

Matthew 14:7

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

Analysis

'Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.' Herod's drunken, lustful folly: he made oath-bound promise to give Salome whatever she requested—'up to half his kingdom' (Mark 6:23). The verb 'promised with an oath' (μεθ' ὅρκου ὡμολόγησεν/meth' horkou hōmologēsen) indicates solemn, binding commitment. This rash vow demonstrates several dangers:

1. Alcohol impairs judgment, leading to foolish commitments
2. Lust makes men vulnerable to manipulation
3. Public vows made before witnesses create pressure to follow through regardless of wisdom
4. Pride prevents powerful men from admitting error and retracting foolish promises.

Reformed theology warns against hasty vows (Ecclesiastes 5:2, Proverbs 20:25). Herod's oath becomes trap: Herodias exploits it to force John's execution. The account shows how sin compounds: Herod's adultery led to imprisoning John; his celebration led to drunken lust; his lust led to rash vow; his vow led to murder. Each decision made next sin easier. Believers must resist first compromises lest they lead to worse.

Historical Context

Ancient rulers often made extravagant promises during feasts—usually hyperbolic expressions of pleasure or favor, not literal offers. The phrase 'up to half my

kingdom' appears in Esther 5:3, 7:2 (Ahasuerus to Esther) as formulaic expression. Herod couldn't actually give half his kingdom—he ruled as Roman client, not autonomous king. But the public oath created dilemma: retracting would shame him before guests; fulfilling might require unwanted action. Herodias brilliantly exploited this. She'd been waiting for opportunity to kill John (Mark 6:19); Herod's rash vow provided it. By having Salome request John's head, Herodias trapped Herod: refuse and break oath publicly, appearing weak and untrustworthy; or execute the prophet he feared. Face-saving before guests won over moral conviction. Similar dynamics appear throughout history: rulers making foolish promises under pressure, unable to retract due to pride. The account demonstrates wisdom of avoiding rash commitments, especially under influence of alcohol, lust, or peer pressure. Churches should warn against hasty vows in spiritual contexts too.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. What does Herod's rash vow teach about the danger of making commitments under emotional, physical, or social pressure?
2. How does pride prevent people from retracting foolish commitments even when wisdom and morality demand it?
3. What biblical wisdom about vows, promises, and commitments should guide Christians' speech and commitments?

Interlinear Text

ὅθεν	μεθ'	ὄρκου	ὡμολόγησεν	αὐτῇ	δοῦναι	ὃ
Whereupon	with	an oath	he promised	her	to give	G3739
G3606	G3326	G3727	G3670	G846	G1325	
ἐὰν	αἰτήσεται					
whatsoever	she would ask					
G1437	G154					

Additional Cross-References

Esther 7:2 (Parallel theme): And the king said again unto Esther on the second day at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition, queen Esther? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? and it shall be performed, even to the half of the kingdom.

Esther 5:3 (Parallel theme): Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

Esther 5:6 (Parallel theme): And the king said unto Esther at the banquet of wine, What is thy petition? and it shall be granted thee: and what is thy request? even to the half of the kingdom it shall be performed.