



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

The Foolish Leader Who Fought Against God

MAY 11-13, 2016

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Acts 12:20-24 *“Now Herod had been very angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon; but they came to him with one accord, and having made Blastus the king’s personal aide their friend, they asked for peace, because their country was supplied food by the king’s country. 21) So on a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat on his throne and gave an oration to them. 22) And the people kept shouting, ‘The voice of a god and not of a man!’ 23) Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God. And he was eaten by worms and died. 24) But the Word of God grew and multiplied.” (NKJV)*

**“GOD RESISTS THE PROUD,
BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”
I PETER 5:5**

Why is Herod so angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon? Does the word “one accord” always point to intercession in the book of Acts? Who was Blastus and what was his job description? How encompassing was the peace that was being sought with Herod? Has Herod extended the power of his kingdom even over two free cities outside his realm? Did Herod carefully plan this meeting to gain maximum press? Why did the people exalt him as a god? What happened in contrast to Herod’s demise?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- MAY 18-20: ACTS 12:25-13:5 **THE FIRST MISSION TEAM LAUNCHED IN PRAYER**
- MAY 25-27: ACTS 13:6-12 **SAUL’S NAME CHANGE- THE FIRST KING TO BELIEVE**

Herod Agrippa had legally murdered the Apostle James and had carefully planned Peter’s arrest, incarceration, trial and execution for the greatest possible awareness

and pleasure of the Jews. The Passover arrest guaranteed the maximum number of Jews to witness the execution of this preeminent Apostle. The seven day imprisonment provided maximum anticipation for this event. Maximum security in the deepest dungeon of the prison with three patrolled checkpoints and a rotation of sixteen guards to ensure Peter’s captivity were used, with two guards constantly chained to each arm of the Apostle. Adding to the depth of Herod’s treachery, there was an iron chain, modeled after the one with which he had been chained to guards, the same weight in iron as a heavy gold chain given to him by the Emperor Caius, that Herod had hung for all to see in the treasury of the Temple where Jesus had taught, “that it might be a memorial of the severe fate he had lain under, and a testimony of his change for the better; that it might be a demonstration how the greatest prosperity may have a fall, and that God sometimes raises what is fallen down” (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 19.6.1). Thus, Herod had languished in the same situation with the changing of elite guards chained to him, and his release was celebrated in the Temple treasury. His multiplied embarrassment with Peter’s climatic escape made him cease pleasing the Jews and he had moved to Caesarea, his Roman Capitol.

**“A MAN’S PRIDE WILL BRING HIM LOW,
BUT THE HUMBLE IN SPIRIT WILL RETAIN HONOR.”
PROVERBS 29:23**

I. ARROGANCE OF SEVERE ANGER ACTS 12:20

Josephus mentions that the king of Syria had upset Herod after other kings had visited and honored him, so it is possible that Herod is upset with these cities in the Syrian region as a result. Or as several commentaries point out, these two cities of Tyre and Sidon are coastal cities that would have naturally been in trading competition with Caesarea so close by. In either case, Herod’s anger results in a power ploy to punish the entire

BIBLE STUDIES

**WEDNESDAY @ 7:30AM –BIBLE STUDY – FREDERICKSBURG – BOB EVANS ON RT. 3 & 12:00 NOON – OAKTON – BOB EVANS – 10443 WHITE GRANITE DR.
THURSDAY @ 7:00AM –BIBLE STUDY – CHESTER – SHONEY’S AT RT. 10 (IRON BRIDGE ROAD) & 301(12531 JEFFERSON DAVIS HIGHWAY)
FRIDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – NORFOLK – GOLDEN CORRAL, 6103 N. MILITARY HWY, NEAR THE NORFOLK AIRPORT**

Virginia

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cities. Because he knew that they got their food from Galilee, under his jurisdiction, he simply enforced an embargo on the food going to Tyre and Sidon and thereby exercised his authority through their hunger. Whatever the issue was that caused Herod's severe anger, such could be overcome by befriending Herod's top security officer, who guarded him while sleeping, and seeking peace. It seems that his power possessed him so much that his anger flared at the slightest provocation.

*"BY PRIDE COMES NOTHING BUT STRIFE,
BUT WITH THE WELL ADVISED IS WISDOM."
PROVERBS 13:10*

II. ARROGANCE OF PRETENTIOUS APPLAUSE 12:21-22

Herod had again planned for maximum press as he addressed the citizens of Tyre and Sidon. According to Josephus, the year was AD 44 and the date had been set on the second day of a festival where he honored Caesar, probably beginning on his birthday, August 5. That day "he put on a garment made wholly of silver, and of a contexture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre early in the morning; at which time the silver of his garment being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out in a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently on him: and presently his flatters cried out, one from one place, and another from another, (though not for his good,) that he was a god" (19.8.2). Luke emphasized that Herod was "arrayed in royal apparel," by placing it at the front of the sentence. Herod had chosen to heighten his aura and he was elevated to deity!

*"PRIDE GOES BEFORE DESTRUCTION,
AND A HAUGHTY SPIRIT BEFORE A FALL."
PROVERBS 16:18*

III. ARROGANCE ABRUPTLY ENDED ACTS 12:23

Instead of responding as Paul and Barnabas when they were called gods (Acts 14:14-18), Herod welcomed the proud title and had invited it with his brilliant clothing. He had been willing to "fight against God" (Acts 5:38-39) in the murder of the Apostle James and the attempted murder of Peter, in which sixteen of his best soldiers, who had guarded Peter, lost their lives. "Then immediately an angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God." Josephus said "the king did neither rebuke them, nor reject their impious flattery" (19.18.2). Thus, "he was eaten by worms and died." All those who rebel against God suffer such an eternal end—this word for "worm" is used by Christ when He speaks of hell three times "Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:44, 46, 48).

*"AS A CIVIL RULER HE OWED HIS POSITION TO GOD AND
WAS ACCOUNTABLE TO HIM; HIS ABUSE OF POWER, BOTH
IN CONDEMNING INNOCENT MEN AND IN GRATIFICATION OF
HIS PERSONAL VANITY, WAS TREASON TO THE SUPREME
RULER ."
CHARLES ERDMAN*

IV. ARROGANCE OVERCOME BY TRUTH ACTS 12:24

Luke seems to be using shorthand for the Governor when he writes, "But the word of God grew and multiplied." Precisely the same two words of increase are used when the Apostles gave themselves to "prayer and the ministry of the Word"—"Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem" (Acts 6:7). The attack by Herod had an opposite affect than intended!

*"THE AUTHOR WILL THEN SHIFT HIS FOCUS TO ANTIOCH
AND THE WESTWARD MARCH OF THE GOSPEL TOWARD
ROME."
HOMER KENT*

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Does your pride lead you to be contentious or pretentious?
- 2) Have you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, or are you still walking in your pride?
- 3) Are you a leader who is characterized by prayer and the Word of God so that you are multiplying the truth in others?