

## *The Herodian Dynasty*

As you read about the Herodians and the events surrounding them, the gap between imperial Rome and Judea will be filled. In the last lesson, there were references to the Herodians, which you will learn about in more detail here. As you learn about localized Roman authority in Judea, your vision of biblical history will be narrowed down to the life of Christ. Since the time you began the lessons of Volume One, your learning has swept over thousands of years. Our Lord's time on earth is a sliver in human time, and his ministry was restricted to the land of Israel. But Paul refers to our Lord's coming as the fullness of time (Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 1:10). As you continue to read these lessons, your awareness of this is critical. The great events of ancient Greece and Rome did not coincidentally align with biblical events. All of what had taken place prior to the coming of Christ had occurred so that all things would be in the right order for our Lord's first advent.

### **Maccabees, Romans and Parthians**

In the second lesson, you read about the invasion of Pompey, which marked the acquisition of Judea by Rome. However, a presence of the Hasmonean House temporarily continued. Towards the end of the Hasmonean Dynasty, power for the priesthood was vied for between Aristobolus II and Hyrcanus II. However, the Idumean (Edomite) governor Antipater held the real power in the land as one who curried the favor of the Romans. Additionally, the Maccabean ruler had been restricted to the priesthood after the invasion of the Romans. With Antipater's presence, his sons Joseph, Phasael, and Herod stood next in line. However, Aristobolus's son Antigonus was made high priest when the Parthians invaded in 40 BC. The Parthian Empire stretched from the north of Syria almost to India, but stopped short of the Caspian Sea. Roman presence was permanently realized when Herod recaptured the land with the empire. No more did the House of Hasmon have a descendant in Judean power.

### **Herod the Great (37 BC- 4 BC)**

Matthew 2:1 refers to Herod as a king. But, do not let that confuse you. While he singularly held the power over the land of Israel during his reign, he only represented the authority of Rome in the land. He was the Herod that ordered the killing of the male children in Bethlehem (Mt. 2). An Idumean, Herod's cantankerous behavior and wild energies were fitting as a descendant of Esau. Although it would be difficult to argue that he practiced Judaism, one author describes him in the following. "Herod the Great was a man of overpowering personality who contrived to be 'everything to all men' and was prepared to use every means to gain his own ends. By religion, he was a Jew, by race, an Idumaeon, by cultural sympathies a Greek, and by political allegiance, a Roman."<sup>1</sup> While Herod is noted for his many architectural achievements throughout the



<sup>1</sup> *The Jews from Alexander to Herod*, DS Russel (Oxford, 1967), 89-90.

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Mediterranean world, his home life was a constant wreck. He was the husband of nine wives and had several of his immediate family killed out of jealousy and paranoia. (Open the following document on this CD: The Family of Herod the Great). He had built many structures throughout Israel, which included theatres, and other edifices of Hellenism. This brought the consternation of the Jews, whose respect he partially earned back in the rebuilding of the temple. As you are aware, if the Jewish people were upset to the point of revolt, Herod would have had a big mess to take care of. Although at times he acted out of sheer madness, he was a shrewd diplomat in his handling of his relationship with the Jews and Rome as well. He was a close friend to Mark Antony. After Antony died, Herod quickly impressed Caesar Augustus, and maintained a good relationship with Rome. He built fortress-palaces throughout the land, which included the Herodium, Masada, and others. After he killed Mariamne, he grew increasingly unpleasant. Towards the end of his life, he was very sick, but continued to manipulatively order executions. Upon his death, authority was divided between three of his sons.



**Herodium**



**The Palace in Jerusalem**

### Herod's Temple

Herod began the rebuilding of the Jewish temple in the eighteenth year of his reign (AD 19). At first, the Jews were concerned about deconstructing the old temple. However, the quality of Herod's project was so impressive, that it became famous throughout the Mediterranean world. The foundation was redone, and expanded, so that large porticoes and columns surrounded the temple. The construction took a year and a half for trained Levites to complete. However, smaller details continued until AD 63, which was seven years before it was burned down by Titus. The Antonia Fortress was located outside the northwest corner. It was named after Mark Antony. Herod paid for this out of his own expenses, and though it pleased the Jews, it did not cause them to forget the many pagan temples Herod built. The Urban Simulation team at UCLA has created a video simulation of Herod's temple. You may view it <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgcVmo1aUQ>. Below are photos of a model of Herod's temple at the Holy Land Hotel in Jerusalem. This period of Israel's history is known as second temple Judaism.





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### The Sons of Herod

Make sure you have the family tree of Herod the Great handy as you examine the map to the right. After Herod died, Mary and Joseph returned to Israel (Matthew 2:20). As you can see, Bethlehem is in the Judean territory, which is where Jesus was born. Because **Archelaus** was on the throne, Joseph was afraid to go there, and they went to Nazareth instead. The parents of Jesus were not the only ones disturbed by Archelaus. Enough Jews and Samaritans had complained directly to Caesar about him, so that he was ousted in AD 6, only two years after his father's death. While his brothers continued to govern, Judea was handled by a variety of procurators.

**Philip** governed Iturea, and is generally known to have been a good ruler. He is mentioned in Luke 3:1.

The regions of Galilee and Perea were ruled by **Antipas** (Herod the tetrarch). He married Herodias, who already was married to his brother Herod Philip (not Philip the tetrarch of Iturea). This behavior was identical to his father's. John the Baptist had confronted his violation of the levirate law (Leviticus 20:21), and was eventually executed at the bidding of his wife, Herodias (Mark 6:14-29). Approximately seven years later, Aretas, the king of Petra invaded Perea and attacked Antipas' army in AD 36. Aritas was the father of Antipas' first wife. Antipas rejected her for Herodias. He specifically attacked out of revenge. Josephus mentioned that some Jews saw this as God's judgment on Antipas. Whether or not that is true, we may observe that he would not have killed John the Baptist if he had not married Herodias. Like David in his sin, Herod Antipas' murder was rooted in lust. Herod Antipas also appears in the New Testament when he heard about Jesus amid rumors (Luke 9:7-9), and when he was called a fox by Jesus (Luke 13:22). Antipas did see Jesus prior to his crucifixion (Luke 23:7-22). Caesar Caligula came to power in AD 37. Philip's former territory was given to the Antipas' half-brother's son, Agrippa (Agrippa I), who was also a friend with Caligula. Out of a conflict between the two, Antipas and Herodias were banished to Gaul (France) only three years after the attack of Aretas, in AD 39.



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### Herod Agrippa I

Carrying on the family tradition, Herod Agrippa was just as much of a menace as his predecessors in his youth. After Anitpas was exiled, he gained the Galilean and Perean regions (AD 39), and gained Judea in AD 41. This was the Herod that prevented Caligula's statue from appearing in the Jewish temple. However, this is not a sign of his fear of God. Even though he had turned from the flagrancy of his youth to the discipline of Judaism, he was responsible for the death of James and the arrest of Peter (Acts 12:1-5). While we may be certain about divine judgment on Antipas, Luke tells us that Herod Agrippa I was "struck down and eaten by worms" for accepting worship of himself (Acts 12:20-25).

### Herod Agrippa II

In AD 44, Agrippa II did not inherit the entire land of Israel which his father had. Roman procurators ruled Judea, while he was over Galilee and Perea. This is the Agrippa that Paul appeared to in Acts 25-26. Bernice is the sister of Agrippa II. Around AD 100, Agrippa II died. The Herodian dynasty, the Flavian dynasty, the New Testament, and the Apostolic era all came to an end within a few years of each other.

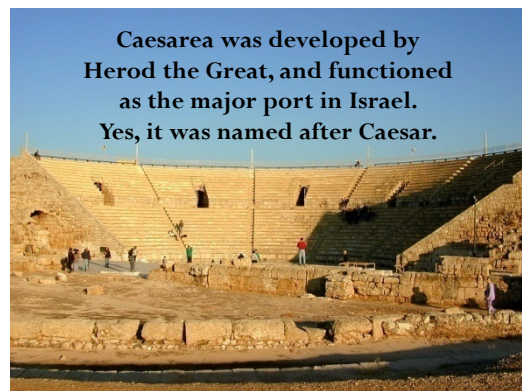
It may help you to use an index card to organize the different figures of the Herodian dynasty who appear in the Bible. You can write the name of each figure, and the events or passages about them underneath. You can also make notes on Herod the Great's family tree.

### Roman Procurators

Procurators were governors appointed directly by Rome. In Israel, they functioned independently from the Herods. To state it simply, they filled in necessary gaps left by the Herodian rulers. There were numerous procurators during this period. The most well known are Pontius Pilate, Antonius Felix, and Porcius Festus. You will encounter the latter two in the book of Acts. Felix married Drusilla who was Agrippa II's sister. During this time, the procurators and Jews generally did not get along well. The frequent irresponsible and oppressive nature of their governing fostered the revolt in AD 66, which was the trigger for the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70.



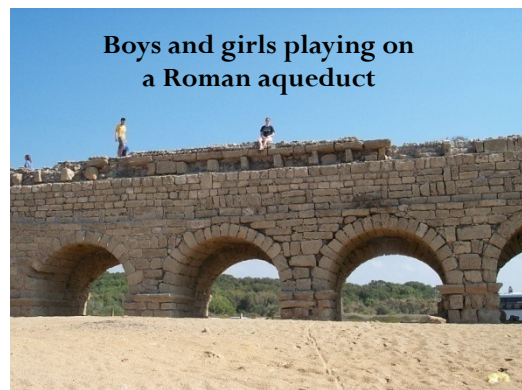
Palace ruins



Caesarea was developed by Herod the Great, and functioned as the major port in Israel. Yes, it was named after Caesar.



Pilate inscription (replica)



Boys and girls playing on a Roman aqueduct



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**Reading Assignment:** Mark 1-8; John 1-8

Greek	Pronunciation	English	Part of Speech
kurio~	<i>kur-ee-oss</i>	<b>Lord</b>	<i>noun</i>
poiēw	<i>poi-a-oo</i>	<b>I do, make</b>	<i>verb</i>
kai	<i>kai</i>	<b>and, even, also</b>	<i>conjunction</i>
agio~	<i>ha-gee-oss*</i>	<b>holy</b>	<i>noun</i>
akouō	<i>aa-ko-oo</i>	<b>I hear</b>	<i>verb</i>

\*The rough breathing mark over vowels (α|ο) creates an “h” sound in front of the vowel. Therefore, “hagios” as in hagiography.