

# Matthew 14 - The Herods; John the Baptist Murdered; Jesus Feeds 5,000; Jesus Walks on Water; Jesus Heals Many

III. King's interim kingdom program (Matt 13:1—20:28)

(2) Why the interim program was necessary (Matt 13:53—14:12)

(B) Beheading of John the Baptist (14:1-12)

(3) Christ trains the disciples (Matt 14:13—20:28)

(A) Feeding of the 5000 (14:13-21)

(B) Calming of the storm (14:22-33)

(C) Healings at Gennesaret (14:34-36)

## Matthew 14

(B) Beheading of John the Baptist (14:1-12) (Cf. Mark 6:14-16; Luke 9:7-9)

**1 At that time Herod the tetrarch** heard the news about Jesus,

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- "At that time" - a loose connective, not intended to necessarily communicate chronological sequence

- "...Herod the tetrarch" - Herod Antipas; he lived primarily at Tiberias on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee. This event, which likely occurred in one day, took place at his residence at the Machaerus fortress in southern Perea, east of the Jordan River.

— Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee and Perea from 4 BC—39 AD, during all of Jesus' earthly life (Cf. 2:19-20)

2 and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he himself has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

2 and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

2 told his servants, "This is John the Baptist! He has been raised from the dead, and that's why these miracles are being done by him."

2 And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

- Herod has previously beheaded John the Baptist for calling out his immorality (v3-12)
- Herod had jurisdiction because John ministered in Perea (John 1:28)

### **John the Baptist Murdered (Cf. Mark 6:17-29)**

**3** For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother **Philip**.

**3** For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip.

3 Herod had arrested John, bound him with chains, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

3 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

- v3-12 recall an event in the past...

- "...Philip" - Herod Antipas had two brothers named Philip; the one referred to here was Herod Philip I

— He was Herod's half-brother, thus Antipas' marriage to Philip's wife Herodias was incestuous (Herodias was Antipas' niece)

4 For John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

4 For John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

4 John had been telling him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

4 For John **said unto him**, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

- Mark 6:16-29 and Luke 3:19-20 ascribe moral and religious motives for Herod's executing of John the Baptist. Josephus wrote that Herod executed him for political reasons [Ant. 18:5:2]. It was likely both.

- "...said unto him" - implied repeated statements; John had rebuked Antipas numerous times about his incestuous relationship

### **John the Baptist's Ministry**

John had heralded the coming of the King and had faithfully preached God's truth. Christ must increase, and he must decrease (John 3:30). Any Christian who is faithful to the Word of God, as John was, will suffer persecution: The world is not the friend of the Christian. The world rejected the King and will also reject His messengers.

5 Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet.

5 Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet.

5 Although Herod wanted to kill him, he was afraid of the crowd, since they regarded John as a prophet.

5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

6 But when Herod's birthday came, the **daughter of Herodias** danced before *them* and pleased Herod,

6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before *them* and pleased Herod,

6 But when Herod's birthday celebration was held, the daughter of Herodias danced before the guests. She pleased Herod

6 But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

- "...daughter of Herodias" - Salome, Herodias' daughter from her previous marriage to Philip I

— Salome was age 12-14

— The idea that her dance was sensual doesn't come from the text, but is inferred due to the Herodian's reputation for low morals, and the low status of dancing girls.

7 so *much* that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked.

7 so *much* that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked.

7 so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked for.

7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

- Herod was a petty monarch, but he acted as if he was a powerful king

8 And after being prompted by her mother, she *said*, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter."

8 Having been prompted by her mother, she *said*, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist."

8 Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me, right here on a platter, the head of John the Baptist."

8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

### **A Rare Luxury**

A princess, Herod's own niece, a granddaughter of Herod the Great and of Mariamne, a descendant, therefore, of Simon the high priest and the great line of Maccabean princes, a princess who afterwards became the wife of a tetrarch Philip, tetrarch of Trachonitis and

the mother of a king, honoring them by degrading herself into a scenic dancer. [Farrar, Life of Christ]

9 And although he was grieved, the king commanded *it* to be given because of his oaths and his dinner guests.

9 Although he was grieved, the king commanded *it* to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests.

9 Under pressure because of his promises and his assembled guests, the king ordered that it be done."

9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

- His oath was wrong, and he knew it; but he went forward with it so as to not "lose face" with his dinner guests

— It was the Romans who practiced decapitation; this was not a Jewish form of execution

10 He sent *word* and had John beheaded in the prison.

10 He sent and had John beheaded in the prison.

10 So he sent word and had John beheaded in prison.

10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

- As the last of the OT prophets, John suffered a martyr's death, as did many of his predecessors

11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought *it* to her mother.

11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

11 His head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she took it to her mother.

11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother.

12 John's disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.

12 His disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.

12 When John's disciples came, they carried off the body and buried it. Then they went and told Jesus.

12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

## Withdrawal to Bethsaida

After strong rejection from the common people and the nation's political leaders, Jesus withdrew to train His disciples further. In view of the events of the near future, the disciples needed stronger faith in Him. Jesus cultivated their faith with two miracles.

(3) Christ trains the disciples (Matt 14:13—20:28)

(A) Feeding of the 5000 (14:13-21) (Cf. Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:11-17; John 6:1-13)

**13** Now when Jesus heard *about John*, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard *about this*, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

**13** Now when Jesus heard *about John*, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard *of this*, they followed Him on foot from the cities.

**13** When Jesus heard this, he left that place and went by boat to a deserted place by himself. The crowds heard of it and followed him on foot from the neighboring towns.

**13** When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

14 When He came ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt **compassion** for them and healed their sick.

14 When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick.

14 When he got out of the boat, he saw a large crowd. He had compassion for them and healed their sick.

14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

- Jesus could not escape the crowds that followed Him wherever He went

— The place where Jesus retreated was evidently near Bethsaida Julias on Galilee's northeast shore (Luke 9:10)

— Jesus traveled there from Capernaum by boat, but the crowds beat Him there on foot

- "...compassion" - Matthew again notes Jesus' compassion (Cf. 9:36)

**15** Now when it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is secluded and the hour is already past *to eat*; send the crowds away, so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

**15** When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

15 When evening had come, the disciples went to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and it's already late. Send the crowds away so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves."

15 And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go; you give them *something to eat!*"

16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; you give them *something to eat!*"

16 But Jesus told them, "They don't need to go away. You give them *something to eat.*"

**16** But Jesus said unto them, *They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*

- Jesus' directions turn the disciples' attention to their own resources. By leading them to consider these, Jesus was leading them to recognize their personal inadequacy, and to appeal to Him as the only adequate resource (Cf. John 2:1-11)

17 They \*said to Him, "We have nothing here except five loaves and two fish."

17 They \*said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish."

17 They told him, "We don't have anything here except five loaves of bread and two fish."

**17** And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

18 And He said, "*Bring them here to Me.*"

18 And He said, "*Bring them here to Me.*"

18 He said, "*Bring them to me.*"

**18** He said, *Bring them hither to me.*

19 And ordering the crowds to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looked up toward heaven. He blessed *the food* and breaking the loaves, He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples *gave them* to the crowds.

19 Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed *the food*, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples *gave them* to the crowds,

19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and blessed them. Then he broke the loaves in pieces and gave them to his disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

20 And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces: twelve full baskets.

20 and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets.

20 All of them ate and were filled. Then the disciples picked up what was left of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.

20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

- Jesus' provision was so abundant that there were 12 large wicker baskets full of leftovers, even after many thousands had eaten all they wanted

21 There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.

21 There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.

21 Now those who had eaten were about 5,000 men, besides women and children.

21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

- Based on the count of 5,000 men, there were likely 10,000-20,000 people present

— Counting only men has OT precedent (Ex 12:37)

This miracle was important to three groups—the disciples, the believing remnant, and the unbelievers. Jesus' miracles at this point were mainly for the benefit of instruction for the disciples. However, they also serve to confirm the faith of the believing remnant and the unbelieving masses. Jesus was illustrating the type of ministry the disciples would have after His departure. They would be involved with feeding people, but with spiritual food rather than physical food. The source of this "food" would be the Lord Himself. When their supply ran out, they would need to return to Him for more. He would then supply them, but the feeding would be done through them.

The Jews had a traditional belief that when the Messiah came, he would feed the people with bread from heaven, just as Moses had done (Deut 18:15). Elisha had also miraculously fed 100 men (2 Kings 4:42-44). This miracle proved Jesus' ability to provide for Israel as King. It may have also reminded the spiritual-minded in the crowd of the messianic banquet predicted in the OT that Messiah would provide (Ps 132:15; Cf. Matt 6:11).

### **Jesus Walks on Water (Cf. Mark 6:45-51; John 6:15-21)**

This story is one of the remarkable bits of New Covenant symbolism found in Scripture.

After feeding the 5,000, immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowd. After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. When evening came He was there

alone but the boat was already a considerable distance from land (~3-3-1/2 miles, half the distance across the lake (John 6:19), buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. During the 4th watch of the night (3am-6am) Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake they were terrified. "It's a ghost they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them, "Take courage. It is I. Don't be afraid" (Matt 14:22-27).

Assume the boat and disciples represent Israel, the Sea the unbelieving world (Is 57:20-21) and Peter the Church. As the disciples had made very little progress rowing across the sea against the wind, Israel had made very little progress in their mandate to tell the world about God (Is 43:10-13). And as Peter was called out of the boat to walk on the water, the Church was called out of Israel to dwell in the world and spread the Gospel (Matt 28:19-20). As long as Peter stayed focused on the Lord he was able to remain above the waves, empowered by his faith to perform a miracle and sustained by his closeness to the Lord. When he was distracted by the winds he began to sink and his life was in peril.

As long as we stay focused on the Lord, we're able to remain above the ways of this world, empowered by our faith to perform miraculous works and sustained by our closeness to Him. When we're distracted by the winds of controversy and deceit, we begin sinking into the world's unbelieving ways and our spiritual life is in peril.

When Peter and the Lord got safely back into the boat, the wind died down and calm returned. When Israel and the Church are finally re-united in Christ, peace will reign in the world. In both cases the Lord's gentle rebuke to Peter is appropriate. To both Israel and the Church He says, "O you of little faith. Why did you doubt?"

#### (B) Calming of the storm (14:22-33)

**22 Immediately** afterward He **compelled** the disciples to get into the boat and to go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.

**22** Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away.

**22** Jesus immediately had the disciples get into a boat and cross to the other side ahead of him, while he sent the crowds away.

**22** And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

- "Immediately...compelled" - *eutheos enagkazen*, there appear to be several reasons for their rapid departure:

— This miracle seemed to refuel enthusiasm of some in the crowd to draft Jesus and force Him to lead the nation (Cf. John 6:15). Perhaps Jesus wanted to spare His disciples from this attractive temptation.

— Jesus wanted to get away to pray (v23)



- He wanted to prepare to get some rest (Mark 6:31-32)
- He had an important lesson to teach them out on the lake

23 After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was **evening**, He was there alone.

23 After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone.

23 After dismissing the crowds, he went up on a hillside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone.

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

- "...evening" - to the Jews, this covers a period from late afternoon to shortly after sunset

24 But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary.

24 But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary.

24 By this time the boat was in the middle of the sea and was being battered by the waves, because the wind was against them.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

- Did Jesus know that there was a storm coming? Jesus *made* the disciples go on the boat

— One can infer that these experienced fishermen were reluctant to go to sea because they could see a storm coming

There are two kinds of storms: storms of correction, when God disciplines us; and storms of perfection, when God helps us to grow. Jonah was in a storm because he disobeyed God and had to be corrected. The disciples were in a storm because they obeyed Christ and had to be perfected. [Wiersbe]

25 And in the **fourthwatch** of the night He came to them, walking on the sea.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea.

25 Shortly before dawn, Jesus came to them, walking on the sea.

**25** And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

- "...fourth watch" - 3-6am (by Roman reckoning, which Matthew referred)

26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.

26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear.

26 When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified and cried out, "It's a ghost!" And they screamed in terror.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying,

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid."

27 "Have courage!" Jesus immediately told them. "It's me. Stop being afraid!"

**27** But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, **Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.**

- Before the Fall, God had ordained that man rule over the sea (Gen 1:28). Here, Jesus was doing just that, fulfilling God's promise for humankind.

— This action gave testimony to His being the Second Adam (Cf. 8:27; Rom 5:12-17), the Man who succeeded where Adam failed.

— The OT speaks of God walking on or through the sea (Job 9:8; Ps 77:19; Is 43:16; Cf. Ps 18:16; 144:7)

**28** Peter responded and said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

**28** Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water."

**28** Peter answered him, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water."

**28** And Peter answered him and said, Lord, **if** it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

- "...if" - since (first class condition in Greek)

29 And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water, and came toward Jesus.

29 And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

29 Jesus said, "Come on!" So Peter got down out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came to Jesus.

**29** And he said, **Come.** And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

- This is the first of three occasions that Matthew recorded Peter receiving special treatment (Cf. 16:13-23; 17:24-27)

- Peter, in his obedience of Jesus, was able to fulfill man's destiny by subduing the sea (see note on v27)

30 But **seeing the wind**, he became frightened, and when he began to sink, he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

30 But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!"

30 But when he noticed the strong wind, he was frightened. As he began to sink, he shouted, "Lord, save me!"

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

- "...seeing the wind" - Peter took his eyes (and mind) off Jesus and onto his circumstances and the "storm" around him (this is a synecdoche)

— Peter's distressing circumstances distracted his attention and weakened his faith in Jesus

— This is a lesson for you and me: We get the impression that while Peter looked at the Lord he was doing fine

— Believing something and *having faith* are two different things. I can believe that the Lord will sustain me, I don't have faith until I actually step off.

— Faith has to do with believing coupled with *relying upon*, trusting

— We get the impression that Peter looked around at his circumstances, then he starts to sink

31 Immediately Jesus reached out with His hand and took hold of him, and \*said to him, **"You of little faith, why did you doubt?"**

31 Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and \*said to him, **"You of little faith, why did you doubt?"**

31 At once Jesus reached out his hand, caught him, and asked him, **"You who have so little faith, why did you doubt?"**

**31** And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, **O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?**

- Jesus rebuked Peter for his "little faith," even though it was stronger than that of the other disciples who remained in the boat

— Jesus used this rebuke to help Peter and the other disciples see that consistent confidence in Himself was absolutely necessary

32 When they got into the boat, the wind stopped.

32 When they got into the boat, the wind stopped.

32 As they got into the boat, the wind stopped blowing.

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

33 And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are truly **God's Son!**"

33 And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!"

33 Then the men in the boat began to worship Jesus, saying, "You certainly are the Son of God!"

**33** Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

- "...God's Son" - this is the first time the disciples addressed Jesus with His full title; it was a new level for the disciples in their understanding of who Jesus was

— This confession is in answer to their own question in 8:27

#### (C) Healings at Gennesaret (14:34-36) (Cf. Mark 6:53-56)

This short three verse section summarizes Jesus' public ministry at this stage of His ministry. It shows that even though Jesus was withdrawing from unbelievers (13:54–14:12) and giving special attention to the training of the disciples (14:13-33), He still had time and compassion to minister to people who were in need.

**34** When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

**34** When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret.

**34** They crossed over and came ashore at Gennesaret.

**34** And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent *word* into all that surrounding region and brought to Him all who were sick;

35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent *word* into all that surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick;

35 When the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word throughout that region and brought him everyone who was sick.

35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

36 and they pleaded with Him that they might just touch the **border of His cloak**; and all who touched *it* were cured.

36 and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched *it* were cured.

36 They kept begging him to let them touch just the tassel of his garment, and everyone who touched it was completely healed.

36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

- Notice their belief. This was Gentile country.
- "...border of His cloak" - similar to the healing of the woman with the issue of blood (9:20-22). See [Hems](#) for more information.

This short section shows that Jesus' ministry continued to have broad appeal (Cf. 4:23-25; 8:16; 9:35-36). It also shows that He continued to minister to the multitudes, even though He concentrated His ministry on the disciples. He also showed no concern about becoming ritually unclean through His contacts with the common people. Instead of becoming unclean Himself, He made people clean.