

Mark 6:22

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee.

Analysis

And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. Herodias executes her plot through her daughter's provocative performance. 'The daughter of Herodias came in and danced' (εἰσελθούσης τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτοῦ Ἡρώδιας καὶ ὥρχησαμένης, eiselthousēs tēs thygatros autou Hērōdiados kai orchēsamenēs)—Josephus identifies her as Salome. Her entrance into the all-male banquet violated social norms; her dancing was likely sensual, not cultural folk dance. This was calculated seduction orchestrated by her mother.

'Pleased Herod and them that sat with him' (ἥρεσεν τῷ Ἡρώδῃ καὶ τοῖς συνανακειμένοις, ēresen tō Hērōdē kai tois synanakeimenois) indicates sexual arousal from erotic performance. 'The king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee' (εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ κορασίῳ· Αἴτησόν με ὁ ἐὰν θέλης, καὶ δώσω σοι, eipen ho basileus tō korasiō: Aitēson me ho ean thelēs, kai dōsō soi)—rash promise made under influence of lust, wine, and male pride before witnesses. This foolish vow, like Jephthah's (Judges 11), produced tragic consequences. The scene illustrates how sexual sin, compromised integrity, and public pride create circumstances leading to greater evil.

Historical Context

Salome was Herodias's daughter by her first husband (Herod, son of Herod the Great), making her Herod Antipas's niece and step-daughter. She was likely young teenager at this time. Dancing by aristocratic women at male banquets was considered scandalous in both Jewish and proper Roman society—professional entertainers danced at such events, not noblewomen's daughters. Herodias's willingness to use her daughter this way reveals her moral corruption and ruthless ambition. The dance was likely similar to performances by hired dancers—sensual, provocative, designed to arouse. Ancient sources describe banquet entertainment including music, dancing, and various performances. Herod's extravagant promise ('whatsoever thou wilt') followed Eastern royal tradition of displaying generosity before nobles (cf. Esther 5:3; 7:2). However, such promises typically had implicit limits—no one expected literal fulfillment of 'anything.' Early church fathers condemned both Herodias's manipulation and Herod's foolish vow, warning against rash oaths made in moments of passion or pride. This narrative became cautionary tale about sexual sin's progression: adultery (Herodias's marriage) leading to murder (John's execution).

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does this scene's progression from adultery through sexual manipulation to murder illustrate sin's escalating nature when not confessed and forsaken?
2. What does Herod's rash promise under influence of lust and pride teach about the danger of public commitments made without sober reflection?

Interlinear Text

καὶ εἰσελθούσης τῆς θυγατρὸς αὐτῆς τῆς
And came in when the daughter of the said G3588 G846
G2532 G1525 G2364 G3588

Ἡρῳδιάδος καὶ ὥρχησαμένης καὶ ἔρεσασης, τῷ Ἡρώδῃ
Herodias And danced And pleased G3588 Herod
G2266 G2532 G3738 G2532 G700 G2264

καὶ τοῖς συνανακειμένοις εἶπεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τῷ
And G3588 them that sat with him said G3588 the king G3588
G2532 G4873 G2036 G935

κορασίῳ Αἴτησόν με ὁ ἔὰν θέλης καὶ δώσω
unto the damsel Ask of me G3739 whatsoever thou wilt And I will give
G2877 G154 G3165 G1437 G2309 G2532 G1325

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G4671

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 14:6 (Parallel theme): But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

Daniel 5:2 (Kingdom): Belshazzar, whiles he tasted the wine, commanded to bring the golden and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple which was in Jerusalem; that the king, and his princes, his wives, and his concubines, might drink therein.