

Luke 23:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

Analysis

Herod...was exceeding glad (ἐχάρη λίαν, echarē lian)—not the joy of genuine faith but perverse curiosity. Herod **was desirous to see him of a long season** (θέλων ιδεῖν αὐτόν, thelōn idein auton), having heard of Jesus's miracles since early in his ministry (9:7-9). His desire was to **see some miracle** (σημεῖόν τι ιδεῖν, sēmeion ti idein)—viewing Jesus as an entertainer, not the Messiah. This is the same Herod who murdered John the Baptist (9:9), whose conscience briefly troubled him with the thought that Jesus might be John raised from the dead.

The word *sēmeion* (sign) is deeply ironic. Herod sought spectacular miracles for entertainment, but Jesus had refused to perform signs for the sign-seeking Pharisees (11:29), declaring 'no sign shall be given...but the sign of Jonas the prophet'—death and resurrection. Herod represents those who want Christianity's power without its demands, miracles without repentance, spectacle without surrender. His 'exceeding glad' reception contrasts starkly with the trembling worship true encounters with Christ produce.

Historical Context

Herod Antipas had executed John the Baptist (c. AD 28-29) at Machaerus fortress, yielding to his wife Herodias's demand after his rash oath at a birthday banquet

(Mark 6:14-29). His guilty conscience and political calculation made him both curious about and fearful of Jesus. Ancient historians (Josephus) describe Herod as cunning but weak-willed, capable of cruelty but susceptible to manipulation.

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does Herod's desire to see miracles without submission reflect our culture's appetite for spiritual experience without genuine discipleship?
2. Why does Jesus consistently refuse to perform signs for those who seek them as entertainment rather than as pointers to repentance and faith?

Interlinear Text

ό	δὲ	Ἡρώδης	ἰδεῖν	τὸν	Ἰησοῦν	ἐχάρη	λίαν	
G3588	And	when Herod	saw	G3588	Jesus	glad	he was exceeding	
	G1161	G2264	G1492		G2424	G5463	G3029	
ἥν	γὰρ	θέλων	έξ	ἰκανοῦ	ἰδεῖν	αὐτοῦ	διὰ	τὸ
he was	for	desirous	of	a long	saw	him	season because	G3588
G2258	G1063	G2309	G1537	G2425	G1492	G846	G1223	
ἀκούειν	πολλὰ	περὶ	αὐτοῦ	καὶ	ἥλπιζέν	τι	σημεῖον	
he had heard	many things	of	him	and	he hoped	some	miracle	
G191	G4183	G4012	G846	G2532	G1679	G5100	G4592	
ἰδεῖν	ὑπ'	αὐτοῦ	γινόμενον					
saw	by	him	done					
G1492	G5259	G846	G1096					

Additional Cross-References

Mark 6:14 (Parallel theme): And king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.

Matthew 14:1 (References Jesus): At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

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