



MATTHEW 13:53-14:12
MESSIAH ON A MISSION (PART 27)

“In What Way Was Jesus A Scandal?”

Misunderstood As Only A Carpenter's Son ***(13:55–57)***

By custom and practice, because he was the eldest son Jesus picked up his father's trade. The rabbis of Jesus' day encouraged every father to teach his son a skilled trade. Most teachers of the Torah themselves had secondary jobs to support their income. From the first century AD we know that Hillel the Elder, who headed the Sanhedrin and fostered a school of interpretive thought that was highly influential in shaping Jewish religious thinking, also engaged in manual labor. (Archeological Study Bible)

***“And they were
offended in him.
But Jesus said unto
them, A prophet is
not without honour,
save in his own
country, and in his
own house” (13:57)***

Matthew draws upon
the motif of
"stumbling" (*skandalizō*)
most commonly rendered
as "take offense"
indicating a negative
response of Jesus'
hometown to His ministry.



“And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief” (13:58)

(13:58) Because of their lack of faith- Jesus' own city is one of two character groups (the other one is Jewish Leaders that are portrayed in Matthew as being "without faith" (*apistia*) in Jesus. The disciples are characterized as having "little faith" (14:31).

The Misunderstanding Around Jesus' Identity

The story of Herod and the backstory of John the Baptist's death places the emphasis on Jesus' identity in 11:2-16:20.

(11:2-5) John the Baptist wonders if Jesus is the Messiah.

(12:1-44) the Pharisees attribute Jesus' healing power to the devil, implying that his identity is different from who he claims to be.

(14:1-2) Herod wrongly assumes Jesus to be John risen from the dead.

(14:33; 16:13-20) The Disciples correctly recognize Jesus' messianic identity.

Miracles Are Hindered Not Only By Lack Of Faith But Also Misunderstanding

The text uses miracles to describe Jesus' messianic deeds (11:2-5).

Jesus' miracles performed across Galilee were not responded to with repentance (11:20-24).

Now the Christological miracles are being questioned by those in Jesus' hometown (13:54), resulting in fewer miracles being performed there (13:58).

Miracles are a response to a need that is supposed to lead one to repentance and revelation of who Jesus is and not to stop in appreciation for what He did.



Herod: (Herod Antipas) son of Herod the Great ruled over Galilee and Perea from 4 BC to AD 39.

While a guest in the home of Herodias and Philip I, Herod Antipas persuaded Herodias to leave her husband (his half-brother) for him. When Herod Antipas married Herodias, John the Baptist publicly condemned him for marrying his half-brother's wife. Such a marriage would have been considered an incestuous affront to God's law (Lev 18:16; 20:21). John was a threat to Herod politically, so Herod had him arrested to counter his influence with the people. Josephus stated that John was imprisoned at Machaerus, a fortress in Perea on the eastern side of the Dead Sea.

Picture of: Machaerus, a fortress in Perea on the eastern side of the Dead Sea.

Footnote:

Herod

Antipas's territory fell into two parts: Galilee and Peraea (see chap. 6 and map 7), separated by a few miles of the Decapolis but almost contiguous. Peraea—the rougher area—was associated with John the Baptist while Galilee — the richer area—was associated with Jesus. Not surprisingly, Antipas figures more prominently in the Gospels than other Herodian princes. He appears first in Luke 3:1 ("Herod being the Tetrarch of Galilee") at the beginning of John the Baptist's ministry "in the wilderness"; which wilderness is not specified but Peraea is likeliest. In Luke's account, Herod shuts John up in prison because John reprovved him "for Herodias, his brother's wife" (Luke 3:19-20) Josephus also mentions this incident at some length (*Ant.* 18.109—19), interpreting John's execution as the cause of Antipas's defeat at the hands of Aretas IV.

Josephus and the Gospels are concerned with John's death, but they weight the issues differently. Antipas had married the daughter of Aretas IV, the Nabatean king whose reign was so important in the cultural development of the region. The two may have been distantly related, since Antipas's grandmother was a Nabatean princess, perhaps of the royal family. His marriage to Aretas's daughter must have had political motivations (see chap. 2), for Nabatea shared a lengthy border with Peraea. After a long marriage Antipas fell in love with Herodias, the wife of one half-brother (*Ant.* 18.109) and the daughter of another, and promised to marry her, ousting Aretas's daughter. She learned of the pact, however, and without telling Antipas fled to Machaerus, the fortress on the border between Peraea and Nabatea, from which she slipped quietly over the border to Petra. Deeply offended, Aretas defeated Antipas resoundingly (36 CE). Hostilities between dependent kings were anathema to Rome; when Antipas informed Tiberius, the Emperor instructed Vitellius, governor of Syria, to bring Aretas or his head to Rome.

Footnote (cont.):

Josephus mentions John the Baptist in his description of the destruction of Antipas's army, explaining that "some of the Jews" thought it was divine vengeance for Antipas's execution of John. According to Josephus, Antipas worried over the size of John's crowds; he feared a revolt and decided to strike first, taking John to Machaerus where he was put to death.

This account in Josephus both supports and contradicts the New Testament version of John's death. Mark states that John was imprisoned for his criticism of Antipas's marriage to Herodias because the marriage contravened Torah. Antipas was afraid to kill John, and was tricked into it by Herodias—who had a grudge against John—using her daughter as the bait. In both accounts, the arrest and execution of John followed Antipas's marital difficulties: in the New Testament this provides the full explanation of John's death; in *Ant.* the reason is social and political, fear of a popular uprising triggered by the eloquence (and possibly the social and religious content) of John's preaching. The identity of Herodias's first husband is unclear. In Mark and some manuscripts of Matthew her first husband was "Philip" (not in Luke and some manuscripts of Matthew); in Josephus her first husband was "Herod," Antipas's half-brother. At this point in the late 20s Herod's family was closely bound up with Christian origins, for John's ministry was the essential introduction to the story of Jesus and John's death was the precondition for focusing solely on Jesus. Antipas thus shapes the connection between John and Jesus in the Gospels.

(Herod King Of The Jews And Friend Of The Romans, 306-308)