

The Death of John the Baptist Mark 6:14-29

by R.A. Torrey

The sermon explores the tragic consequences of sin through the story of John the Baptist's death, highlighting the conflict between righteousness and wickedness.

Scripture: Mark 6:14

Topics: "Faithfulness in Adversity", "The Consequences of Sin"

Description

R.A. Torrey explores the tragic story of John the Baptist's death, emphasizing the moral decay of Herod and Herodias. He highlights Herod's internal conflict and fear of John, juxtaposed with Herodias's relentless hatred and manipulation that ultimately led to John's execution. The sermon reflects on the consequences of sin, the cost of compromising one's integrity, and the stark contrast between the fate of a faithful servant of God and that of a wicked ruler. Torrey challenges the audience to consider the true cost of their choices and the importance of standing firm in righteousness, even in the face of persecution.

Transcript

(Compare Matthew 14:1-12; Luke 9:7-9)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. The Abject Terror of a Conscience-Smitten King, vv. 14-18 How far did the rumor of the mighty works of the Son of God penetrate? How did His name and power become so widely known? (Matt. 9:31; Mark 1:45.) What was Herod's explanation of these mighty works? Was it he who first suggested that our Lord was John risen from the dead? (Luke 9:7.) What made him ready to catch up this idea? How did he feel about it? Was his anxiety on this score of very long duration? (Luke 23:8.)

Were the impressions which were made upon his mind usually of very long duration? What was the explanation others gave of our Lord and His mighty works? What was a third explanation? (Matt 21:11; Luke 7:16; John 6:14; 7:40; 9:17.) Was this last explanation true? Was it the whole truth? Why did none of them reach the whole truth on the matter? Did Herod accept any of these other explanations? Why not? Was it a peaceful day for him when he reached this conclusion? At whose instigation had he laid hold upon John in the first place?

How had John brought down the wrath of this woman upon his own head? What were the characteristics of John's preaching as we read it in v. 18? Ought he to have spoken so plainly to a great man? What

would have been the result if he had not? (Ez. 3:18.) Did his denunciation of Herod's sin bring the latter to repentance? Was it not in vain then? (Ez. 3:19.) Would it be right in our day to denounce the sins of great men in this plain, straight-forward, fearless way? What was the result of this plain preaching?

If our practices do not harmonize with the teachings of some faithful servant of God, what are the two ways of trying to do away with the discrepancy? Which is the favorite way with the world? Did Herod succeed in covering his sin by silencing the preacher? What may a faithful preacher always expect? (2 Chron. 24:20, 21; 36:16; Neh. 9:26; Matt. 21:35, 41; 22:6, 7; John 15:20.) 2. The Implacable Hatred of a Wicked Queen, vv. 19-25 How far did the hatred of Herodias against John go?

Could she carry out her murderous desires? Was she any less a murderess on that account? What is it God looks at? When is a person a murderer in His sight? (1 John 3:15.) What kept back Herodias from her evil designs? Why did Herod fear John? What feeling will men who are righteous and holy always awaken in the hearts of those who would do them harm? (Mark 11:18; 1 Kings 21:20.) Was it merely fear of John that kept Herod from yielding to the suggestions of Herodias? (Matt. 14:5.)

Was there much virtue or stability of purpose in his protection of John? What was the effect of John's preaching upon him (v. 20, R.V.)? Why was he "much perplexed"? What would have been the simplest way out of his perplexity? Was he willing to listen to John? Are there ever persons nowadays who seem to listen with pleasure to the preaching of the truth and let that take the place of obeying the truth? Did his glad hearing of the word do him any good? Why not? What were the steps that led up to the final tragedy and Herod's appalling crime?

Was he the last man who has lost his head and plunged into crime because of a beautiful dancer? Had Herod's wife much regard for her daughter to send her in to dance on such an occasion? What was all she was thinking about? Had the daughter much self-respect to go in and dance? What was all she was thinking about? What was the effect of the girl's dance upon Herod and his friends? Was God "pleased"? What offer did Herod make the maiden? In what physical and mental condition was he when he made this promise?

What request did the girl make? Who instigated her to make that request? (Compare 2 Chron. 22:3.) Had all this been a pre-arranged plot on the part of Herodias (v. 24)? Did the daughter of Herodias yield herself readily to the hellish conspiracy? Why did she come in such haste? 3. The Strange Reward of a Faithful Preacher, vv. 26-29 How did the king feel when he saw the trap into which he had fallen? How had he fallen into the trap? Did it do any good to be sorry? Was it "godly sorrow"? (2 Cor. 7:10.)

How could he have got out of the trap? Why didn't he do that? Was he right or wrong in keeping his oath? (Ex. 20:13.) Was it merely regard for his oath that led him to accede to the maiden's request? What would it have cost him to have refused the request? What did it cost him to grant the request? Was he as conscientious in the strict fulfillment of all his vows as he was in the fulfillment of this? Didn't the result prove that John had made a mistake in his bold preaching? (Matt. 5:11, 12; 2 Tim. 2:12.)

What did the disciples of John do? Did they lay him in the tomb? (Phil. 1:23, 24; 2 Cor. 5:8.) What further does Matthew tell as to what they did? (Matt. 14:12.) What is the best thing we can do with all our bereavements, discouragements and perplexities? (Matt. 11:28.) Which was the happier that night, Herodias the living and seemingly triumphant sinner, or John the dead and seemingly conquered servant of God? Which is better--to die true or live false? CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. John the Baptist

(1). what he was:

Righteous, holy, 20; courageous, 18; awe-inspiring, 20.

(2). What he did:

Rebuked sin, plainly, fearlessly, without respect of persons, 18.

(3). What he got:

Imprisonment, 17; death, 27, 28.

2. Herod

(1). His early promise:

Feared John, heard him gladly, opposed to plots of Herodias, 19, 20.

(2). His final failure:

Loved his sin more than the truth he gladly heard, 20, 17; remained an adulterer, 18-28; became a murderer, 27.

(3). His wretchedness:

Was much perplexed, 20; brought upon himself exceeding sorrow, 26; was tormented by an accusing conscience, 14, 16; goaded by his own paramour, 19, 24; entrapped by his own rashness, 22, 23; haunted by his own conscience, 14, 16.

(4). His manifold fears:

Feared John, 20; the people, Matt. 14:5; his wife, 19, 28; his friends, 26; the ghosts of his own imagination, 14, 16.

(5). His steps toward hell:

Took his brother's wife, 17; rejected the faithful warning, 18; imprisoned the faithful preacher, 17; made a drunken feast, 21; watched a lascivious dancer, 22; obeyed the promptings of his excited imagination and made a rash vow, 22, 23; kept his foolish and wicked oath, 26; murdered a holy man, 27. Sin grows.

3. Herodias

(1). Her shameless adultery, 17; cruel vengefulness, turbulent rage at rebuke, 19; cunning plotting, 22-24; pitiless murder, 19, 24.

(2). The road she travelled to her own place:

Entered an adulterous alliance, 17; rejected a faithful warning, hated the faithful messenger, 19; plotted his death, 22-24; sacrificed her daughter's modesty upon the altar of her own hellish hate, 22; murdered God's faithful ambassador, 27; gloated over the head of the victim of her lust and hate and cruelty, 28. Sin

grows.

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