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The same antichrist spirit that was on Herod the Great, his son Antipas, and the Roman Empire is still alive today, trying to remove the Christ out of Christmas and Christianity out of the world.

We read in **Matthew 2:16-18**; about the massacre of the innocents. It says; "*Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly angry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying: "A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."*

WWW.thoughtco.com says this;

"The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus reported that Herod the Great died of a painful and debilitating disease that caused breathing problems, convulsions, rotting of his body, and worms. He was a brutal man who killed his father-in-law, several of his ten wives, and two of his sons. He ignored the laws of God to suit himself and chose the favor of Rome over his own people. Herod's heavy taxes to pay for lavish projects forced an unfair burden on the Jewish citizens."

Herod the Great was in ruler-ship for almost 4 decades. He was a descendant of Esau, the Edomite, and it was difficult for the Jews to accept him because he was a descendant of Esau, who was the twin of Jacob through whom the Israelite and Jewish people descended. Herod supplied the resources and revenue to build the Jewish temple to make it the most glorious of temples, so the religious leaders of the day didn't want to rock the boat with him, so instead they sided with him when it suited them.

WWW.allaboutarchaeology.org says this about him.

Herod the Great's Motivation Was Power.

"Herod the Great found his answer in the construction of the great Temple Mount complex. It was a favor to the common Jews that no one could disparage, and it was leverage against anyone in the pseudo-priesthood that feared they would be excluded from Herod's gravy train. The Jews could say, "Look at the beautiful Temple Herod built; he's Jewish, you know," and feel secure. The priests could say -- well, they couldn't say anything, lest they incur Herod's wrath and get kicked out of the club. But they could continue building their personal wealth and power, as well as fleecing the flock. And true believing Jews could look at the Temple and hope: "Maybe Messiah will come soon."

That's why they couldn't recognize Jesus when he came, because they were caught up in the money and in power, making money off of the sacrifices. So, in a nutshell, that's who Herod the Great was, and how it was that God used a Roman-appointed Idumean (Edomite) to build a Jewish Temple complex to which Messiah did indeed come, and which Rome itself ultimately destroyed. Herod chose Rome over the Jewish nation. If you read the prophecies in the Old Testament, you read about the destruction of this temple that Herod the Great built. That fact that he was from Esau, **Romans 9:13** says that God said this about him; "*Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.*" That's why this temple was torn down, because of Herod's lineage and that he favored Rome. God did not want his chosen people, the Jewish nation, to worship in a temple built by an outcast whom God did not approve of.

Herod Antipas was Herod the Great's son who ruled Galilee when Jesus entered his public ministry. We read in **Luke 3:1**; "*Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene.*"

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It was during his reign when John the Baptist was thrown in prison and ultimately executed because he was exposing the adultery that Herod was living in with his brother's Philip's wife. We read this in **Luke 3:19-20**; *"But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done, also added this, above all, that he shut John up in prison."*

We read the full story in **Matthew 14:1-9** where it says; *"At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the report about Jesus and said to his servants, 'This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.' For Herod had laid hold of John and bound him, and put him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Because John had said to him, 'It is not lawful for you to have her.' And although he wanted to put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask. So she, having been prompted by her mother, said, 'Give me John the Baptist's head here on a platter.' And the king was sorry; nevertheless, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he commanded it to be given to her."*

Herod thought he had silenced John the Baptist but the same spirit that he walked in was what Jesus was walking in. So regardless of how he tried, the prophetic words of John were still being fulfilled through Jesus and it could not be killed or silenced. So there was no victory for Herod by beheading John. The work still continued on.

Luke 9:7-9 says; *"Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. Herod said, 'John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?'" So he sought to see Him."*

Now in Mark 3, Jesus had just healed a man with a withered hand in the synagogue when we read this in **Mark 3:6**; *"Then the Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him."* The Pharisees, who were religious leaders, were in cahoots with the Herodians, who were a political party that wanted to restore a Herod to the throne in Judea, as well as other areas that had been ruled by Herod the Great.

Jesus gives this warning about these two groups of people in **Mark 8:15**; *"Then He charged them, saying, 'Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.'" Herod was using the religious leaders to plot to kill Jesus. This Herod Antipas knows clearly what his father Herod the Great did, when he massacred all the babies in Bethlehem and surrounding areas when Jesus was born. He didn't want any Jew taking his throne or kingdom. Herod Antipas is now doing the same thing because he wants the political throne to be king of the Jews. Within both the Pharisees and the Herodians, the leaven wickedness is rising to have power. Remember, Herod Antipas was not Tetrarch over Judea, only Galilee. But since Jerusalem was in Judea, where this new King of the Jews was to rule and reign from, he wanted that too.*

It says in **Luke 13:31-32**; *"On that very day some Pharisees came, saying to Him, 'Get out and depart from here, for Herod wants to kill You.'" And He said to them, 'Go, tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.'"*

The Pharisees wanted Jesus gone. Did they really expect to have Jesus succumb to their demands? To lay down his call and election at their beckon call? Reiterating Herod's threat of killing him were thought to have put fear in Jesus, but Jesus wasn't going to bend his knee to the devil who was working through these leaders who wanted him to stop his preaching, teaching, healing, deliverance and redemption that was only through him.

Jesus' response was forceful and stunning to them when he called Herod a fox! Sometimes you need to have that attitude to the Herod's in your life. That same anti-Christ spirit that was working through these leaders to

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destroy Jesus is what's at work even now trying to shut you up and shut you down. Jesus didn't back down one iota. The Pharisees thought that Jesus would have been appreciative to their warnings by giving him a heads up, but he gave them no such pleasure. Jesus knew who he was and where he was going and wasn't going to stop for anyone or anything, be it religious or political. Jesus was and is God incarnate, God in the flesh.

We continue reading in **Luke 23:6-12**; "*When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.*"

Like Jesus, there may be times in your ministry when you'll just say nothing to your accusers - peers, family, friends, religious or political leaders. What happened here? The leader from Rome (Pilate), the son of Herod the Great (Herod Antipas) and the religious leaders (Pharisees) were in bed together so to speak, the highest authorities in the land together with one common goal; to keep Jesus off the throne from becoming King. The treatment from Herod towards Jesus did away with the enmity between Pilate and Herod, and just like his father Herod the Great he chose to favor Rome over his own people.

This source from www.blueletterbible.org says the following; "*The Herodians were a political party who wanted to restore a Herod to the throne in Judea. They were opposed to the Pharisees who wanted a descendant of David on the throne. They joined with the Pharisees in attempting to silence Jesus.*" Here we see that the Herodians didn't want Jesus on the throne, the Pharisees didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah so that was to the Herodians favour and then to seal it all they got Rome involved through Pilate to seal the deal.

So once again we see this attempt to silence the voice of the prophet. Keep in mind that Rome ultimately destroys the 2nd temple in 70 AD that his father King Herod the Great built for the Jews, and Rome assumed full power in 92 AD of the Herodian monarch. Rome destroyed the temple, those whom they had been in cahoots with.

Christians were persecuted by Rome until 313 AD when it was legalized under Constantine and in the 4th century became the official religion of Rome.

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The same child that Mary gave birth to over 2000 years ago lives in you Christian, in the form of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ, the son of God, lives in you! As a Christian, some of you are carrying inside of you a vision for a ministry that God wants you to birth and grow into something great and the world is trying to get you to abort it in exchange for a secular vision and a worldly venture. Some of you have given birth to a new ministry, and in the infant stages the devil wants to kill it, just like he wanted to the Christ Child. But you see, King Herod couldn't kill the Christ Child, and his son Antipas couldn't kill Jesus although he wanted to, and even after the religious leaders and Roman leaders killed Jesus, he rose from the dead and established the early Church under severe persecution for almost 300 years.

When God calls you to give birth in the spirit, to a ministry, you like Joseph and Mary may look a little crazy, the odds may look against you, may seem like there's no room at the Inn, or town, city or nation. They may say that there is no room for signs, wonders, miracles, gifts of the spirit or speaking in tongues - they tell you to take a hike down the road! The journey seems long and tough, the town gossip is out of control with family and

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friends. You might even look like a phantom ministry at times because there is no evidence. A phantom ministry being like that of a phantom pregnancy.

How many ministers have you heard talk about their early days in ministry? The tough times, walking by faith, they want to abort it and throw in the towel. That's what the devil wants you to do, together with family, friends, religious system, political system etc. Why? Because they want to take the Christ Child and the power of the Holy Spirit out of the picture.

You see, the same antichrist spirit that was on Herod in wanting to kill the Christ Child, is wanting to kill the ministry of Christ in you, he couldn't do it back then and he can't do it now, he's a defeated foe. So this Christmas, you need to examine what the Lord is calling you to do. You need to step out and stand up, doing what the Lord has called you to do, in spite of what it looks like around you. You might have to carry that vision a while when it's inside you and you may not even be able to tell anyone. Don't let the religious or political systems silence you, nor family or friends. Put a guard and shield over what you're giving birth to in the spirit. Don't give up in the early stages of what God has called you to do. If Mary or Joseph had given up, who knows what would have happened, but they listened to the voice of God every day and every step of the way, no matter what came.

You need to stand up to the fox, the Herod, the devil who is trying to shut you up, tear you down, throw you out, destroy you leaving no fragrance of Christ in the world and say - I'm going to fulfill the ministry and the call and election on my life. You need to address the anti-Christ spirits like Jesus addressed Herod the fox and let them know that you **WILL FULFILL WHAT GOD HAS CALLED YOU TO DO**. God is faithful to complete that which he has started in you!