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As we start Chapter 14, the order is a bit reversed here, in that we see Herod thinking Jesus is a resurrected John the Baptist. In the Gospel of Matthew, we have not seen the beheading of John but will cover it now after Herod's belief that John has risen.

Matthew 14

> **The Beheading of John**
> ***(Mark 6:14-29; Luke 9:7-9)***
>
> **1At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, 2And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him.**

Herod Antipas is the son of Herod the Great. Antipas is the ruler over Galilee and Perea. He had divorced his wife and took in his brothers' wife. John the Baptist called the nation's attention to this immorality. Irritated Herod had John arrested and put in prison

His father Herod the Great was a practicing Jew even though not of Jewish heritage, so likely Herod Antipas was brought up in some type of Jewish home.

"Herod the greats father Antipater, was a Idumean (Edomite) whose people were forcibly converted to Judaism by the Hasmonean king John Hyrcanus in the second century BC. His

mother Cypros, was a Nabatean Arab princess, leading many contemporaries to label Herod the Great as "half-Jew""" AI search

In any case, Herod's guilt is driving him to imagine many things about what he had done to John the Baptist. Now hearing of the miracles that Jesus was doing only magnified Herod's guilt.

> **3For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.**
>
> > ***Leviticus 18:16 Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of thy brother's wife: it is thy brother's nakedness.***

The term "uncover the nakedness" means to have physical relations.

> **4For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. 5And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.**

These Roman rulers had immense power over their portions of the Roman empire. Their only fear was to allow any uprising that would cause word to reach Rome about an unrest. Rome would consider that a failure and could be cause for the removal of the local ruler. So, Herod aware of the tenuous nature of unrest, he opted to not kill John but imprison him.

6But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

Royalty made a great show of birthdays and any other occasion that celebrated themselves. Three details stand out in this scene:

- Herod's character: He was an immoral man, and his marriage to his brother's wife was not the least of his sins.
- The dancer: She was the daughter of that debauched marriage, which made her Herod's niece.
- Herod's response: He was immorally stirred by her dance, which set the stage for his rash promise.

7Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. 8And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. 9And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

These immoral leaders all seemed to play loose with sin but held their “word” or “oath”, to be somehow sacred despite all their other failings. Perhaps time has not changed much.

10And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. 11And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother.

Herod wanted to kill John the Baptist as soon as John called him out on his sin of marrying his brother’s wife, Herodias. Politically considerations of a revolt caused Herod to imprison John instead. Now due to a sensually driven vow, Herod is obliged to kill John,

so Herod doesn't look weak to his illegitimate family and his inner circle.

> 12**And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.**

It was likely no small thing to ask for the body of John the Baptist. The Herod regime was hostile toward John and toward Jesus. Recall as this chapter started that Herod thought Jesus was the resurrected John. We are not told the order of this specific event as to how long John's body languished in the prison cell where he was beheaded. The prison guards were likely more than happy to have someone take the body and in order to fulfill the Jewish Law of burial. John would need to be buried quickly after his body was prepared.

As soon as they had retrieved and buried John as the order seems to say they then went and told Jesus. If you recall Jesus and John, were cousins. Most likely John's parents and other relatives, including Jesus's own mother Mary were told so they could attend to John as well at his burial.

We are told none of this explicitly in God's Word but the Law would have been followed; then this was all likely part of that legal process for burial and compassion for the family's loss.

It was no small matter to Jesus as well, as we are told Jesus withdrew.

> **The Feeding of the Five Thousand**
> ***(Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-15)***
>
> **13When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.**

From Strongs Concordance, this word “desert” seems to point to land and not water. However, we are told that Jesus departed by ship to this desert place. So, he took a small boat from the shore and landed on another shoreline to be alone with his thoughts of John and time for conversation with the Father.

Transliteration: erémos
Pronunciation: eh'-ray-mos
Phonetic Spelling: (er'-ay-mos)
KJV: desert, desolate, solitary, wilderness

That would make sense then that the crowd would follow Jesus by foot.

Mark 6 puts much more meat on this event leading up to the feeding of the 5,000. Mark 6:14-24 is Mark’s account of the death of John the Baptist

> ***Mark 6:30And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had***

done, and what they had taught. 31And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him. 34And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. 35And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed:

14And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

Picking up again in Matthew 14 in coordination with Mark 6, Jesus sees the multitude that had literally ran around the Sea of Galilee and got to where Jesus was landing before He and His disciples got there.

That image of the hungry masses moved Christ from His likely morning of His Cousin and fellow worker John and put the focus back on Jesus's ministry.

15And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

> **Psalms 63:1 A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah*. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;***

God will set the stage that there is no doubt as to who the provisions come from. In this case, Jesus had gone to a desolate area somewhere near the Sea of Galilee. The remoteness of the area is the perfect setting for Jesus to provide a miracle that would testify to His ability to feed the hungry in a physical sense but pointing to the more important Spiritual feeding of those who are starving for Spiritual Food, the Word, Jesus.

As a side note but based on the same power of God. God is going to put the world in a condition, Israel in a condition that they can only rely on Him and not the friends of Israel which America is the primary friend and protector. How God will prepare the world with America being its true only superpower is up for debate. Whatever God does it will be clear that when Israel is attacked during the Ezekiel 38/39 war, God is their defender, it won't be America. So, what does God do to bring those circumstances to be?

> ***Ezekiel 38"13Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?***

AI research as to who these identified nations are:

"Young lions thereof" (Hebrew kephîrîm) – This is the key phrase. The Hebrew word literally means "young lions" but is also used for "villages" or "colonial outposts." Interpretations:

- *Colonies/offshoot nations of Tarshish – if Tarshish = Britain, then the "young lions" are its former colonies (US, Canada, Australia, etc.). This is the view that places the US in this verse.*

Back to Jesus and how He addresses the need for food for so many people. The disciples recognized the need of people; they were going to be physically hungry and there was no place to get food. They had become wise enough to a point that they came to Jesus pointing out the problem but non-the-less they were wise enough to come to God first.

A teacher will often present a problem and ask the students to find a solution. That is what Jesus is doing after the disciples brought the problem to Him.

> **16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.**

A miracle being formulated by the Messiah by involving His disciples. I don't mean to make light of this event, but the Messiah wants His disciples to learn something. They have it part right already; they had learned enough to first come to Him.

That is what God wants of us, first come to Him, it doesn't matter what the problem come to Him first. Don't think for a moment that He does not already know what problem is facing us; He wants us to overtly come to Him for help.

> **17And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. 18He said, Bring them hither to me.**

In this miracle the solution was in the disciples' hands already they just didn't know it. Even when Jesus pointed out that the solution was in their hands, their response was quite human; we are talking about 5,000 people and we only have this small amount of food. The math just doesn't work out in human hands.

> **19And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *his* disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.**

What Jesus knows and we are learning as did His disciples, that when the Creator of all things simply gives thanks to the Father with full confidence that it is within the Father's Will, Jesus knows it will be done.

That is our challenge and it is no small challenge. When we ask we need to understand that what we are asking needs to be in the

Father’s Will. If it is and we ask Him for it, it will be done, not because we asked, but we asked in His Will and in Jesus name.

> ***John 14:13And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.***

The caveat is that what we ask in Jesus’s name must be in God’s Will and that God will be glorified.

We will find an explicit qualifier as a requirement that requests do align with God’s Will.

Praying in Jesus name does not equal a blank check for Believers to ask for anything for any reason. Therein lies the challenge, knowing God’s Will in our lives. With AI’s assistance here are the key points in our prayers asking God for something.

- Alignment with Will: **1 John 5:14 states, "if we ask anything according to his will he hears us,"** indicating that divine response is contingent on the request matching God's purposes.

- Abiding in Christ: John 15:7 connects the promise of answered prayer to abiding in Jesus and having His words abide in the believer, ensuring that the believer's desires conform to God's will.

- Ultimate Purpose: The overarching goal of these prayers is that the Father may be glorified in the Son (John 14:13) and that believers may bear fruit (John 15:8), rather than personal self-interest.

Therefore, the assurance of answered prayer is rooted in surrender to God's will, where the believer's desires are transformed to align with divine purpose."

Notice that the disciples did not pray a prayer, but they came to the Messiah with the problem. The Messiah's Will aligned with God the Father's Will in that the masses be fed and the source was what was available. Jesus knowing God's Will to be glorified through the Son, there was no hesitant in the least and the Son, thanked God the Father in advance of the miracle.

So, what does that mean to us. First, we need to know God's Will. How do we figure that out? His Word, it is why we study His Word, it is one of two ways we will know His Will. The second way we will know His Will is through the Holy Spirit's direction.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJQ5i3pPkMI

20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.
21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

Discerning God's Will in our lives will never be available to us unless we study His Word to understand what He wants from His Believers. Matthew chapters 5 through Matthew 7 Jesus gives a critical direction to Believers as to God's Will in each of our lives.

Once we understand what He says about a great many things, we will have a grasp of what His Standards are for Believers. What obedience looks like.

Discerning not only what He wants from us will help insure by discernment that we are not being fooled to do something outside of God's Will. He will never ask a Believer to do anything that is not in His Will and never outside His Word.

Jesus Walks on Water
(Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-25)

22 And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away.

Preparation for another miracle to again use it as a teaching moment. Jesus sends His disciples on ahead as He prepares to dismiss the masses He just fed. We can only assume the

disciples thought that the Messiah would come on another boat or walk around the Sea. We are not told what they thought, but it seems logical that they would wonder how He will catch up to them?

> **23And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone. 24But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.**
>
> We know from verse 15
>
> > ***15And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.***

The 6 to 9 PM time which coincides with the Jewish 1st watch for night time. So, after feeding them and teaching them, He sends His disciples out onto the Sea of Galilee without Him with them.

We are told that Jesus went up to the mountain to pray and at the "4th watch of the night". The Jewish night was divided into 4 watches. 6PM to 9PM, 9PM to 12 midnight, 12 midnight to 3AM and 3AM to 6AM.

The disciples had been straining at the sea for some 6 to 9 hours. They would be exhausted as the sea had been contrary meaning they were likely rowing not sailing.

25And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

It is now between 3AM and 6AM and the disciples are going to see Jesus' walking across the Sea of Galilee.

26And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

> ***Job 9:8 Which alone spreadeth out the heavens, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea.***

This verse is speaking of God. Now to be clear, Jesus is God!

> ***Colossians 1: 15Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. 19For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;***

Like many cultures the Jewish people had their tales of various things. Seeing a vision on the sea was often interpreted as an ominous sign of something bad is happening. So, the disciple's default to their human response to something that frightens them and they become terrified.

27But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

The fear was obviously visible to Jesus, but He already knew of their reaction, so He speaks peace to His disciples to calm them.

> **28And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.**

Always the “if’s” not only from Peter but from most Believers. We are so ingrained into our 3-dimensional world that when we see something God does, we might preface it with “if”.

There is a definite need for discernment and that need is constantly around us and more is approaching in the form of false teacher, false prophets, false images. We need to practice our discernment before the anti-Christ shows up or at least to the time of the Anti-Christ approach.

> **29And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.**

A request is made of Jesus, and Jesus responds with a command. Obedience to a Command of the Lord God is always a good thing. However, obedience with doubt can be disastrous.

> **30But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? 32And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. 33Then they that**

were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

It is quite amazing that with so many things that the disciples have seen Jesus do that it seems like time and again, it strikes them anew that now we know Jesus is the Son of God. I realize that we even have a renewing of our faith from time to time when we see or hear something of or from God that we say, Jesus really is the Son of God. That should be established in our hearts that there is no doubt that Jesus is the Son of God. There is no doubt and we need nothing further to verify that knowledge. God said, I believe it and that settles it. No doubt whatsoever.

Jesus Heals at Gennesaret
(Mark 6:53-56)

34And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret.

Gennesaret is on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. This portion of the 12 tribes was allotted to Naphtali.

35And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

Mark 6:55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

36And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

Faith in the power of Jesus is growing. However, the knowledge that He is the Son of God and in fact God has not found its way to their hearts. Right now, as we study Matthew it is all about what Jesus can do for me, not what can I do for Him.

It is now and always has been all about Him. He did it all, what small thing can I do with my life to say thank you? Obedience to God's Will in each of our lives.

This generation shall not pass away! A study for another time!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4n7_xE_lCuY

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