

# Mark 6:21

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;

## Analysis

**And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee.** Herodias's opportunity for revenge arrives through royal celebration. 'A convenient day' (ἡμέρας εὐκαίρου γενομένης, hēmeras eukairou genomenēs) ironically describes what was convenient for Herodias's murderous plot—the Greek εὐκαιρος (eukairos) means opportune or suitable. She waited strategically for the right moment when Herod would be vulnerable. 'Herod on his birthday' (τοῖς γενεσίοις αὐτοῦ, tois genesiois autou) refers to birthday banquet, Roman custom foreign to Jewish tradition but adopted by Herodian dynasty.

'Made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee' (δεῖπνον ἐποίησεν τοῖς μεγιστᾶσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ τοῖς χιλιάρχοις καὶ τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς Γαλιλαίας, deipnon epoiesen tois megistasin autou kai tois chiliarchois kai tois prōtois tēs Galilaias) describes elaborate state dinner for political elite: nobles, military commanders (literally 'commanders of thousands'), and Galilean aristocracy. The setting—alcohol flowing, male pride, public commitments—created circumstances where Herod's weak character would be exploited. This teaches that sinful patterns create vulnerabilities; sexual compromise (Herodias), political ambition, and pride combined to produce tragic injustice.

## Historical Context

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Roman birthday celebrations were lavish affairs featuring feasting, entertainment, and gift-giving. Jewish tradition didn't celebrate birthdays (considered pagan practice), but Herodian rulers adopted Greco-Roman customs. Archaeological evidence from Herodian palaces shows elaborate banquet halls designed for such entertainments. The guest list—military commanders and regional aristocracy—reflects political nature of the event: demonstrating power, cementing alliances, displaying wealth. Wine flowed freely at such banquets; ancient moralists warned that drunkenness loosened inhibitions and led to poor decisions. The separation of sexes at formal dinners was customary—men dined separately from women, making Herodias's daughter's entrance (v. 22) deliberately provocative. Herod Antipas ruled from his capital Sepphoris or later Tiberias, both displaying Roman sophistication. Early church fathers noted providential irony: Herod celebrated his physical birth while orchestrating death of God's prophet. The 'convenient day' for Herodias's scheme became the tragic day of John's martyrdom.

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does this 'convenient day' for evil demonstrate that Satan watches for strategic moments of vulnerability to tempt God's people?
2. What warning does this banquet scene offer about how pride, alcohol, and public commitments can combine to produce devastating moral compromises?

## Interlinear Text

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καὶ γενομένης ἡμέρας εὔκαιρου ὅτε Ἡρώδης τοῖς

And was come day when a convenient that Herod G3588

G2532

G1096

G2250

G2121

Ἡρώδης τοῖς

G3753

G2264

G3588

γενεσίοις αὐτοῦ δεῖπνον ἐποίει τοῖς μεγιστᾶσιν αὐτοῦ

birthday a supper made lords G846

G1077

G846

a supper

G1173

G3588

lords

G846

G4160

G3175

καὶ τοῖς χιλιάρχοις καὶ τοῖς πρώτοις τῆς Γαλιλαίας

And G3588 high captains And G3588 chief G3588 estates of Galilee G1056

G2532

G5506

G2532

G4413

G3588

G1056

## Additional Cross-References

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**Esther 2:18** (Creation): Then the king made a great feast unto all his princes and his servants, even Esther's feast; and he made a release to the provinces, and gave gifts, according to the state of the king.

**Genesis 40:20** (Creation): And it came to pass the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast unto all his servants: and he lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.