

Mark 6:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

Analysis

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. The narrative shifts to Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, whose guilty conscience interprets Jesus' ministry through lens of his own sin. 'King Herod heard of him' (Ἦκουσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης, Ēkousen ho basileus Hērōdēs)—technically Herod Antipas was tetrarch, not king, but popularly called king. Jesus' fame 'spread abroad' (φανερὸν γὰρ ἐγένετο τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, phaneron gar egeneto to onoma autou)—literally 'His name became manifest'—due to the disciples' widespread mission and Jesus' own miracles.

Herod's guilty response: 'John the Baptist was risen from the dead' (Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων ἐγήγερται ἐκ νεκρῶν, Iōannēs ho baptizōn egēgertai ek nekrōn) reveals his tormented conscience. Having murdered John (vv. 17-29), Herod feared supernatural retribution—John returned from death to haunt him. The phrase 'mighty works show forth themselves in him' (αἱ δυνάμεις ἐνεργοῦσιν ἐν αὐτῷ, hai dynameis energousin en autō) attributed Jesus' miracles to John's resurrection power. This shows how guilt distorts perception—Herod couldn't properly evaluate Jesus because his conscience accused him over John's murder. Sin creates spiritual blindness preventing proper understanding of Christ.

Historical Context

Herod Antipas (4 BC-AD 39) ruled Galilee and Perea under Roman oversight. Son of Herod the Great (who slaughtered Bethlehem infants), he inherited his father's political cunning and moral corruption. Josephus (Antiquities 18.5.2) confirms Herod imprisoned and executed John the Baptist, corroborating Mark's account. The execution occurred at Machaerus fortress east of Dead Sea. Herod's superstitious fear of John's resurrection reflected common beliefs about ghosts and supernatural retribution—not orthodox Jewish resurrection theology but popular superstition. The belief that murdered persons' spirits could return to haunt killers was widespread in ancient Mediterranean world. Herod's interpretation of Jesus as resurrected John shows how completely he misunderstood both men's identities and missions. This confusion persisted among others (Mark 8:28), illustrating how political guilt and spiritual blindness prevented proper recognition of Christ. Later, when Jesus stood trial before Herod (Luke 23:8-12), Herod treated Him as curiosity, not Savior—moral compromise creates spiritual insensitivity.

Related Passages

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. How does Herod's guilty conscience distorting his perception of Jesus warn about sin's power to blind us to spiritual truth?
2. What does Herod's superstitious fear rather than genuine repentance teach about ineffective guilt that doesn't lead to salvation?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἤκουσεν	ὁ	βασιλεὺς	Ἡρώδης	φανερὸν	γὰρ	
And	heard	G3588	king	Herod	spread abroad	of him (for	
G2532	G191		G935	G2264	G5318	G1063	
ἐγένετο	τὸ	ὄνομα	αὐτῷ	καὶ	ἔλεγεν	ὅτι	Ἰωάννης
was	G3588	name	him	And	he said	That	John
G1096		G3686	G846	G2532	G3004	G3754	G2491
βαπτίζων	ἐκ	νεκρῶν	ἠγέρθη,	καὶ	διὰ	τοῦτο	
the Baptist	from	the dead	was risen	And	therefore	G5124	
G907	G1537	G3498	G1453	G2532	G1223		
ἐνεργοῦσιν	αἱ	δυνάμεις	ἐν	αὐτῷ			
do shew forth themselves	G3588	mighty works	in	him			
G1754		G1411	G1722	G846			

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