

Message #19**Mark 6:14-29**

There is a new fad that originally existed in Pentecostal churches, but now has infiltrated several different churches, including some “Bible churches”; it is the fad of dancing girls. The churches that permit this and promote this use about 10 passages out of the O.T. to support their position: Ex. 15:20-21; Judges 11:34; I Sam. 18:6-7; I Chron. 15:29; Ps. 30:11; 149:3; 150:1-6; Eccl. 3:4; Jer. 31:4, 13.

Now we are of the conviction that this is an evil demonic invasion into the church. None of the proof text passages having anything to do with the church. They are all aimed at national Israel and most of them have millennial ramifications to Israel, when Jesus Christ is physically here on earth and she is in her Kingdom.

Churches that permit dancing girls have Biblically illiterate men leading the church and probably the real bottom line of this is crowds and money. **There is not one N.T. text for the church that promotes dancing girls anywhere. It is not in the church epistles, it is not in church history and churches that are doing this have lost their way.**

It is irreverent, it is immoral, it is for entertainment and it is evil. Moms and dads may think it is real cute to look up on a platform and see their daughter up in church dancing, but to God it is shameful.

I personally know of a young man who said I like to go to church to see the dancing girls. I heard a married man say this is disgusting. He said when I go to church with my wife I have a mind that wants to go to hear the Word of God and not to watch some burlesque show. I know of a man who was visiting a church and the girls started dancing and he got up and walked out.

I am no legalist and this church is certainly not a legalistic church. However, there is no place for this kind of thing in the church of God. Frankly, I believe Jesus Christ will judge ministers who permitted this very severely. I don't care what the crowd response was, what the offerings were or the size of the crowds. I believe leaders are heading to terrible judgment and great loss of rewards. Jesus Christ does not look favorably on dancing girls. In fact, Jesus Christ had a forerunner, who was a front line witness for Him and what Mark most graphically describes is something churches better think very seriously about:

JOHN, THE FORERUNNER OF JESUS CHRIST, WAS MURDERED BY HEROD BECAUSE OF A DANCING GIRL.

Do not miss this point. One of the great men of God, the greatest prophet of God by classification of Jesus Christ, was murdered because of a dancing girl. John had a very sacred assignment as the forerunner of Jesus Christ and he ended up being killed because of a dancing girl. The most graphic description of this episode is found right here in Mark.

The story is comprised of three parts:

PART #1 – King Herod was hearing about Jesus Christ. 6:14-15

Notice how **verse 14** begins, with a conjunction “and” which connects us to the previous context. The disciples were out preaching truth about Jesus Christ and healing and anointing with oil identifying Jesus as “King Jesus.”

Well Herod called himself a “king” and this really bothered him. Herod wasn’t actually a king. The real king was the Roman Emperor or Caesar, who was Tiberius (A.D. 14-37). We may recall when Jesus was born the Caesar was Augustus (B.C. 4-A.D. 14), then Tiberius, and then Caligula (A.D. 37-A.D. 41).

Herod was like a governor; but he wanted to be viewed as a king. Herod was a typical political egomaniac who certainly wanted to be king and thought of himself as king, but he really wasn’t.

He was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. When Herod the Great died (this is the Herod who tried to kill Jesus when He was a baby), this Herod was made ruler over Galilee and Perea. Josephus said this is Herod Antipas who reigned from 4 B.C. to A.D. 39.

Truth is God sovereignly put him in power because of His sovereign plan for Christ on the cross (Acts 4:27). God had actually predestined that this vile, immoral political leader would be in power for His purposes.

Now Herod had been hearing amazing things about Jesus Christ. He was gaining tremendous popularity and doing amazing things. Well the Jews were making up explanations rather than acknowledge who He told them He was. They were specifically spreading three rumors:

False Rumor #1 - Jesus Christ was John who had been raised from the dead. 6:14b

The Greek text does not call John “John the Baptist” as if he is part of some denomination. It identifies John as the guy who was known for baptizing the Jews. The miracles that Jesus was performing, according to this crazy speculation, were being performed by a resurrected ghost of John. This is one whopper of a rumor. When John was here, he did not even perform one miracle. That rumor really bothered Herod because he killed John.

False Rumor #2 - Jesus Christ was Elijah the prophet. 6:15a

This view was promoted by Jews who were trying to throw people off track from the truth. They were saying before the Messiah comes an Elijah-type will come and Jesus is that guy. They were not about to admit He was the Messiah.

Many Jews believed that Elijah would return before judgment day and Israel’s Kingdom because Elijah had been taken to heaven miraculously (II Kings 2:11-12) and because of a prediction by Malachi (Mal.4:5-6). So they told people he was an Elijah-type.

False Rumor #3 - Jesus Christ was a prophet like the old prophets. **6:15b**

Others were speculating that Jesus was here to proclaim prophetic truth about Israel and her Kingdom. He was like some Old time prophet.

PART #2 – King Herod was bothered by the rumor that Jesus Christ was John. **6:16-28**

It is quite clear of all the rumors that Herod heard about Jesus Christ, the one that bothered him the most was the one that said Jesus was a resurrected John. When Herod heard this, according to **verse 16**, he “kept saying” over and over again “John whom I beheaded has risen.”

His conscience must have been eating at him. Some people who kill others do have a conscience. Often times those who commit murders can’t shake it. They will come clean of their crime because their conscience bothers them. I know there are O J Simpson-types who have no conscience, but Herod was one who apparently did.

Now the “for” that begins **verse 17** explains the details of what Herod did to John. There are eleven specific details that are spelled out:

Detail #1 - Herod himself had John arrested. **6:17a**

Herod sent men to take John and bind him in prison. John had been preaching the truth and he got arrested for it.

Detail #2 - Herod arrested John because of Herodias and because of what John had been saying about Herod’s marriage to her. **6:17b-18**

Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, who was the son of Herod the Great by Miriamne I. She married her half-uncle (her father’s half-brother) whose name was Philip. Philip was the son of Herod the Great by Mariamne II. Herodias had a daughter by Philip, whose name, according to Josephus, was Salome.

Now when Herod Antipas visited Philip, he started having an affair with his wife, Herodias. As a result of this they decided to each leave their spouses and marry each other.

When John heard about this he said this is not lawful for two Biblical reasons:

- 1) According to God’s law it was an abomination for a brother to get sexually involved with his brother’s wife while the brother was alive (Lev. 18:16; 20:21).
- 2) According to God’s law a brother could only marry his wife if the brother were dead (Deut. 25:5-6).

So this relationship was a violation of the law of God and John was preaching “it is not lawful.”

Now Herod knew enough of Scripture to know that John was preaching truth; but this really made Herodias angry, which is why Herod, the hen-pecked husband had John arrested. Preaching the truth of God will sometimes get the preacher into trouble with godless people.

Detail #3 - Herodias had a grudge against John and wanted him dead. **6:19**

The word “grudge” is one that means that Herodias set herself against John with an intense and urgent hatred (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 154). Herodias had the same kind of hatred for John that Jezebel had for Elijah. She did not just want John in prison, she wanted him dead.

Detail #4 - Herod had a healthy fear of John and kept him safe. **6:20**

Herod was in “awe” of John. Herod not only knew John preached the truth, but he also knew that this was a righteous and holy man. He actually protected John from being killed because he respected him.

In fact, he was perplexed by this whole thing. On the one hand, his wife wanted John killed; but on the other hand, he liked John and liked to listen to him preach. John had boldness and a power behind him that Herod did not hear in the rest of the Pharisees and Scribes. Herod was in a mental quandary because his conscience knew that John was innocent.

I recently read a statement that was written by a counselor who wrote this: “The worst forms of functional mental disorder arise from a repressed conscience.”

Many people with mental problems would discover if they would just respond to what God would have them do would discover their mental problems would disappear. Herod did not do that.

Detail #5 - Herod held a banquet for his birthday. **6:21**

Herod decided to throw a birthday party for himself and he decided to invite some of the most influential leaders in all of Galilee. He invited his military commanders and leading business men and political leaders. This banquet was a “men only” (no wives) banquet that would feature feasting, drinking, revelry and immorality.

This was like some royal stag club birthday party for men. These were very powerful men in Jesus’ day. These were the “social elite” of Galilee. Anyone who was anyone was at this bash from both the political and military world.

Detail #6 - Herodias’ daughter dances and pleases everyone. **6:22a**

Greek manuscripts slightly differ on this point. Some manuscripts say this was Herod’s daughter or step-daughter whose name was Herodias; but other manuscripts say she was the daughter of Herodias.

We think the determining factor on this is Matthew's commentary that is not in question. Matthew says she was the daughter of Herodias (Matt. 14:6). Also later in this very context, Mark says this girl went out and talked to her mother (Mark 6:24). In fact, Josephus names the girl as being the daughter of Herodias and says her name was "Salome" (*The Complete Works of Josephus*, p. 383)

Salome was the daughter of Herodias by Philip. She was probably in her late teens. If a teenage girl did what Salome did today before a group of older men, those men would go to jail. Now this shows you the character of Salome and her mother. This girl was supposedly royalty and she is going to dance before a bunch of half-drunk men.

Now there is no question that the dance she performed was some form of "erotic dance" that was, as Barclay said, very "licentious." Normally this kind of dance was performed by concubines and prostitutes, but at this banquet the girl dancing was from the royal family line.

This was a decadent dance that would please a lust-crazed Herod and all the other leaders who watched it. Herod was an impulsive, lust-crazed maniac who could not control his pathetic appetites. This is proved by stealing his brother's wife and what happens after the dance.

Detail #7 - Herod makes the dancing girl an insane and extravagant offer. **6:22b-23**

At the end of the dance, Salome had so pleased the men and was so desirable to all there. She had put on an enchanting dance that mesmerized the men. By the way, these are the military and political leaders of this part of the world. They hate truth; they hate the Word of God; but they love this dancing girl. When she was done, Herod publicly made her a bizarre offer—anything she wanted up to half his kingdom.

Actually Herod does not even have the right to offer this because Rome is in charge of all this territory. He is a tetrarch, only in charge of 1/4th of the territory. He wants everyone to think he is a big man. Herod is a man shooting off his loud and arrogant and disgusting mouth in front of all of his leaders and is prepared to give half of whatever he has to this girl.

It does not matter what this girl did in her dance, this offer is insane. There is no dancing girl worth this offer. When she gets done with her dance routine, Herod tells the girl you can ask for anything up to half my kingdom. He said this in front of all his political and military leaders.

Tell me what dance is worth that? How lust-crazed do you have to be to offer this? What a pathetic ruler of people this is. He would give away half of his kingdom to a dancing girl because of one dance. This shows you how lust-crazed one may become. He does not even think rationally.

I know of a man who ended giving up half of everything he owned. He threw away his family, his house, his salary. It all started when he went and watched an erotic dance at a strip club.

How stupid. I have known of ministers who gave up their ministries because of their lust-crazed addictions.

This shows you how dominating lusts can become if you do not come to terms with the Word of God and Jesus Christ.

Detail #8 - Herodias' daughter asks her mother what she should request. **6:24a**

Now remember, this is a teenage girl. She has no idea as to what she should ask for. This was an unbelievable offer to a young lady and she didn't know what to ask for. Probably she was shocked by this offer and she went to her mother to consult with her. Obviously the mother knew all about this dance and this daughter wanted to please not only the men, but her mother.

Detail #9 - Herodias advises her daughter to ask for John's head. **6:24b**

Now at this point Salome has a choice. She can ask for anything she wants for herself or she can ask what her mother wants for herself. She decided to ask for what her mother wanted. Her mother told her to go ask for "the head of John the one who baptizes people."

Detail #10 - Herodias' daughter asks for the immediate head of John on a platter. **6:25**

Now not only was Salome favorable to this request, but she puts her own twist on it. Without any hesitation at all, without any morals or scruples, she hurried in before the king and said she wants John's head cut off immediately and put on a platter and brought before all these people to see. She wanted this done "right here and right now."

Detail #11 - Herod was sad, but he gave her the request. **6:26-28**

When Herod heard the request, he was sad, but he is so pathetic and so arrogant and proud that he would rather kill a wonderful servant of God than to go back on his drunken word to an immoral dancer.

He did have a way out. He could have said to her, "I offered you a gift, not your mother." He could have said, "I agreed to give you a gift, but I did not agree to commit a crime against an innocent man." He also could have responded in accordance with Leviticus 5:4-6, that provides a legal way out when one has sworn something without thinking about it. But Herod did not do that.

Instead he takes the easy way out in front of everyone and immediately he sent an executioner to John, who was in prison, and he beheaded John, put his head on a platter and brought it and gave it to Salome, who gave it to Herodias.

A man of God was destroyed by a dancing girl. How do you think God views dancing girls in His church? I guarantee this; it is destroying the sacredness and the reverence that belongs in the church of God.

PART #3 – John’s disciples took his body and buried John’s body in a tomb. **6:29**

They probably did not have John’s head to bury, but they did have his body. In sharp contrast to the drunken party and the debauchery, John’s disciples came and took the body of John and gave him an honorable burial.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

1) No matter how evil or immoral or godless the political leader, God is still sovereign and that leader is fulfilling His sovereign purposes.

As evil and as lust-crazed as Herod was, God had a sovereign purpose and plan for permitting Herod to be in power (Acts 4:27-28). Herod would be used as part of the process to bring about the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, which was necessary for the salvation of all mankind.

2) When one does not respond to his conscience, he weakens his mind and his morals and will develop a personality disorder that no counseling or medicine will cure.

3) One may become so lust-crazed that he no longer can control himself and ends up doing and saying things that are bizarre and insane.

4) When you preach the truth and stand for truth, it will offend people, especially those who are convicted by the truth but not responding to the conviction.

5) Believing on Jesus Christ and loving the Word of God is not popular with the vast majority of people; but when one leaves this sin-cursed world, one will be honored forever and ever just like John .