

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' (Ἡκουσεν ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡρώδης, Ἐκουσεν ho basileus Hērōdēs)—technically Herod Antipas was tetrarch, not king, but popularly called king. Jesus' fame 'spread abroad' (φωνερὸν 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' (Ιωάννης 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 dymameis 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

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

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 ὁ
was G3588 name him And he said That John G3588
G1096 G3686 G846 G2532 G3004 G3754 G2491

βαπτίζων ἐκ νεκρῶν ἦγέρθη, 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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