

1. The Core Theme: Authority, Obedience, and False Kingship

All three passages revolve around one question:

Who truly represents the will of YHWH — the king, the prophet, or the priest?

2. Mark 6:14–29 — Corrupted Kingship

Herod Antipas and the death of John

Herod:

- Knows John is righteous
- Fears him
- Protects him
- Yet imprisons and ultimately executes him

Why?

Because of:

- Political pressure
- Public image
- An impulsive oath
- Fear of losing honor before guests

Herod becomes a ruler who:

- Hears truth
- Recognizes holiness
- But cannot act on it

He preserves his throne but loses moral authority.

3. Exodus 27:20–30:10 — True Sacred Authority

This section describes:

- The **Menorah light** (27:20–21)

- The consecration of **Aaron and his sons** (28–29)
- The altar of incense (30:1–10)

Here we see the opposite model of leadership:

The priest:

- Does not rule by force
- Does not act for public honor
- Is consecrated through obedience
- Wears garments representing responsibility, not ego

The breastplate carries the names of Israel.

The incense altar represents intercession.

The light must burn “continually.”

Authority here is:

- Structured
- God-ordained
- Rooted in service

This section establishes:

True leadership flows from obedience and holiness — not popularity.

4. First Samuel 15 — Saul’s Partial Obedience

In **First Samuel 15**, Saul is commanded to destroy Amalek completely.

He does not.

He:

- Spares King Agag
- Keeps the best livestock
- Claims it is for sacrifice

When confronted by **Samuel**, Saul blames the people.

Samuel declares:

“To obey is better than sacrifice.”

Saul, like Herod:

- Fears public opinion
- Acts partially
- Protects his image
- Justifies disobedience

And he loses the kingdom.

5. Structural Parallels Between the Three

Theme	Mark 6	Exodus 27–30	1 Samuel 15
Leader Type	Political ruler (Herod)	Priestly leadership	Political king (Saul)
Relationship to Holy Man	Kills prophet	Serves before Elohim	Rejects prophet
Obedience	Compromised by fear	Precise & structured	Partial & self-protective
Authority Source	Rome & public approval	Divine command	Divine command
Outcome	Prophet dies	Sacred order established	Kingdom torn away

6. The Deep Connection

A. Kings Who Fear Men Lose Authority

- Saul feared the people.
- Herod feared his guests.
- Both sacrificed righteousness to preserve honor.

B. Priests Who Fear Elohim Preserve Light

Exodus presents a contrasting image:

- The priest carries Israel on his heart.
- The light burns continually.
- The incense rises daily.

The priestly model is:

Quiet obedience over dramatic gestures.

7. A Pattern of Inverted Leadership

Herod resembles Saul more than David.

Both:

- Make rash vows
- Act emotionally
- Use religious language to justify wrong
- Silence prophetic voices

And in both cases:

- A prophet stands against a compromised king.
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8. Theological Movement Across the Three Texts

1 Samuel 15:

→ Disobedient king loses kingdom.

Exodus 27–30:

→ Priestly system established to safeguard divine presence.

Mark 6:

→ A king who refuses correction kills a prophet.

The movement is tragic:

- Saul loses kingdom but prophet lives.
- Herod keeps throne but prophet dies.

- The priesthood remains as the only stable divine institution.
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9. Deeper Canonical Echo

In Exodus:

The incense altar stands before the veil — representing mediation between holiness and power.

In 1 Samuel:

Saul tries to perform sacrifice (priestly act) improperly.

In Mark:

Herod, a political ruler, makes an oath during a banquet (almost like a distorted covenant meal), leading to bloodshed.

The sacred is inverted into spectacle.

10. Final Synthesis

These three passages together teach:

1. **Authority without obedience becomes violence.**
2. **Partial obedience is rebellion disguised as devotion.**
3. **Political fear destroys prophetic truth.**
4. **True leadership carries others before God, not itself before crowds.**

Exodus gives the ideal.

1 Samuel shows the fracture.

Mark shows the tragedy.