

Message #38

Luke 9:7-9

If you want to see many paranoid people, look at those who are working for a company that has just been sold. If you have ever gone through this personally, you know what happens. First, there are the rumors that the company is being sold. Second, there is the speculation as to whether or not things will stay the same. Third, people wonder about their jobs whether or not they can keep them. Fourth, new people begin to show up and you wonder about that. What you have is a constant paranoia.

If you can understand that or relate to that, you can begin to understand Herod. Herod had been the top gun in Galilee and Perea for over 30 years at the time Jesus arrived on the scene (4 B.C.-A.D. 39). But now, all of a sudden, there was a new Person who was gaining a tremendous reputation and a tremendous following. Jesus Christ was changing the world and changing his world. Now He sent out twelve of His own disciples and they were telling everyone about Jesus Christ.

Herod was never in a right relationship with Jesus Christ. He had lots of questions about Him, but very few answers. All Herod knew is that Jesus Christ was a Person getting top billing in his territory and kingdom. He was paranoid, intimidated, threatened, angry and frustrated.

Perhaps the saddest thing of all is that Herod never truly did find out who Jesus Christ actually was. He lived his entire life without ever having a relationship with Him. He spent his entire political life in paranoia and now he is spending his eternal life burning in hell.

This is the way it is for people who do not come to terms with Jesus Christ. They spend their whole lives in havoc. They are confused, threatened, paranoid, proud and then they die and go to hell. Herod is a prototype of a politician who is never interested in the truth of God.

What is described in these verses is tragic. Here was a man who literally had every opportunity to literally come to terms with Jesus Christ, and he didn't and he is burning forever.

NO MATTER WHO A PERSON IS OR HOW IMPORTANT A PERSON IS, UNLESS HE COMES TO FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST, HE WILL SPEND THIS LIFE IN GREAT PERPLEXITY AND HE WILL SPEND ALL ETERNITY BURNING IN HELL.

A person could be a very successful politician and be heading to eternal disaster. Most are.
 A person could be very successful on his job and yet be totally miserable.
 A person could be a very smart academic in a classroom and be totally confused in his mind.
 A person could be very successful in his accomplishments and be completely empty.
 A person could have everything in this world and still end up in hell. That is exactly what happened to Herod.

Herod was a man who had position, power, prestige, possessions and political clout. **He had everything except peace of mind and peace in his soul.** His life is a case study of a paranoid eternal loser.

Herod had every opportunity to come to terms with Jesus Christ and never did. Herod says to all that one can be very religious and have all kinds of exposure to religious gatherings and be as lost as one may be.

Now as we look down through these verses there are four key facts brought out about Herod:

FACT #1 – Herod was powerful. 9:7a

What we learn is that Herod was “tetrarch” which means he was a powerful ruler who ruled one quarter part of this part of the Roman world. He was a powerful political figure. In fact, sometimes he was referred to as King (Matt. 14:9). Even Pontius Pilate recognized the power and authority of Herod (Luke 23:6-7).

However, with all of his power and prestige, he still could not solve the great riddle of his soul. He could not find contentment; he could not find peace of mind because he did not personally know Jesus Christ.

There are many powerful people in this world who do not know Jesus Christ. It does not matter how powerful they may be or how important the world says they are. Without a relationship with Jesus Christ, peace and contentment will be lacking and the person will be miserable.

Back when I was in school, a man came to school who had owned a very lucrative grocery business. He had started his own chain of stores and was highly esteemed in the community in which he lived. At one of the chapel services, he gave his testimony and told how he was absolutely miserable until he came to faith in Jesus Christ. He eventually sold his businesses and went to school and he stood before all of us and said I have never been happier in all my life.

What a testimony. He was successful, esteemed, powerful and miserable until he came to terms with Jesus Christ. Money, power, position cannot bring peace and happiness to the soul.

Truth is as powerful and as successful as Herod was, he ended up with nothing.

FACT #2 – Herod was knowledgeable. 9:7b

Herod had great knowledge of Jesus Christ. He was hearing things about Him. The text says, “he heard of all that was happening.” Everyone was talking about Jesus Christ:

- 1) Herod had heard that Jesus could speak to a fever and it obeyed Him.
- 2) Herod had heard that He could command demons to do what He wanted them to do.
- 3) Herod had heard that He was healing all kinds of diseases.
- 4) Herod had heard that He could speak to storms and it would obey Him.
- 5) Herod had heard that He could heal paralyzed people.
- 6) Herod had heard that He could actually bring someone dead back to life.

Hearing about Jesus Christ and having knowledge about Jesus Christ is not the same as believing in Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Herod's problem was not one of ignorance but unbelief. Herod had all kinds of knowledge and had heard all kinds of stories, but he refused to believe. The truth is this is the story of most of humanity. Most people today have the same problem as Herod. Many people have heard about Jesus Christ but they do not believe in Him as their Savior. Most people have a Bible and yet the vast majority of people do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

We could actually have some Herod-types in every service. There are those who have plenty of knowledge of Jesus Christ. They celebrate Christmas and Easter. But that does not mean they have personally received Jesus Christ as Savior and invited Him into their lives.

Don't make the mistake of equating knowledge of Jesus Christ with saving faith in Jesus Christ. Herod had knowledge.

FACT #3 – Herod was perplexed. **9:7c-9a**

Herod was “greatly perplexed” by what he was hearing. That word (διαπορευω) means that he was at a total loss about what to think or say about Jesus Christ (G. Abbott Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 110). He was trying to sort all of this out in his mind. He couldn't figure it out things he was hearing about Jesus Christ. He didn't know how to explain things. He didn't know what to think or say or believe.

To further add to Herod's confusion, there were three theories floating around about Jesus Christ:

Theory #1 - Some theorized that Jesus was John. **9:7b**

John had been the forerunner to Jesus Christ. He had clearly testified who Christ was (John 1:15-18). He made it very clear that John was not the Messiah (John 1:20), but that Jesus was the Messiah (John 1:29-34). These rumors that Jesus was John were originally started by the religious leaders (John 1:19-21).

Apparently some of the leaders were trying to cover-up John's testimony and they had spread the rumor that Jesus was John. Herod had actually executed John by beheading him (Luke 9:9; Mark 6:16). Apparently one rumor was that he had come back from the dead and was now going through the country performing miracles.

People will make up and believe bizarre things about Jesus Christ even though what they believe is in direct contradiction to the Word of God.

For example, Mormons just make up stuff like Jesus is the spirit-brother of Satan. Or Jesus is a God like we all may become a god. This is what Herod did and Herod ends up in hell.

Theory #2 - Some theorized that Jesus was Elijah. **9:8a**

Elijah was a prophet that the Jews anticipated and still anticipate would come just prior to the Messiah setting up His Kingdom. The Jews based this belief on the fact that Elijah had been taken by God (I Kings 2:1-11) and by certain passages of Scripture that imply Elijah will be connected to the coming of Christ (Mal. 4:5-6).

But if we carefully observe the text of Malachi, we discover that Elijah is predicted to come prior to the “great and terrible day of the LORD.” The Jews wanted that day to come but they did not want to spiritually prepare themselves for that day. For the most part, the Jews rejected Jesus Christ because He did not pour out wrath on Israel’s enemies. They did not want to hear about their own sin and need to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior, so some said He is Elijah.

A person may make Jesus Christ out to be whatever he/she wants. But unless he invites Him into his or her life, he will end up in hell. This is not theory; this is fact.

Theory #3 - Some theorized that Jesus was a prophet. **9:8b**

Another theory was that Jesus was some O.T. prophet who had come back from the dead. In fact, one of the theories was He was Jeremiah (Matt. 16:14).

Regardless of any theory, all of them required a miraculous resurrection and reappearance of a body. All of the theories required a rejection of truth, which even the demons knew. The demons knew that Jesus Christ was the Holy One of God (Luke 4:34).

The Jews would rather make up their own stories than to accept the truth of God. Herod was confused by all of this and he did not know what to believe. He was totally baffled by what he was hearing.

In **verse 9**, Herod says, “I myself beheaded John, so who is this ‘man’ I hear such things about?” Herod means who is this masculine person I am hearing so much about?

You and I are living in a Herod-type world. We are living in a world that is theologically confused concerning Jesus Christ.

- 1) Some say He was a good man.
- 2) Some say He was a good teacher.
- 3) Some say He was a good example.

The Bible says He is God. The Bible says He is the Messiah. The Bible says He is the Savior, the lamb who has come to take away the sins of the world.

Things have not changed much since Herod’s day. Many people want to be the King of their own lives and not submit themselves to the God/King.

FACT #4 – Herod wanted to see Jesus Christ. **9:9b**

Herod did not believe in Christ, but he did want to see Jesus Christ for two reasons:

Reason #1 - He was curious about Jesus Christ. **9:9b**

Who wouldn't be curious about seeing Christ? Who isn't curious about seeing Christ today? There is a major difference between being curious about Christ and having a relationship with Christ.

Reason #2 - He wanted to kill Jesus Christ. **Luke 13:31-32**

Deep in the heart of Herod was a paranoia that wanted Jesus Christ dead. His motivation for wanting to see Christ was not pure and true.

Herod did finally get an opportunity to see Jesus Christ (Luke 23:8), but when he did, his true colors came out and he not only rejected Him, but he ended up mocking Him (Luke 23:11-12).

Herod was exposed to so much information about Jesus Christ. He had access to so much truth and he was responsible for the execution of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:26-28).

It is a fact of history that Jesus Christ was a real Person who did live in history. Josephus testifies of that; Suetonius testifies of that, Pliny testifies of that and Trajan testifies of that. Jewish rabbis admit Jesus Christ was real and was really here.

But Jesus Christ did not come to this world to be a reality of history; He came to be the Savior of your sinful soul and if you haven't believed in Him and invited Him into your life, you have every right to be paranoid because you don't know when you will be called to face Him.