

June 21, 2009

TWO KINGS, TWO FEASTS
MATTHEW 14.1-21

Herod and Jesus are two kings whose feasts are at odds with one another.

1. HEROD AND HIS FEAST OF DEATH (1-12)

Herod and what he heard (1-5): Herod the tetrarch = Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great; reigned in Galilee and Perea from 4 BC to AD 39.

Different Herod, same Herod personality; he is associated with death. In this passage there are two “Herods,” one a female.

They are the antithesis to the king and queen, man and wife, God intended from the beginning.

Believe Jesus is John risen from the dead. Possibly believes that this is a resurrection (cp. Ac 25–26). If this was a resurrection then Herod would be in line for judgment.

Parallels between John and Jesus are real. John as last of OC prophets sums them up. Jesus sums up the OC in himself. John foreshadows Jesus.

John is a prophet (14.5). So is Jesus (13.57). John is seized and bound (14.3), two words used of Jesus later on before he is put to death (26.4; 27.2). Herod hesitates to kill John (14.5). Pilate hesitates to kill Jesus (27.1-26).

What happens to John here is a foreshadowing of what will happen to Jesus. John’s total life—ministry, living, and dying—anticipated and proclaimed the One Coming.

John is in prison b/c he told Herod that his marriage to his brother’s wife was unlawful/sinful.

John was doing his duty as a prophet. Prophets in Scripture were counselors for the king. Kings were to submit to prophets. Cf. e.g., David and Nathan

Herod is consumed by his lust for power and women. His heart is controlled and led astray by women. Reflects the first son-king of David, Solomon, who, the Bible says, had his heart led astray by his love for many foreign women (1Kg 11.1-3).

“The crowds” or “the multitudes” - a character in Matthew’s gospel. Herod is controlled by fear of them for self-preservation. Contrast to Jesus who is not controlled by fear of them but by *compassion* for them.

Herod’s feeding on people (6-12): Birthday - a day to celebrate life.

Herodias’s daughter (niece and step-daughter of Herod Antipas) dances. Seems obvious that she provokes lust in Herod.

Herod promises by an oath to give whatever she wants. She consults with her mother and asks for John’s head on a platter.

(1) Herodias is set up in antithesis to all the godly women in the Bible who are head-crushers of the serpentine enemies of God. Just after the fall, God set enmity between the serpent and the woman and between her seed and his seed (Gen 3.15).

In union with her husband the woman participates in the head-crushing. Cf. e.g. Jael (Jd 4.17-22) and “a certain woman” of Thebez (Jdg 9.50-55). Note also Christ and his bride (cf. Rom 16.20).

Herod and Herodias are the antithesis of this. It is not the serpent whose head is being crushed. It is the righteous one.

(2) Head is on a platter in the context of a feast. John is the last course of the feast.

Cannibal king that devours the flock. Cf. Micah 3.1-3.

2. JESUS AND HIS FEAST OF LIFE (13-21)

Jesus and what he heard (13-14): Jesus hearing the report sets up the comparison/contrast.

Jesus takes a boat to a deserted/wilderness place. Note that Jesus doesn't stir up forces for violent revolution.

The boat - Again associates Jesus and his ministry with the sea and, by common imagery, the Gentiles. Like he was at the beginning of his life, Jesus is driven into exile from the land to go among the Gentiles.

Parallels with Egypt and Saul. David must go into the wilderness b/c of a wicked king on the throne.

Jesus going to be alone might also have something to do with mourning as well as fleeing from possible death himself.

The crowds follow and Jesus is moved with compassion when he sees them and their needs. He acts to meet their needs.

Cp. 9.35ff.; 15.32 - the embodiment of YHWH *feels* for people.

Healing the sick - the effective sign and announcement that *the* resurrection from the dead was occurring.

Herod's kingdom is one of death. Jesus' kingdom is one of life.

Jesus feeding the people (15-21): Disciples care about the needs of the people but only know one way to meet them.

But Jesus is in the wilderness with the people. This is an opportunity to feed the people in the wilderness with bread from heaven and reveal to them the nature of the true Exodus.

Jesus takes the opportunity to reveal the nature of the kingdom *and* the disciples place in it. Jesus commands them to feed the people.

(1) Jesus is revealing their inability to bring life to the world in their own power.

Jesus has chosen these disciples as primary representatives of this kingdom. Their responsibility will be to carry out the mission of this kingdom when he is gone. They are to be guardians and providers of the feast. They need to learn how to do it.

Loaves and fish - possibly Jews (12 loaves on the Table of Facebread) and Gentiles (sea creatures).

v. 19 - only loaves are emphasized as being distributed. Possibly the grafting into Israel in Christ. The two become one new man.

(2) Jesus reveals that they will be able to complete the mission of the kingdom when they are dependent upon him.

Seats them on the grass. Cf. Ps 23. Jesus is the true Shepherd-King.

Scene parallel to the institution of the Lord's Supper. Cp. Mt 26.26

This is something of an explanation of what goes on in the Supper.

The nature of our mission as the people of God: Jesus gives to us in order that we might, in turn, give to others.

In the end, everyone ate and was satisfied. The disciples giving away the food did not inhibit them from being satisfied themselves. In fact, as they gave it away there was enough for the crowds and them with 12 baskets left over.

12 baskets for the 12 tribes of Israel. Israel is invited to the feast.

5,000 men - possibly a reference to Jesus' army that he is bringing of Egypt or that is being gathered to him in the wilderness (like David).

1. *In union with Christ we exist as his church for the life of the world.*

2. *Jesus takes our most feeble offerings, presents them to the Father in intercession, and then uses them through us to complete the mission he has given us.*