

From the Death of Antigonus to the Finishing of the Temple by Herod

by Flavius Josephus

The story of Herod's rise to power and his subsequent cruelty and greed lead to the suffering of the Jewish people.

Scripture: Psalm 146:3, Proverbs 6:34, Proverbs 16:18, Proverbs 27:4, Ecclesiastes 7:9

Topics: "Herod's Reign", "Biblical History"

Description

Flavius Josephus recounts the events from the death of Antigonus to the completion of the temple by Herod. Herod seizes Jerusalem, captures Antigonus, and punishes his enemies while rewarding his supporters. Antony beheads Antigonus to quell the Jews' loyalty to him. Hyrcanus is freed by the Parthians and returns to Herod, who later manipulates the high priesthood to secure his rule. Herod's complex relationships with Cleopatra and Mariamne lead to suspicion, jealousy, and tragic consequences.

Transcript

BOOK XV.

CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF EIGHTEEN YEARS.

FROM THE DEATH OF ANTIGONUS TO THE FINISHING OF THE TEMPLE BY HEROD.

CHAPTER 1.

CONCERNING POLLIO AND SAMEAS. HEROD SLAYS THE PRINCIPAL OF ANTIGONUS'S FRIENDS, AND SPOILS THE CITY OF ITS WEALTH. ANTONY BEHEADS ANTIGONUS.

1. HOW Sosius and Herod took Jerusalem by force; and besides that, how they took Antigonus captive, has been related by us in the foregoing book. We will now proceed in the narration. And since Herod had now the government of all Judea put into his hands, he promoted such of the private men in the city as had been of his party, but never left off avenging and punishing every day those that had chosen to be of the party of his enemies. But Pollio the Pharisee, and Sameas, a disciple of his, were honored by him above all the rest; for when Jerusalem was besieged, they advised the citizens to receive Herod, for which advice they were well requited. But this Pollio, at the time when Herod was once upon his trial of life and death, foretold, in way of reproach, to Hyrcanus and the other judges, how this Herod, whom they suffered

now to escape, would afterward inflict punishment on them all; which had its completion in time, while God fulfilled the words he had spoken.

2. At this time Herod, now he had got Jerusalem under his power, carried off all the royal ornaments, and spoiled the wealthy men of what they had gotten; and when, by these means, he had heaped together a great quantity of silver and gold, he gave it all to Antony, and his friends that were about him. He also slew forty-five of the principal men of Antigonus's party, and set guards at the gates of the city, that nothing might be carried out together with their dead bodies. They also searched the dead, and whatsoever was found, either of silver or gold, or other treasure, it was carried to the king; nor was there any end of the miseries he brought upon them; and this distress was in part occasioned by the covetousness of the prince regent, who was still in want of more, and in part by the Sabbatic year, which was still going on, and forced the country to lie still uncultivated, since we are forbidden to sow our land in that year. Now when Antony had received Antigonus as his captive, he determined to keep him against his triumph; but when he heard that the nation grew seditious, and that, out of their hatred to Herod, they continued to bear good-will to Antigonus, he resolved to behead him at Antioch, for otherwise the Jews could no way be brought to be quiet. And Strabo of Cappadocia attests to what I have said, when he thus speaks: "Antony ordered Antigonus the Jew to be brought to Antioch, and there to be beheaded. And this Antony seems to me to have been the very first man who beheaded a king, as supposing he could no other way bend the minds of the Jews so as to receive Herod, whom he had made king in his stead; for by no torments could they be forced to call him king, so great a fondness they had for their former king; so he thought that this dishonorable death would diminish the value they had for Antigonus's memory, and at the same time would diminish the hatred they bare to Herod." Thus far Strabo.

CHAPTER 2.

HOW HYRCANUS WAS SET AT LIBERTY BY THE PARTHIANS, AND RETURNED TO HEROD; AND WHAT ALEXANDRA DID WHEN SHE HEARD THAT ANANELUS WAS MADE HIGH PRIEST.

1. NOW after Herod was in possession of the kingdom, Hyrcanus the high priest, who was then a captive among the Parthians, came to him again, and was set free from his captivity, in the manner following: Barzapharnes and Pacorus, the generals of the Parthians, took Hyrcanus, who was first made high priest and afterward king, and Herod's brother, Phasaelus captives, and were them away into Parthis. Phasaelus indeed could not bear the reproach of being in bonds; and thinking that death with glory was better than any life whatsoever, he became his own executioner, as I have formerly related.

2. But when Hyrcanus was brought into Parthia the king Phraates treated him after a very gentle manner, as having already learned of what an illustrious family he was; on which account he set him free from his bonds, and gave him a habitation at Babylon, (1) where there were Jews in great numbers. These Jews honored Hyrcanus as their high priest and king, as did all the Jewish nation that dwelt as far as Euphrates; which respect was very much to his satisfaction. But when he was informed that Herod had received the kingdom, new hopes came upon him, as having been himself still of a kind disposition towards him, and expecting that Herod would bear in mind what favor he had received from him; and when he was upon his trial, and when he was in danger that a capital sentence would be pronounced against him, he delivered him from that danger, and from all punishment. Accordingly, he talked of that matter with the Jew that came often to him with great affection; but they endeavored to retain him among them, and desired that he would stay with them, putting him in mind of the kind offices and honors they did him, and that those honors they paid him were not at all inferior to what they could pay to either their high priests or their kings;

and what was a greater motive to determine him, they said, was this, that he could not have those dignities [in Judea] because of that maim in his body, which had been inflicted on him by Antigonus; and that kings do not use to requite men for those kindnesses which they received when they were private persons, the height of their fortune making usually no small changes in them.

3. Now although they suggested these arguments to him for his own advantage, yet did Hyrcanus still desire to depart. Herod also wrote to him, and persuaded him to desire of Phraates, and the Jews that were there, that they should not grudge him the royal authority, which he should have jointly with himself, for that now was the proper time for himself to make him amends for the favors he had received from him, as having been brought up by him, and saved by him also, as well as for Hyrcanus to receive it. And as he wrote thus to Hyrcanus, so did he send also Saramallas, his ambassador, to Phraates, and many presents with him, and desired him in the most obliging way that he would be no hinderance to his gratitude towards his benefactor. But this zeal of Herod's did not flow from that principle, but because he had been made governor of that country without having any just claim to it, he was afraid, and that upon reasons good enough, of a change in his condition, and so made what haste he could to get Hyrcanus into his power, or indeed to put him quite out of the way; which last thing he compassed afterward.

4. Accordingly, when Hyrcanus came, full of assurance, by the permission of the king of Parthia, and at the expense of the Jews, who supplied him with money, Herod received him with all possible respect, and gave him the upper place at public meetings, and set him above all the rest at feasts, and thereby deceived him. He called him his father, and endeavored, by all the ways possible, that he might have no suspicion of any treacherous design against him. He also did other things, in order to secure his government, which yet occasioned a sedition in his own family; for being cautious how he made any illustrious person the high priest of God, (2) he sent for an obscure priest out of Babylon, whose name was Ananelus, and bestowed the high priesthood upon him.

5. However, Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, and wife of Alexander, the son of Aristobulus the king, who had also brought Alexander [two] children, could not bear this indignity. Now this son was one of the greatest comeliness, and was called Aristobulus; and the daughter, Mariamne, was married to Herod, and eminent for her beauty also. This Alexandra was much disturbed, and took this indignity offered to her son exceeding ill, that while he was alive, any one else should be sent for to have the dignity of the high priesthood conferred upon him. Accordingly, she wrote to Cleopatra (a musician assisting her in taking care to have her letters carried) to desire her intercession with Antony, in order to gain the high priesthood for her son.

6. But as Antony was slow in granting this request, his friend Dellius (3) came into Judea upon some affairs; and when he saw Aristobulus, he stood in admiration at the tallness and handsomeness of the child, and no less at Mariamne, the king's wife, and was open in his commendations of Alexandra, as the mother of most beautiful children. And when she came to discourse with him, he persuaded her to get pictures drawn of them both, and to send them to Antony, for that when he saw them, he would deny her nothing that she should ask. Accordingly, Alexandra was elevated with these words of his, and sent the pictures to Antony. Dellius also talked extravagantly, and said that these children seemed not derived from men, but from some god or other. His design in doing so was to entice Antony into lewd pleasures with them, who was ashamed to send for the damsel, as being the wife of Herod, and avoided it, because of the reproaches he should have from Cleopatra on that account; but he sent, in the most decent manner he could, for the young man; but added this withal, unless he thought it hard upon him so to do. When this letter was brought to Herod, he did not think it safe for him to send one so handsome as was Aristobulus,

in the prime of his life, for he was sixteen years of age, and of so noble a family, and particularly not to Antony, the principal man among the Romans, and one that would abuse him in his amours, and besides, one that openly indulged himself in such pleasures as his power allowed him without control. He therefore wrote back to him, that if this boy should only go out of the country, all would be in a state of war and uproar, because the Jews were in hopes of a change in the government, and to have another king over them.

7. When Herod had thus excused himself to Antony, he resolved that he would not entirely permit the child or Alexandra to be treated dishonorably; but his wife Mariamne lay vehemently at him to restore the high priesthood to her brother; and he judged it was for his advantage so to do, because if he once had that dignity, he could not go out of the country. So he called his friends together, and told them that Alexandra privately conspired against his royal authority, and endeavored, by the means of Cleopatra, so to bring it about, that he might be deprived of the government, and that by Antony's means this youth might have the management of public affairs in his stead; and that this procedure of hers was unjust, since she would at the same time deprive her daughter of the dignity she now had, and would bring disturbances upon the kingdom, for which he had taken a great deal of pains, and had gotten it with extraordinary hazards; that yet, while he well remembered her wicked practices, he would not leave off doing what was right himself, but would even now give the youth the high priesthood; and that he formerly set up Ananelus, because Aristobulus was then so very young a child. Now when he had said this, not at random, but as he thought with the best discretion he had, in order to deceive the women, and those friends whom he had taken to consult withal, Alexandra, out of the great joy she had at this unexpected promise, and out of fear from the suspicions she lay under, fell a weeping; and made the following apology for herself; and said, that as to the [high] priesthood, she was very much concerned for the disgrace her son was under, and so did her utmost endeavors to procure it for him; but that as to the kingdom, she had made no attempts, and that if it were offered her [for her son], she would not accept it; and that now she would be satisfied with her son's dignity, while he himself held the civil government, and she had thereby the security that arose from his peculiar ability in governing to all the remainder of her family; that she was now overcome by his benefits, and thankfully accepted of this honor showed by him to her son, and that she would hereafter be entirely obedient. And she desired him to excuse her, if the nobility of her family, and that freedom of acting which she thought that allowed her, had made her act too precipitately and imprudently in this matter. So when they had spoken thus to one another, they came to an agreement, and all suspicions, so far as appeared, were vanished away.

CHAPTER 3.

HOW HEROD UPON HIS MAKING ARISTOBULUS HIGH PRIEST TOOK CARE THAT HE SHOULD BE MURDERED IN A LITTLE TIME; AND WHAT APOLOGY HE MADE TO ANTONY ABOUT ARISTOBULUS; AS ALSO CONCERNING JOSEPH AND MARIAMNE.

1. SO king Herod immediately took the high priesthood away from Ananelus, who, as we said before, was not of this country, but one of those Jews that had been carried captive beyond Euphrates; for there were not a few ten thousands of this people that had been carried captives, and dwelt about Babylonia, whence Ananelus came. He was one of the stock of the high priests (4) and had been of old a particular friend of Herod; and when he was first made king, he conferred that dignity upon him, and now put him out of it again, in order to quiet the troubles in his family, though what he did was plainly unlawful, for at no other time [of old] was any one that had once been in that dignity deprived of it. It was Antiochus Epiphanes who first brake that law, and deprived Jesus, and made his brother Onias high priest in his stead. Aristobulus

was the second that did so, and took that dignity from his brother [Hyrceanus]; and this Herod was the third, who took that high office away [from Arianflus], and gave it to this young man, Aristobulus, in his stead.

2. And now Herod seemed to have healed the divisions in his family; yet was he not without suspicion, as is frequently the case, of people seeming to be reconciled to one another, but thought that, as Alexandra had already made attempts tending to innovations, so did he fear that she would go on therein, if she found a fit opportunity for so doing; so he gave a command that she should dwell in the palace, and meddle with no public affairs. Her guards also were so careful, that nothing she did in private life every day was concealed. All these hardships put her out of patience, by little and little and she began to hate Herod; for as she had the pride of a woman to the utmost degree, she had great indignation at this suspicious guard that was about her, as desirous rather to undergo any thing that could befall her, than to be deprived of her liberty of speech, and, under the notion of an honorary guard, to live in a state of slavery and terror. She therefore sent to Cleopatra, and made a long complaint of the circumstances she was in, and entreated her to do her utmost for her assistance. Cleopatra hereupon advised her to take her son with her, and come away immediately to her into Egypt. This advice pleased her; and she had this contrivance for getting away: She got two coffins made, as if they were to carry away two dead bodies and put herself into one, and her son into the other and gave orders to such of her servants as knew of her intentions to carry them away in the night time. Now their road was to be thence to the sea-side and there was a ship ready to carry them into Egypt. Now Aesop, one of her servants, happened to fall upon Sabion, one of her friends, and spake of this matter to him, as thinking he had known of it before. When Sabion knew this, (who had formerly been an enemy of Herod, and been esteemed one of those that laid snares for and gave the poison to [his father] Antipater,) he expected that this discovery would change Herod's hatred into kindness; so he told the king of this private stratagem of Alexandra: whereupon he suffered her to proceed to the execution of her project, and caught her in the very fact; but still he passed by her offense; and though he had a great mind to do it, he durst not inflict any thing that was severe upon her, for he knew that Cleopatra would not bear that he should have her accused, on account of her hatred to him; but made a show as if it were rather the generosity of his soul, and his great moderation, that made him forgive them. However, he fully proposed to himself to put this young man out of the way, by one means or other; but he thought he might in probability be better concealed in doing it, if he did it not presently, nor immediately after what had lately happened.

3. And now, upon the approach of the feast of tabernacles, which is a festival very much observed among us, he let those days pass over, and both he and the rest of the people were therein very merry; yet did the envy which at this time arose in him cause him to make haste to do what he was about, and provoke him to it; for when this youth Aristobulus, who was now in the seventeenth year of his age, went up to the altar, according to the law, to offer the sacrifices, and this with the ornaments of his high priesthood, and when he performed the sacred offices, (5) he seemed to be exceedingly comely, and taller than men usually were at that age, and to exhibit in his countenance a great deal of that high family he was sprung from, - a warm zeal and affection towards him appeared among the people, and the memory of the actions of his grandfather Aristobulus was fresh in their minds; and their affections got so far the mastery of them, that they could not forbear to show their inclinations to him. They at once rejoiced and were confounded, and mingled with good wishes their joyful acclamations which they made to him, till the good-will of the multitude was made too evident; and they more rashly proclaimed the happiness they had received from his family than was fit under a monarchy to have done. Upon all this, Herod resolved to complete what he had intended against the young man. When therefore the festival was over, and he was feasting at Jericho (6) with Alexandra, who entertained them there, he was then very pleasant with the young man, and drew

him into a lonely place, and at the same time played with him in a juvenile and ludicrous manner. Now the nature of that place was hotter than ordinary; so they went out in a body, and of a sudden, and in a vein of madness; and as they stood by the fish-ponds, of which there were large ones about the house, they went to cool themselves [by bathing], because it was in the midst of a hot day. At first they were only spectators of Herod's servants and acquaintance as they were swimming; but after a while, the young man, at the instigation of Herod, went into the water among them, while such of Herod's acquaintance, as he had appointed to do it, dipped him as he was swimming, and plunged him under water, in the dark of the evening, as if it had been done in sport only; nor did they desist till he was entirely suffocated. And thus was Aristobulus murdered, having lived no more in all than eighteen years, (7) and kept the high priesthood one year only; which high priesthood Ananelus now recovered again.

4. When this sad accident was told the women, their joy was soon changed to lamentation, at the sight of the dead body that lay before them, and their sorrow was immoderate. The city also [of Jerusalem], upon the spreading of this news, were in very great grief, every family looking on this calamity as if it had not belonged to another, but that one of themselves was slain. But Alexandra was more deeply affected, upon her knowledge that he had been destroyed [on purpose]. Her sorrow was greater than that of others, by her knowing how the murder was committed; but she was under the necessity of bearing up under it, out of her prospect of a greater mischief that might otherwise follow; and she oftentimes came to an inclination to kill herself with her own hand, but still she restrained herself, in hopes she might live long enough to revenge the unjust murder thus privately committed; nay, she further resolved to endeavor to live longer, and to give no occasion to think she suspected that her son was slain on purpose, and supposed that she might thereby be in a capacity of revenging it at a proper opportunity. Thus did she restrain herself, that she might not be noted for entertaining any such suspicion. However, Herod endeavored that none abroad should believe that the child's death was caused by any design of his; and for this purpose he did not only use the ordinary signs of sorrow, but fell into tears also, and exhibited a real confusion of soul; and perhaps his affections were overcome on this occasion, when he saw the child's countenance so young and so beautiful, although his death was supposed to tend to his own security. So far at least this grief served as to make some apology for him; and as for his funeral, that he took care should be very magnificent, by making great preparation for a sepulcher to lay his body in, and providing a great quantity of spices, and burying many ornaments together with him, till the very women, who were in such deep sorrow, were astonished at it, and received in this way some consolation.

5. However, no such things could overcome Alexandra's grief; but the remembrance of this miserable case made her sorrow, both deep and obstinate. Accordingly, she wrote an account of this treacherous scene to Cleopatra, and how her son was murdered; but Cleopatra, as she had formerly been desirous to give her what satisfaction she could, and commiserating Alexandra's misfortunes, made the case her own, and would not let Antony be quiet, but excited him to punish the child's murder; for that it was an unworthy thing that Herod, who had been by him made king of a kingdom that no way belonged to him, should be guilty of such horrid crimes against those that were of the royal blood in reality. Antony was persuaded by these arguments; and when he came to Laodicea, he sent and commanded Herod to come and make his defense, as to what he had done to Aristobulus, for that such a treacherous design was not well done, if he had any hand in it. Herod was now in fear, both of the accusation, and of Cleopatra's ill-will to him, which was such that she was ever endeavoring to make Antony hate him. He therefore determined to obey his summons, for he had no possible way to avoid it. So he left his uncle Joseph procurator for his government, and for the public affairs, and gave him a private charge, that if Antony should kill him, he also should kill Mariamne immediately; for that he had a tender affection for this his wife, and was afraid of

the injury that should be offered him, if, after his death, she, for her beauty, should be engaged to some other man: but his intimation was nothing but this at the bottom, that Antony had fallen in love with her, when he had formerly heard somewhat of her beauty. So when Herod had given Joseph this charge, and had indeed no sure hopes of escaping with his life, he went away to Antony.

6. But as Joseph was administering the public affairs of the kingdom, and for that reason was very frequently with Mariamne, both because his business required it, and because of the respects he ought to pay to the queen, he frequently let himself into discourses about Herod's kindness, and great affection towards her; and when the women, especially Alexandra, used to turn his discourses into feminine railery, Joseph was so over-desirous to demonstrate the king's inclinations, that he proceeded so far as to mention the charge he had received, and thence drew his demonstration, that Herod was not able to live without her; and that if he should come to any ill end, he could not endure a separation from her, even after he was dead. Thus spake Joseph. But the women, as was natural, did not take this to be an instance of Herod's strong affection for them, but of his severe usage of them, that they could not escape destruction, nor a tyrannical death, even when he was dead himself. And this saying [of Joseph] was a foundation for the women's severe suspicions about him afterwards.

7. At this time a report went about the city Jerusalem among Herod's enemies, that Antony had tortured Herod, and put him to death. This report, as is natural, disturbed those that were about the palace, but chiefly the women; upon which Alexandra endeavored to persuade Joseph to go out of the palace, and fly away with them to the ensigns of the Roman legion, which then lay encamped about the city, as a guard to the kingdom, under the command of Julius; for that by this means, if any disturbance should happen about the palace, they should be in greater security, as having the Romans favorable to them; and that besides, they hoped to obtain the highest authority, if Antony did but once see Mariamne, by whose means they should recover the kingdom, and want nothing which was reasonable for them to hope for, because of their royal extraction.

8. But as they were in the midst of these deliberations, letters were brought from Herod about all his affairs, and proved contrary to the report, and of what they before expected; for when he was come to Antony, he soon recovered his interest with him, by the presents he made him, which he had brought with him from Jerusalem; and he soon induced him, upon discoursing with him, to leave off his indignation at him, so that Cleopatra's persuasions had less force than the arguments and presents he brought to regain his friendship; for Antony said that it was not good to require an account of a king, as to the affairs of his government, for at this rate he could be no king at all, but that those who had given him that authority ought to permit him to make use of it. He also said the same things to Cleopatra, that it would be best for her not busily to meddle with the acts of the king's government. Herod wrote an account of these things, and enlarged upon the other honors which he had received from Antony; how he sat by him at his hearing causes, and took his diet with him every day, and that he enjoyed those favors from him, notwithstanding the reproaches that Cleopatra so severely laid against him, who having a great desire of his country, and earnestly entreating Antony that the kingdom might be given to her, labored with her utmost diligence to have him out of the way; but that he still found Antony just to him, and had no longer any apprehensions of hard treatment from him; and that he was soon upon his return, with a firmer additional assurance of his favor to him, in his reigning and managing public affairs; and that there was no longer any hope for Cleopatra's covetous temper, since Antony had given her Celesyria instead of what she had desired; by which means he had at once pacified her, and got clear of the entreaties which she made him to have Judea bestowed upon her.

9. When these letters were brought, the women left off their attempt for flying to the Romans, which they thought of while Herod was supposed to be dead; yet was not that purpose of theirs a secret; but when the king had conducted Antony on his way against the Partians, he returned to Judea, when both his sister Salome and his mother informed him of Alexandra's intentions. Salome also added somewhat further against Joseph, though it was no more than a calumny, that he had often had criminal conversation with Mariamne. The reason of her saying so was this, that she for a long time bare her ill-will; for when they had differences with one another, Mariamne took great freedoms, and reproached the rest for the meanness of their birth. But Herod, whose affection to Mariamne was always very warm, was presently disturbed at this, and could not bear the torments of jealousy, but was still restrained from doing any rash thing to her by the love he had for her; yet did his vehement affection and jealousy together make him ask Mariamne by herself about this matter of Joseph; but she denied it upon her oath, and said all that an innocent woman could possibly say in her own defense; so that by little and little the king was prevailed upon to drop the suspicion, and left off his anger at her; and being overcome with his passion for his wife, he made an apology to her for having seemed to believe what he had heard about her, and returned her a great many acknowledgments of her modest behavior, and professed the extraordinary affection and kindness he had for her, till at last, as is usual between lovers, they both fell into tears, and embraced one another with a most tender affection. But as the king gave more and more assurances of his belief of her fidelity, and endeavored to draw her to a like confidence in him, Mariamne said, Yet was not that command thou gavest, that if any harm came to thee from Antony, I, who had been no occasion of it, should perish with thee, a sign of thy love to me?" When these words were fallen from her, the king was shocked at them, and presently let her go out of his arms, and cried out, and tore his hair with his own hands, and said, that "now he had an evident demonstration that Joseph had had criminal conversation with his wife; for that he would never have uttered what he had told him alone by himself, unless there had been such a great familiarity and firm confidence between them. And while he was in this passion he had like to have killed his wife; but being still overborne by his love to her, he restrained this his passion, though not without a lasting grief and disquietness of mind. However, he gave order to slay Joseph, without permitting him to come into his sight; and as for Alexandra, he bound her, and kept her in custody, as the cause of all this mischief.

CHAPTER 4.

HOW CLEOPATRA, WHEN SHE HAD GOTTEN FROM ANTONY SOME PARTS OF JUDEA AND ARABIA CAME INTO JUDEA; AND HOW HEROD GAVE HER MANY PRESENTS AND CONDUCTED HER ON HER WAY BACK TO EGYPT.

1. NOW at this time the affairs of Syria were in confusion by Cleopatra's constant persuasions to Antony to make an attempt upon every body's dominions; for she persuaded him to take those dominions away from their several princes, and bestow them upon her; and she had a mighty influence upon him, by reason of his being enslaved to her by his affections. She was also by nature very covetous, and stuck at no wickedness. She had already poisoned her brother, because she knew that he was to be king of Egypt, and this when he was but fifteen years old; and she got her sister Arsinoe to be slain, by the means of Antony, when she was a suppliant at Diana's temple at Ephesus; for if there were but any hopes of getting money, she would violate both temples and sepulchers. Nor was there any holy place that was esteemed the most inviolable, from which she would not fetch the ornaments it had in it; nor any place so profane, but was to suffer the most flagitious treatment possible from her, if it could but contribute somewhat to the covetous humor of this wicked creature: yet did not all this suffice so extravagant a

woman, who was a slave to her lusts, but she still imagined that she wanted every thing she could think of, and did her utmost to gain it; for which reason she hurried Antony on perpetually to deprive others of their dominions, and give them to her. And as she went over Syria with him, she contrived to get it into her possession; so he slew Lysanias, the son of Ptolemy, accusing him of his bringing the Parthians upon those countries. She also petitioned Antony to give her Judea and Arabia; and, in order thereto, desired him to take these countries away from their present governors. As for Antony, he was so entirely overcome by this woman, that one would not think her conversation only could do it, but that he was some way or other bewitched to do whatsoever she would have him; yet did the grossest parts of her injustice make him so ashamed, that he would not always hearken to her to do those flagrant enormities she would have persuaded him to. That therefore he might not totally deny her, nor, by doing every thing which she enjoined him, appear openly to be an ill man, he took some parts of each of those countries away from their former governors, and gave them to her. Thus he gave her the cities that were within the river Eleutherus, as far as Egypt, excepting Tyre and Sidon, which he knew to have been free cities from their ancestors, although she pressed him very often to bestow those on her also.

2. When Cleopatra had obtained thus much, and had accompanied Antony in his expedition to Armenia as far as Euphrates, she returned back, and came to Apamia and Damascus, and passed on to Judea, where Herod met her, and farmed of her parts of Arabia, and those revenues that came to her from the region about Jericho. This country bears that balsam, which is the most precious drug that is there, and grows there alone. The place bears also palm trees, both many in number, and those excellent in their kind.

When she was there, and was very often with Herod, she endeavored to have criminal conversation with the king; nor did she affect secrecy in the indulgence of such sort of pleasures; and perhaps she had in some measure a passion of love to him; or rather, what is most probable, she laid a treacherous snare for him, by aiming to obtain such adulterous conversation from him: however, upon the whole, she seemed overcome with love to him. Now Herod had a great while borne no good-will to Cleopatra, as knowing that she was a woman irksome to all; and at that time he thought her particularly worthy of his hatred, if this attempt proceeded out of lust; he had also thought of preventing her intrigues, by putting her to death, if such were her endeavors.

However, he refused to comply with her proposals, and called a counsel of his friends to consult with them whether he should not kill her, now he had her in his power; for that he should thereby deliver all those from a multitude of evils to whom she was already become irksome, and was expected to be still so for the time to come; and that this very thing would be much for the advantage of Antony himself, since she would certainly not be faithful to him, in case any such season or necessity should come upon him as that he should stand in need of her fidelity.

But when he thought to follow this advice, his friends would not let him; and told him that, in the first place, it was not right to attempt so great a thing, and run himself thereby into the utmost danger; and they laid hard at him, and begged of him to undertake nothing rashly, for that Antony would never bear it, no, not though any one should evidently lay before his eyes that it was for his own advantage; and that the appearance of depriving him of her conversation, by this violent and treacherous method, would probably set his affections more on a flame than before.

Nor did it appear that he could offer any thing of tolerable weight in his defense, this attempt being against such a woman as was of the highest dignity of any of her sex at that time in the world; and as to any advantage to be expected from such an undertaking, if any such could be supposed in this case, it would

appear to deserve condemnation, on account of the insolence he must take upon him in doing it: which considerations made it very plain that in so doing he would find his government filled with mischief, both great and lasting, both to himself and his posterity, whereas it was still in his power to reject that wickedness she would persuade him to, and to come off honorably at the same time.

So by thus affrighting Herod, and representing to him the hazard he must, in all probability, run by this undertaking, they restrained him from it. So he treated Cleopatra kindly, and made her presents, and conducted her on her way to Egypt.

3. But Antony subdued Armenia, and sent Artabazes, the son of Tigranes, in bonds, with his children and procurators, to Egypt, and made a present of them, and of all the royal ornaments which he had taken out of that kingdom, to Cleopatra. And Artaxias, the eldest of his sons, who had escaped at that time, took the kingdom of Armenia; who yet was ejected by Archclaus and Nero Caesar, when they restored Tigranes, his younger brother, to that kingdom; but this happened a good while afterward.

4. But then, as to the tributes which Herod was to pay Cleopatra for that country which Antony had given her, he acted fairly with her, as deeming it not safe for him to afford any cause for Cleopatra to hate him. As for the king of Arabia, whose tribute Herod had undertaken to pay her, for some time indeed he paid him as much as came to two hundred talents; but he afterwards became very niggardly and slow in his payments, and could hardly be brought to pay some parts of it, and was not willing to pay even them without some deductions.

CHAPTER 5.

HOW HEROD MADE WAR WITH THE KING OF ARABIA, AND AFTER THEY HAD FOUGHT MANY BATTLES, AT LENGTH CONQUERED HIM, AND WAS CHOSEN BY THE ARABS TO BE GOVERNOR OF THAT NATION; AS ALSO CONCERNING A GREAT EARTHQUAKE.

1. HEREUPON Herod held himself ready to go against the king of Arabia, because of his ingratitude to him, and because, after all, he would do nothing that was just to him, although Herod made the Roman war an occasion of delaying his own; for the battle at Actium was now expected, which fell into the hundred eighty and seventh olympiad, where Caesar and Antony were to fight for the supreme power of the world; but Herod having enjoyed a country that was very fruitful, and that now for a long time, and having received great taxes, and raised great armies therewith, got together a body of men, and carefully furnished them with all necessaries, and designed them as auxiliaries for Antony. But Antony said he had no want of his assistance; but he commanded him to punish the king of Arabia; for he had heard both from him, and f

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