

Notes on those Herods of Biblical Interest

- (1) **Herod Antipater**, made procurator of Judea in 47 BC, murdered in 43 BC, had 5 children, including Herod the Great. [This Antipater is not to be confused with a later Herod Antipater who never ruled and was the son of Herod the Great by a wife named Doris].
- (2) **Herod "the Great"** (King of Judea, Galilee, Iturea and Tracoonitis from 37-4 BC), favored by Mark Antony, had 10 wives and at least 15 children, murdered many of them (his sons became competitors for his throne), this is the guy who encountered the Magi and murdered the Holy Innocents, very bad news (like all of his progeny or at least those he hadn't already murdered). He murdered his wife [Miramne, the only of his wives he truly loved, at the urging of his sister Salome], her brother, his aunt, his father, three of his sons, and various other relations. He built Caesarea Maritima [22 BC] on the coast and rebuilt the Temple (19 - 9 BC) to endear himself to his subjects. He was Edomite [OT], Idumean [NT] not a Jew, though he sort of followed Judaism at least in form). Massive taxes were required to support his building projects and his largesse around the Empire [Mt 2:1-9, Lk 1:5], and he was hated by the masses. Herod was a tool of Roman imperial policy and affixed the Roman eagle to the facade of the Temple. He slew 45 members of the Sanhedrin who had supported the Hasmoneans and reduced it to having merely religious power. He had absolute power over Palestine's internal affairs. According to Augustus "...it is better to be Herod's pig than his son...". It is reported that Herod, from his deathbed, ordered 3,000 Jewish leaders killed so that there would be mourning in the land.
- (3) **Herod Antipas**, sometimes "**Antipas**", son of Herod the Great by a wife named Malthace, "tetrarch" of Galilee [including Nazareth] and Perea 4 BC - 39 AD, he beheaded John the Baptist [Matt 14:1-12] at the behest of his wife Herodias (whose first husband was Antipas' half-brother Herod Philip) and Salome, her daughter by Herod Philip I. This is the Herod of the Crucifixion to whom Jesus was sent by Pilate, later reconciled with Pilate (the Roman procurator in Caesarea who reported to the Roman governor in Syria). The Romans banished him in 39 and turned Galilee over to Agrippa I. Died at Caesarea in 44 [Mt 14:1-12, Lk 3:1, Lk 23:7-12, Mk 6:14-29].
- (4) **Herod Archelaus**, son of Herod the Great by a wife named Malthace, after a contest in Rome of Herod the Great's will he was made "ethnarch" over Idumea, Judea, and Samaria [4 BC-6 AD], with a promise to made "king" if he proved himself able. He wasn't, many rebellions especially by the Zealots, having inherited his father's vices but not his skills, and he was stripped of power and banished to Rome, upon the machinations of his brothers and the recommendations of a Jewish delegation. When Mary and Joseph left Egypt and avoided Judea and settled in Nazareth, this is the Herod they were avoiding [Mt 2:19-23].
- (5) **Herod Philip**, son of Herod the Great by a wife named Cleopatra, "tetrarch" of Iturea and Tracoonitis 4 BC-34 AD, was the most capable of Herod's sons, inherited his father's northern territories and had a long and peaceful rule, built Caesaria-Philippi, this is not the same fellow as the Herod Philip who never ruled and who was the first husband of Herodias. [Lk 3:1, Mt 14:3, Mk 6:17]].
- (6) **Herodias**, niece and wife of Antipas [her first and second husbands were her uncles, Herod Philip I and Herod Antipas, who were half-brothers]. Her daughter Salome danced for the head of John the Baptist. This woman really fit the Herod mold.; played Jezebel to Antipas' Ahab [Mt 14:3, Mk 6:14-29, Mt 14:1-12].
- (7) **Herod Agrippa I**, sometimes "**Herod the King**" (king of Judea 37/41-44 AD), nephew of Antipas, grandson of Herod the Great; the guy who led the persecution in Judea in 44 AD (Acts 11-12) in which Paul was caught up. He was raised in Rome, a pal of Caligula and Caligula's reluctant successor Claudius, but an adversary of Tiberius. He slew James the brother of John (son of Zebedee) with the sword [Acts 12:1-24], and imprisoned Peter [Acts 12:3-9] and was eaten up by worms [Acts 12:20-23] at age 54 in the year 44 AD. Many Jews in Judea and the Diaspora looked upon his reign as a golden age, but he was severe toward Christians. Upon his death Jews mourned and pagans rejoiced.
- (8) **Herod Agrippa II**, usually called "**Agrippa**", son of Agrippa I and great-grandson of Herod the Great (born in 27 AD, was 17 and in Rome at the time of his father's death in 44); long running and scandalous affair with his sister Bernice; he was small-time under Claudius but made into a bigshot by Nero in 54-55 BC). This is the guy before whom Paul was tried [Acts 25:13-26:32] with Bernice and the then procurator Festus. After the war in 66-70 AD (which was during his tenure), he and Bernice went to live in Rome (where she continued as Titus' mistress for a while, and where he died in about 100 AD).
- (9) **Bernice**, see Agrippa II above, she became Titus' mistress while he was in Palestine and in 75 was called to Rome; the Romans hated her as much as had the Judeans
- (10) **Drusilla**, the youngest daughter of Agrippa I, born about 38 AD. She was beautiful but her older sister Bernice was not, and Bernice persecuted her. She left her Jewish husband to marry Felix, the Roman procurator. A real floozy. She was with Felix when Paul was tried, and when Paul spoke of righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come, Felix justifiably "trembled". [Acts 24:24-25].