

When J appeared before Pontius Pilate to be tried by him, the accusers brot especially three major accusations against him. In the first place they claimed that J was an insurrectionist. It was said that he had, thru his teaching and preaching, raised hatred and enmity against the Roman gov't, and for that reason it was dangerous to the welfare of the gov't for him to be free. Another false accusation which they brot against X was this, that he had preached against the payment of honest taxes to the gov't. But that was just the opposite of what X had said. He had expressly taught that constitutional taxes must be paid. The third accusation which the enemies of X continually brot was that he had claimed to be a king, and, if the gov't would not take action against him, he would gain so many followers that he would finally be strong enuf to become a dangerous contender for the throne. Pilate listened to all these accusations, and after he had examined J and had questioned him about these accusations, he too was convinced that they were false, animosity being the cause for them. So after the careful examination, Pilate goes out upon the raised elevation before the people and exclaims, "I find no fault in this man". He is innocent, at least, there is not sufficient cause to warrant his death. Now what should have been the result of this declaration of innocence? X should have been set free. But the enemies fo the Sav had in this time not been idle. People from ~~all~~ the entire city had gathered round the palace by this time, and the Jewish leaders had aroused them and filled them with such hatred against X that this great mob was literally lusting after blood. But the chief priest and the entire mob of accusers insisted that X was guilty in spite of the fact that Pilate had found him innocent, and thus prevented Pilate from taking that step which justice rightly demanded of him.

What should Pilate do? Justice demanded that there was no cause for the death of the Sav, but the mob was furiously howling for his death. Something must be done in order to keep the good will of the Jews and to at least give a public show of justice. So Pilate came upon the idea of sending X to herod the tetrarch, who was at this time also in the city of Jerusalem, celebrating the feast of the Passover. J was a Galilean and should therefore properly be judged by the king of Galilee, Herod. It is of this trial of J before Herod that we would learn this evening.

J IS BROT BEFORE HEROD.

1. The character of Herod.
2. The trial
3. The outcome of the meeting.

In order to gain a fairer understanding of the character of Herod mentioned in our T, we should also take a brief glance at his family. Herod the Great, who is the father of Herod of our T, is perhaps one of the first evil characters which we learned to know in the sacred history of X. You will remember that he was ruler ^{at that time} at the time of the birth of the Sav. When the wise men came to him to inquire of him ~~what~~ ^{what} he wanted of them, he commanded them to find the X child and return to him telling him where he could find the Sav. When, by direction of G in a dream, the wise men returned to their country by another route, Herod the Great ordered all ^{the} children below a certain age to be killed ^{with the intention of robbing the Jews of the X child for fear that he would allude to his throne.}

Now this man Herod the Great was an able, but a vicious and blood thirsty ruler. He had been married ten times, having murdered one of his wives and banished most of the rest. He had nine sons, three of whom he also murdered. And so his entire life was stained with blood of his wicked deeds. For all of this the L duly punished him, for his death was of a nature which would strike horror in the hearts of every one. ^{It reminds us: He not desiring, if it were possible.} Knowing this of the father of the man Herod who is mentioned in our T, we may imagine something of the disposition of the children who were brot up under such circumstances. Surely such evil environment had a very evil effect upon the children. When Herod the great died, his kingdom was divided among three of his sons, the section of Galilee and Peraea being given to Herod Antipas, or Herod the tetrarch as he is also called. This is the man of whom our T tells us.

In spite of the evil influences of his wicked parent upon Herod in his youth, we find that he is susceptible to religious influence. Mark tells us that ~~when the Jews and Pharisees~~ ^{when John the Baptist} ~~came to him~~ ^{came to him} for his ministry, Herod was greatly impressed by his

doctrine and practise. He often sent for John and eagerly heard him. There is however, one thing which seems to mark the turning point in the life of Herod. He had sent away his own wife and seduced his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, to become his wife. Of course, John, who was an unflinching man of G, had to rebuke Herod for this grievous sin ~~that~~ his unholy alliance. This rebuke roused the hatred of Herodias against John, and she, having the controlling influence in Herod's life, since she had a much more positive character than his, finally managed to have John beheaded.

Herod was a Pharisee and therefore did not believe in the resurrection. However, when he heard of J and his marvelous works, he said, "This is John whom I have beheaded." He has come to life again. Another proof that he was at least somewhat impressed by religion, - he was ~~next~~ ^{here} at this time attending the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. Of course, it may be true, as a noted authority gives it, that Herod was here more for the purpose of entertainment and diversion than for the purpose of devotion.

This is a lesson which stood out prominently throughout most of our character studies so far during this Lenten season, to avoid dead formalism. We too should learn from these examples that this lifeless proximity or nearness to X and his word avail absolutely nothing. Yes, they rather add to the greatness of one's guilt. We saw it in Judas who lived with the Sav in closest outward relationship for three years. We saw it in Caiaphas, who performed the duties of his office for personal gain. We saw it in Pilate who tried to wash the blood stains from his hands with a little water. O let us then all be warned against this dreadful sin of mere formalism, for that can never take the place of living, eternal realities. And, my fr, there is nothing which will contribute more toward bringing about this spiritually dead condition than to continue against better knowledge, in secret sins. They blind us to the beauty of the sp things and entirely blunt our moral senses.

II.

v. 8. J is sent from Pilate to Herod. And Herod, we are told, received J with gladness. He had ~~not~~ heard much about X and his power to perform miracles and his ability to preach, but had never had the opportunity to see J. Now, without any effort on his part, he has opportunity to meet X. Perhaps he will perform some miracle for Herod or do something else which might add to the amusement which Herod was seeking here at Jerusalem. Remember, that it was not as the Son of G or as a great religious teacher that Herod wanted to see X, it was plain curiosity. He was seeking novelties, and if he could be entertained, even at the expense of the Sav of mankind, or if religion could contribute something to his program of diversion, he would use it. This was seemingly all the interest he had in J. This is evident from our T for we read there, v. 8.

My fr, Herod is here the example of many people of our day. There are many who have the opportunity to hear the W of G, yes may even have heard it and its gracious promises for some time, as Herod had heard them from John the Baptist, but what happens? As soon as the minister ~~of~~ mentions some sin of which they are guilty, as soon as he shows from the W of G that this or that practise is contrary to the will of G, is therefore sin, they at once turn away from X, frequently become angry and leave the church. And tho their conscience may for a time accuse them of their wrongs and unchristian actions, yet they force it to finally keep quiet. As soon as the warnings of ~~the~~ inner voice, the conscience remain unheeded, as soon as its wants are not satisfied, it begins to become more and more insensible. Tho the conscience of man cannot be entirely deadened, yet it can gradually be lulled to sleep, so that it will finally not give heed to and sound a warning against a wrongdoing. Thus it was with Herod. At first the news of J filled him with alarm, but soon this fear was overcome, and he is now merely interested in satisfying his worldly desires.

There is another lesson here for us. Herod does not show a single sign of interest in the work of the Sav, as the author of salv. And why? His sinful desires, his worldliness had entirely ruled his heart. That is the inevitable result of living a life such as Herod was living. A life of sin and unbelief, closes our soul to the appeals of the W of G; righteousness loses all its beauties . . .

T.9-12. The hopes of Herod to see J were finally fulfilled. Here was J before him in person. He now addresses X in the friendliest manner and asks him all sorts of questions regarding himself and his work. But Herod is highly disappointed. J answers him nothing on all his inquiries. We note also that Herod seems to forget entirely why Pilate had sent J to him. He should try him and see whether he is guilty of death. Now when the accusers of X saw now Herod was avoiding the issue, they again begin to accuse X vehemently. The same accusation were brot again now which they had brot at the trial before Pilate. But Herod too found no cause to put J to death. But in order to keep the good will of the Jews, and also for his personal amusement, the wicked Herod and his soldiers treated him with every sign of contempt possible. They mocked and ridiculed him, they put an old shining garment on him, probably a cast-off royal garment, and thus sent him back to Pilate. His action indicated that he considered J a helpless, irresponsible fool, a mock king, some one to be laughed at, not one who needed to be feared by any one or punished. And when they had had their sport with the Sav, they send him back to Pilate.

As a result of the happenings of this day, the two rulers Pilate and Herod who formerly had been enemies, became friends.

Why did J remain silent when he was questioned by King Herod? He knew that Herod was trying to heap more scorn and ridicule upon him. He knew that he was not sincere about his trial, and therefore deemed it best not to give him an answer. He lived up to his own precepts, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs, and cast not your pearls before the swine." However, this silence of the Sav should also have been a warning to Herod. At all other times, even before the wicked Pilate J makes a confession of himself and his work, but before Herod he remains silent thruout, thus showing that he was beyond reclaim. He had hardened his heart to such extent, that even the Sav of mankind feels it useless to speak words of admonition to him.

We should then this evening take this lesson home with us. We should not only have an outward interest in X and in his Will, religious questions should not be merely of secondary interest to us, nor should we at all times, as some people like to do-wander about from one church to another, always looking for something new and something which will temporarily amuse us. This does not bring true salvation. No, xtian friends, salv is found only in the blood of the Lamb of G, in the merits of Him, whom Herod refused to receive as his Sav and King. Receive him, make him and his promises your very own, and you will have the crown of life forevermore.

AMEN.