

Jesus had given ample evidence of His power, casting out unclean spirits. He had healed many serious illnesses including leprosy, serious physical disabilities, restored eyesight, hearing and speech, driven out indwelling unclean spirits and calmed an exceedingly violent storm. Doing so He fulfilled prophecies written 700 years before.

Isaiah 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:

After all this Jesus crowns it all by actually bringing a little girl back to life. She was a 12 year old who had become sick but she died while her anxious father was fetching Jesus to come heal her.

With this history He returns to the home of His childhood. He had grown up in Nazareth becoming a sober young man as regards God's things, Luke 2:40 - 52, and a tradesman working with His hands known as the carpenter's son. But they had seen nothing extraordinary about His character, appearance or behavior that would lead them to think 'This must be the Son of God.' On the contrary, when he entered the local synagogue and began to teach they were offended at Him. They name his mother and brothers and mention his sisters. He pointedly observes that a prophet is not often recognized or accepted by those he grew up among. This sadly was true, not only in Nazareth, but nationally among the Jewish establishment. He refrained from calling down judgement,

John 3:17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

but meekly continued to go about teaching. He does few miracles there because of their utter unbelief.

"How beauteous were the marks divine that in thy meekness used to shine..."

But he did not retreat into seclusion. He moved boldly to greatly expand His ministry. He sent His twelve disciples (including Judas) forth to preach giving them power over evil spirits. He sent them forth without provisions for surely the people would receive, feed, clothe and shelter them who brought such GOOD NEWS. On the other hand, this was serious business for the cities that did not receive them would be subject to destructive judgement worse than Sodom and Gomorrah had suffered two thousand years before. (Here Jesus incidentally confirms the existence of those cities and the reality of the sudden awful destruction they experienced.) What did they preach? Repentance! Not works but humbling and confession, moved by a changed attitude toward their conduct and their God.. The disciples, now evangelists, "cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." But they authoritatively shook off the dust of their feet against those communities that refused their message. We read of Paul and Barnabas doing the same at Antioch in Pisidia, Acts 13:51. This may not sound like a very "Christian attitude." But it was

a faithful warning of the consequences of ignoring God's pleadings for their souls.

Then came a dreadful foreshadowing of the fate of Jesus, the Messiah (Christ). He was calling His people in His Land. He came unto His own (things, [nation, land]) and His own (people) received Him not, John 1:11. Herod, the Roman backed king, dares to behead the declared forerunner of Christ. Why? He had seemed to be genuinely curious about John (the Baptist) and his message and teaching. Curiosity is different than seeking. He must have been getting too interested for Satan engineered a plot to destroy John. Of course God allowed this for it was time for His faithful servant, John, to come home for his work was done. As a martyr John exposed again the enmity against the Messiah whom he had been born to announce. Just as an earlier Herod had killed the infants in Bethlehem trying to dispose of Jesus his descendants here conspired to destroy John, Jesus' herald. For both Herodius and this current Herod were descendants of that earlier Herod. Obviously men didn't believe and accept John's message for they could not correctly name who this Jesus was. They named prophets and even declared that He was John the Baptist resurrected. Foolish superstitious men When Jesus asked His disciples "who say ye that I am?" Peter answered for them all, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the Living God," Matthew 16:16. But sinners sin to cover their sins. They lie or murder to do so. Adam was the first to lie to cover sin. Cain was the first murderer. Herodius was an evil woman who hated and sought revenge upon a faithful prophet of God because he dared to question her sinful conduct. What a gruesome sight. What a poor excuse for a king this Herod was. What a poor excuse for a man he was. He makes a thoughtless vow in response to his lustful enjoyment of a lewd dance. Then he is not man enough to confess his foolish error and rescind his vow in the name of righteousness. Righteousness he was enthroned by God to enforce, Romans 13:1-5. Would he have been admired by his court? Or were they too corrupt and politically ambitious to cut him any slack and forgive him his vow? We don't know but God knows. Herod is guilty of the innocent blood of the greatest prophet of God, Luke 7:28. He later took on a much greater guilt, for though he found no fault in Jesus he allowed him to be crucified anyway, Luke 23:8,11,12,15. Some men will do anything to retain any power they have acquired. Herod could have forsaken his throne in favor of the Man of Galilee, receiving eternal profit of his soul. He had an opportunity. He blew it.

John's disciple came and took His body and buried it. How poignant. But John's body will be raised with all the other Old Testament saints when Jesus comes for us, Hebrews 11: 39-40.

References for Mark 6, Dig Deeper, January 17, 2007

Luke 2:39 And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. 40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. 41 ¶ Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. 42 And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. 43 And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and his mother knew not of it. 44 But they, supposing him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. 45 And when they found him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking him. 46 And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. 47 And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. 48 And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. 49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? 50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. 51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.

Luke 7:28 For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.

Luke 23:8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had

27. How beauteous were the marks divine

L.M.

How beauteous were the marks divine
That in Thy meekness used to shine
That lit Thy lonely pathway, trod
In wondrous love, O Son of God!

O who like Thee, so calm, so bright,
Thou Son of Man, Thou Light of light
O who like Thee did ever go
So patient through a world of woe!

O who like Thee so humbly bore
The scorn, the scoffs of men, before!
So meek, so lowly, yet so high
So glorious in humility!

heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

11 And Herod with his men of war set him at nought, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together: for before they were at enmity between themselves.

15 No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him.

Romans 13:1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. 2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: 4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. 6 For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

Hebrews 11:39 And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: 40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Death-death that sets the prisoner free
Was pang, and scoff, and scorn to Thee!
Yet love through all Thy anguish glowed,
And mercy in Thy life-blood flowed!

O wondrous Lord, my soul would be
Still more and more conformed to Thee,
With heart engaged, along the road,
To trace Thy footsteps, Son of God!

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