

## Matthew Chapter 14

The murder of John the Baptist is also in (Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9).

### **Matthew 14:1 "At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,"**

“Herod Antipas,” identified as Herod the tetrarch in the Gospels, was the son of Herod the Great and brother of Archelaus (2:22). Of the Herods, Antipas figures most prominently in the Gospels since he ruled over the regions where both John the Baptist and Jesus conducted most of their ministries, Perea and Galilee.

“Herod was the ruler of Galilee. “Tetrarch”: One of 4 rulers of a divided region. After the death of Herod the Great, Palestine had been divided among his sons. Elsewhere, Matthew refers to Herod as “king” (verse 9), because that was the title by which he was known among the Galileans.

Antipas is remembered primarily for his imprisonment and execution of John the Baptist. Antipas had married his brother Philip’s wife, Herodias. Though Antipas respected and feared John, nevertheless he had John beheaded as the result of a plot by Herodias.

The Gospels mention three occasions involving Jesus and Antipas.

1. The first relates Antipas’s fear when he learned of Jesus’ ministry. He feared that John whom he had beheaded was resurrected (14:2).
2. The second (Luke 13:31-33) relates the fear of others that Antipas would kill Jesus as He passed through Perea on His final trip to Jerusalem.
3. On the third occasion Antipas finally meets Jesus, when He was sent from Pilate to be examined (Luke 23:6-12).

After a long reign of 43 years (4 B.C. – 39 A.D.), Antipas was deposed by Rome and exiled.

### **Matthew 14:2 "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."**

The fame of Jesus had spread throughout the land. This Herod had beheaded John, and was feeling guilty. He was fearful of John when John was living, and now, he had worked himself up to believe that this Jesus was John raised from the grave.

Verses 3-8: John had been arrested because he challenged the legitimacy of Herod’s divorce and incestuous remarriage. “Herodias” was the daughter of Aristobulus, a half-brother of Antipas. She had been married to her uncle, Herod “Philip,” and had borne him a daughter, Salome. However, she divorced her husband and married Antipas, who was already married.

Herodias was a guilty and vindictive woman who wanted John dead, and she devised a plan to get rid of him. At the king's birthday party, her daughter performed a provocatively enticing dance which so appealed to the drunken Herod that he "promised with an oath" she could have whatever she wanted. She asked for "John the Baptist's head in a charger" (a table platter).

**Matthew 14:3 "For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put [him] in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife."**

"Herodias ... his brother Philip's wife": Herodias was the daughter of Aristobulus, another son of Herod the Great; so when she married Philip, she was marrying her own father's brother.

What precipitated the arrest of John the Baptist was that Herod Antipas (another of Herodias' uncles), talked Herodias into leaving her husband (his brother), in order to marry him (Mark 6:17), thus compounding the incest, as well as violating (Lev. 18:16).

John was outraged that a ruler in Israel would commit such a sin openly, so he rebuked Herod severely (verse 4). For this, he was imprisoned and later killed (Mark 6:14-29).

**Matthew 14:4 "For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her."**

Herod had married his brother's wife; John had confronted him and told them that they were living in sin. Herod put him in jail to keep him quiet.

**Matthew 14:5 "And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet."**

Herod and Herodias would have liked to be rid of John, but they were afraid of the followers of John, because there were so many of them.

**Matthew 14:6 "But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod."**

"The daughter of Herodias": Salome, daughter of Herodias and Philip. According to Josephus, the Jewish historian, she married yet another son (her own father's brother and her mother's uncle), of Herod the Great, thus further tangling the web of incest in that family.

**Matthew 14:7 "Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask."**

"He promised with an oath". This a foolish and wicked oath to please a wanton girl, the monarch called the eternal God to witness his willingness to give her half his kingdom (Mark 6:23). It seems also, that he was willing to shed the holiest blood it contained. An oath like this it was not lawful to make, and it should have been broken (see Matthew 14:9).

“To give her whatsoever she would ask”: And then repeating it, he confirmed it with an oath; adding, as Mark says, that he would give it her, even "to the half of his kingdom": a way of speaking used by princes, when they give full power to persons to ask what they will of them.

**Matthew 14:8 "And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger."**

“And she being before instructed of her mother”: What request to make; for as Mark says, "she went forth" to her mother immediately, as soon as she had received the king's promise, and took advice of her, what she should ask; who bid her ask for the head of John the Baptist.

And accordingly, she went in "straightway with haste unto the king", as the same evangelist observes, to take him at his word, and whilst he was in the mood; being urged and hastened on by her mother, who was eager to satisfy her revenge on John

**Matthew 14:9 "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]."**

“For the Oath’s sake”: A promise made with a certain oath was considered sacred and inviolable, especially when made by a ruling monarch. Herod was widely known for his duplicity, so it was not honesty that he was concerned about, but rather the appearance of things. He did not want to be embarrassed in front of his dinner guests.

**Matthew 14:10 "And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison."**

“He sent, and beheaded John in the prison”. The executioner did his work in the dark dungeon; the wicked Herodias had triumphed. His head was given to the damsel. How mysterious is the providence, which left the life of so holy a man in such infamous hands!

Which permitted it to be sacrificed to the malice of an abandoned harlot; the petulancy of a vain girl, and the rashness of a foolish, perhaps drunken prince, who made a prophet's head the reward of a dance! But we are sure the Almighty will repay his servants in another world for whatever they suffer in this.

**Matthew 14:11 "And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought [it] to her mother."**

“And his head was brought in a charger”: For the sake of these wicked people, the bloody offering, the head of the slaughtered prophet was brought and given as the reward to the daughter and mother.

What an offering to a woman! Josephus says of Herodias that "she was a woman full of ambition and envy, having a mighty influence on Herod, and able to persuade him to things he was not at all inclined to." This is one of the many proofs that we have that the evangelists drew characters according to truth

You can easily see why we should not take oaths. This evil Herodias caught Herod at a weak moment and plotted this evil scheme. The sin was the mother's. The daughter was just carrying out her mother's wishes.

Herod really did not want to kill John, but to save face with his friends; he carried out this horrid deed. John was a martyr. John's trouble was over. Herod's trouble was just beginning.

**Matthew 14:12 "And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus."**

“Buried it”: In a cave (Mark 6:29). These were John's disciples (followers), who got his body and buried it. Their first thought was to warn Jesus.

Verses 13-19: The feeding of the five thousand is the Lord's only miracle recorded in each of the four Gospels (Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13). According to John, Andrew, who had brought Peter to Jesus, now brought a boy's lunch consisting merely of “five loaves, and two fishes” (small baked rolls and dried fish, an adequate lunch for a boy, but hardly a crumb for the immense crowd).

The simplicity of the story and its inclusion by all four evangelists should eliminate any doubt of its historical accuracy.

**Matthew 14:13 "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."**

“They followed him on foot”: They traveled great distances over land to reach the secluded spot where He had come by boat.

Jesus withdrew from the city to be alone for a while. It was not time for Jesus to confront Herod here. The large groups of people who followed Jesus for the healings and miracles would not be discouraged, just because He had left town. They just walked out to the desert where He was. They wanted to be healed and to see His mighty miracles.

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

Was moved with compassion. That is, pitied them.

Mark 6:34 says he “was moved with compassion” because they were as sheep having no shepherd. A shepherd is one who takes care of a flock. It was his duty to feed it; to defend it from wolves and other wild beasts; to take care of the young and feeble; to lead it by green pastures and still waters (Psalm 23:1-6).

This multitude had needs in their lives. Jesus is always concerned about our needs. He is always ready to heal. This time was no different. He realized they had great belief, or they would not have come so far. Faith brings answers to prayers. Jesus healed them.

**Matthew 14:15 "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."**

“When it was evening”: It was the first evening which began at the decline of day about three o'clock in the afternoon. The second evening, according to Jewish customs, began at sunset. The day had already been spent in teaching and healing.

This is a desert place. And hence there would be no hamlets dotting it, in which the multitudes could get provisions for themselves. There are no farm houses in Palestine. The whole population lives in towns or villages, and often the farmers go many miles to their fields.

The disciples were telling Jesus that supper time had passed, and that these people needed to leave to go find food. They probably, were ready for the ministry for that day to stop as well, because it was getting late.

**Matthew 14:16 " But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat."**

Jesus said “They need not depart; give ye them to eat”: John adds (John 6:5-6), that previous to this Jesus had addressed Philip, and asked, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And that he "said this to prove him; for he himself knew what he would do;" that is, he said this to try his faith; to test the confidence of Philip in himself.

Philip it seems, had not the kind of confidence which he ought to have had. He immediately began to think of their ability to purchase food for them.

**Matthew 14:17 "And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes."**

“We have here but five loaves and two fishes”: When we are deeply conscious of our own necessities, we shall be led to depend on Jesus with a firmer faith. God often permits his servants to be brought low, that they may have repeated opportunities of proving the kindness and mercy of their gracious Lord and Master.

It was Andrew who spoke (John 6:8,9). The loaves here were of barley meal made into small, thin cakes, baked hard on the side of the oven, so as to be broken.

Jesus knew that He was the Bread of Life. The disciples could see only the physical food. The number "five" means grace. The disciples could not understand how Jesus could believe these five loaves and two fishes could feed so many.

**Matthew 14:18 "He said, Bring them hither to me."**

The loaves and the fishes, signifying that they were sufficient; or that he would make them so: this he said, to try their faith in him, their obedience to him, and their liberality to others.

And indeed, the best way to have an increase of temporal supplies, is to bring what we have, and put it into Christ's hands; whereby not only good is done to others, but that with an overabundance is returned to the giver.

**Matthew 14:19 "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."**

“He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass”: The other evangelists say, that he ordered the disciples to cause the people to sit down; both no doubt were done: the multitude were commanded to sit down by Christ, which, without his orders, they would never have done

And the disciples were enjoined to place them in form, by companies, in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties, that their number might be the better taken, and the food more orderly distributed by the apostles.

Jesus then took the five loaves and the two fishes: into his hands, lifting them up, that they might be seen by the whole company; and they be fully convinced of the miracle going to be wrought by him: and looking up to heaven; to his Father in heaven, who is the Father of mercies; and from whom every mercy and blessing of life comes; and giving thanks to him for the same.

As was usually done by him, he blessed the five loaves and the two fishes; and brake the loaves, and divided the fishes; and gave the loaves, and fishes also, to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

Verses 20-21: Not only is the miracle itself amazing but its result was equally stunning. “Twelve baskets full” of fragments remained over and above what was eaten. The baskets (Greek *kophinoi*) were small, carried on the arm, and used as a satchel. These may have belonged to the disciples, who received a basket full of blessing as a result of their labor to feed others.

Collection of the fragments emphasized the adequacy and immensity of Christ’s provision. Besides the “five thousand men” a large uncounted group of women and children were fed.

**Matthew 14:20 "And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full."**

And they did all eat, and were filled - This was an undoubted miracle. Christ and his twelve disciples, and the five thousand men, with the women and children, of the five loaves and two fishes; everyone had their portion.

The quantity must have been greatly increased to have supplied so many. He that could increase that small quantity so much had the power of creation; and he that could do that could create the world out of nothing, and had no less than divine power.

**Matthew 14:21 "And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children."**

This is one of the most interesting miracles in the Bible. Several things we need to note here. The disciples did not believe at first that there was enough food. Jesus is the Bread of Life. He fed the three million Israelites on their way to the Promised Land, this was minor to that.

We also must see the importance of prayer before meals. We also must realize that on command Jesus could cause a super abundance of anything to be there. God owns everything, and it is all subject to His command. It is also, interesting that after feeding 10 to 20 thousand people, (men, women and children), there was still a basket of food left for each disciple.

Jesus created the universe. This miracle of food was minor to that. Jesus has no limits to what He could do then or now. We limit God. God is not limited. As we see in the next verse. Jesus did not stop and dwell on this miracle; He quickly went on to other things.

Verses 22-27: Following the miraculous feeding, which John relates in the discourse on the Bread of Life (John 6:22-59), the disciples departed across the "sea" (of Galilee), by rented ship. Jesus dismissed the crowd and went up "into a mountain ... to pray."

That night, about three miles out in the lake (John 6:19), the disciples encountered great difficulty from a "wind" that was "contrary." During the "fourth watch," three to six a.m., Jesus came to them "walking on the sea." The nearly exhausted disciples, who had been rowing all night, were afraid, thinking He was a "spirit" (Greek phantasma), that is, a ghost or apparition. Jesus reassured them, saying, "IT is I."

**Matthew 14:22 "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."**

"And straightway Jesus constrained" (see Mark 6:45-56; John 6:15-21). The word "straightway" means immediately; that is, as soon as the fragments were gathered up. To "constrain" usually means to compel. It here means to command. There was no need of compulsion. They were at this time on the east side of the Lake of Gennesaret. He directed them to get into a ship and cross over to the other side; that is to Capernaum.

Mark adds that he sent them to Bethsaida (Mark 6:45). Bethsaida was situated at the place where the Jordan empties into the lake on the east side of the river. It is probable that he directed them to go in a ship or boat to Bethsaida, and remain there till he should dismiss the people, and that he would meet them there, and with them cross the lake.

**Matthew 14:23 "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."**

Jesus needed time away from the group. He sent the multitude home and went aside to commune with the Father. We should learn from this the importance of time alone with God in prayer. The most effective prayers are when we are hidden away with God.

**Matthew 14:24 "But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary."**

The Sea of Galilee is well known for its high winds and shipwrecks. This was no different. The wind was up.

**Matthew 14:25 "And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea."**

“Walking on the sea”: A manifest and wonderful miracle. It was a boisterous sea. It was in a dark night. The little boat was 4 or 5 miles from the shore, tossed by the billows.

“In the fourth watch”: The Jews, who used to divide the night into three watches, latterly adopted the Roman division into four watches, as here; so that at the rate of three hours to each, the fourth watch, reckoning from six p.m. would be three o'clock in the morning.

“Jesus went unto them”; yet would he not go to their relief till his own time came.

**Matthew 14:26 "And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear."**

It would be a fearful sight in the dark of night to see a man walking on the sea. They really didn't realize who Jesus was, or they would not have been astonished at this feat.

**Matthew 14:27 "But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."**

Jesus recognized their fear and spoke to them to calm them down.

Verses 28-32: “Peter answered him” in his characteristically impulsive manner. This part of the story is recounted only by Matthew, who was in the boat and on whom it must have made a deep impression. The incident is not presented as a parable, but as an actual event involving three miracles. Jesus walks on the water, Peter temporarily does so, and the wind ceases immediately.

**Matthew 14:28 "And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water."**



“And Peter answered him and said”: Peter who knew his voice, and was ready to believe it might be Christ; and having more courage, and being more forward than the rest of the disciples, ventured to speak to him; saying,

“Lord, if it be thou”: for he was not fully assured that it was he: he might consider that nocturnal apparitions are deceitful, and that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and could put on the appearance, and mimic the voice of Christ; wherefore, to try whether it was a specter, or really Christ, he says,

“bid me come unto thee on the water”: thereby expressing great love and affection to Christ, being willing to come to him, even through danger, through storms and tempests; and also his strong faith in him. Supposing it to be he; who he knew, was as able to support his body on the water as his own; and yet much modesty, submission, and dependence; not willing to take a step without his order.

**Matthew 14:29 "And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus."**

You can see from these Scriptures above, that faith in Jesus makes supernatural things possible. The secret of success is to obey the Lord's voice, and then keep our eyes upon Him.

**Matthew 14:30 "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me."**

“But when he saw the wind boisterous”: Or "strong", blowing hard against him, and raising up the waves, which beat with great violence upon him, he was afraid; though Christ was so nigh him, and he had had such an instance of his power in bearing him up, causing him to walk upon the waters thus far; which shows, that his faith was imperfect.

“And beginning to sink”: through fear, and the violence of the wind and waves, just ready to be immersed, and go down to the bottom of the sea, he cried; being in a great fright and much danger, and with great importunity and eagerness, saying, Lord, save me.

**Matthew 14:31 "And immediately Jesus stretched forth [his] hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"**

You see, Peter was doing fine, until he took his eyes off Jesus, and on to the things of the world. Fear is not of God. It is lack of faith. Our cry, the same as Peter's, is Lord save me. There was no hesitation. Jesus is always as near as our cry for help. He is our very present help. He reminded Peter that his doubt was what caused him to sink.

**Matthew 14:32 "And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased."**

And when they were come into the ship the wind ceased - Here was a new proof of the power of Jesus. He that has power over winds and waves has all power. John adds (in John 6:21), that the

ship was immediately at the land whither they went; another proof, amid this collection of wonders that the Son of God was with them.

Verses 33-36: The disciples “worshiped him” and recognized Him as “the Son of God.” Their spoken Aramaic of this phrase was a clear recognition of the deity of Jesus. No mere man deserved their worship and no mere man could do what He had done.

It is no surprise that the people of “Gennesaret,” on the plain to the northwest of the Sea of Galilee, were healed by simply touching “the hem of his garment.” This procedure may have been motivated by reports of the cure of hemorrhage that had previously occurred in the same region (9:20).

**Matthew 14:33 "Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God."**

They that were in the ship came and worshipped him. Not only did they approach him with an outward unforbidden gesture of worship, but they avowed him, for the first time collectively, to be the Son of God.

Where Jesus is, there is always peace. This walking on the water did this for the disciples. They suddenly realized who Jesus was. It seems as if they should have known it before, when He fed 5,000 men.

**Matthew 14:34 "And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret."**

Land of Gennesaret - This region was in Galilee, on the west side of the Sea of Tiberias; and in this land was situated Capernaum, to which he had directed his disciples to go.

**Matthew 14:35 "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;"**

“And when the men of the place had knowledge of him”: Not merely by report, but by face, having seen, and heard him before (see Luke 5:1).

They sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; which not only expresses their faith in him, that he was able to heal all their sick and diseased, were they ever so many.

But also, their affectionate regard to their fellow creatures and countrymen; and their care and diligence in sending messengers about to their respective cities, towns, and villages, and which must be attended with expense. For they neither spared cost nor pains, to do good to their country; in all which, they set an example worthy of imitation.

**Matthew 14:36 "And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole."**

Mark 6:56 - And wherever he went, into villages, towns or countryside, they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed.

“The hem of his garment”: The numbers that pressed upon him seemed almost too large for him to be able to heal them singly by laying his hands upon them, therefore many begged that they might be allowed to touch if it were, but the border of his garment (Mark 6:56). Soon after followed the ever-memorable discourse, so strikingly in accordance with the present Passover season, in the synagogues of Capernaum, respecting the Bread of Life (John 6:22-65).

This was away from the home area of Jesus. The disciples had just seen such a miracle that caused them to worship Jesus. His fame had spread, and people brought all their friends and relatives who were sick. Their faith was so strong that they thought if they could touch anything of His, it would heal them. The great miracles here, happened because of their great faith.

### **Matthew Chapter 14 Questions**

1. What did Herod think when he heard of the fame of Jesus?
2. Why did Herod put John in jail?
3. What sin had John told Herod he committed?
4. Why had Herod not put John to death?
5. What was the celebrated occasion when Herodias' daughter danced?
6. Who told her to ask for John's head?
7. Why did Herod go through with this hideous crime?
8. What did this make John?
9. Whose disciples came out and got the body?
10. What did they do immediately after burying John?
11. When Jesus heard, what did He do?
12. What happened to the multitude seeking Jesus' help?
13. When Jesus realized they had followed, what did he do?

14. What brings answers to prayers?
15. In verse 16, what did Jesus tell the disciples that seemed impossible?
16. How many loaves and fishes did they have?
17. What does five mean?
18. What two things did Jesus do before serving the food?
19. How many fragments were left?
20. How many were fed?
21. Who is Jesus?
22. Who stayed to send the multitude away?
23. What did Jesus do when He was alone?
24. What are the most effective prayers?
25. What was well known for high winds?
26. What time of night did Jesus go to them?
27. What was unusual about His coming?
28. What effect did it have on the disciples?
29. Who asked to meet Jesus?
30. Could he do this miracle? How long?
31. What makes supernatural things possible?
32. What did Peter cry out?
33. What is fear?
34. What land did they go to?
35. What did the men do when they heard Jesus had come to them?
36. The great miracles happened because of what?