

Matthew 14:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

Analysis

'And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.' Herodias's wicked manipulation reaches climax: she 'instructed' (προβίβασθεισα/probibastheisa, prompted, instigated) her daughter to request John's head. The specific, grisly detail—'in a charger' (ἐπὶ πίνακι/epi pinaki, on a platter)—demonstrates premeditation and vindictiveness. This wasn't spontaneous request but calculated plot. Herodias exploited her daughter's dance and Herod's rash vow to accomplish murder she'd long desired (Mark 6:19). Reformed theology sees this as example of extreme wickedness: using daughter as tool for murder, corrupting youth for evil purpose, destroying innocent prophet to protect sinful position. The verse demonstrates sin's progression: adultery (illegal marriage) leads to hatred of righteousness (John's condemnation), pride (refusing correction), murder (silencing the prophet). Each sin facilitates worse sin. Herodias represents hardened conscience: no remorse, only determination to silence truth. Modern parallels exist: those in manifest sin often violently oppose anyone exposing it.

Historical Context

Herodias's character emerges clearly: ruthlessly ambitious, manipulative, vengeful. She'd abandoned one husband for another (her brother-in-law) to increase status and power. John's public condemnation threatened her position—if Herod repented and divorced her, she'd lose queenship and return to disgrace. She determined to eliminate the threat. Using Salome was brilliantly wicked: Herod

wouldn't suspect the girl; the public vow trapped him; the request for John's head appeared to come from Salome, not Herodias. Josephus confirms Herodias's ambitious, ruthless character. The detail 'on a platter' served multiple purposes: proved John was dead (Herodias wanted certainty), public display of Herodias's power (warning to other critics), and macabre trophy. Church history records similar patterns: Jezebel killing prophets (1 Kings 18:4), Nero persecuting Christians, medieval church executing reformers. Those benefiting from unrighteous systems often respond violently when confronted.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. What does Herodias's manipulation of her daughter teach about how sin corrupts and uses others for evil purposes?
2. How do people today violently oppose those who expose their sin—what forms does this take in contemporary contexts?
3. What responsibility do believers have to speak truth even to powerful, dangerous people who may respond with violence?

Interlinear Text

ἡ δὲ προβιβασθεῖσα ὑπὸ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτῆς, Δός
G3588 **And** **she being before instructed** **of** G3588 **mother** G846 **Give**
G1161 G4264 G5259 G3384 G1325

μοι, φησίν, ὧδε ἐπὶ πίνακι τὴν κεφαλὴν Ἰωάννου τοῦ
me **said** **here** **in** **a charger** G3588 **head** **John** G3588
G3427 G5346 G5602 G1909 G4094 G2776 G2491

βαπτιστοῦ
Baptist's
G910

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