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Shepherd's Path

A Shepherd's Personal Devotions

A Miraculous Church Series, Lesson 58

Lesson Title: A Miraculous Judgment – Herod's Death

Take Home Point: Give glory to God.

Warm-Up:

How do you feel when someone takes credit for your work? It's hard to be selfless or even team-oriented in this world where personal worldly rewards so often depend on personal credit. But misdirected credit for accomplishment is a small thing compared to misdirected worship. When given to a person, it is evil for the giver and the recipient alike, but it is a greater evil to accept it. Most people would deem modern man to be above this kind of man-worship, but that is certainly not so. Consider the adulation given to Stalin, Hitler, even Kim Jong-Il of Korea. Sometimes it is out of fear or ignorance on the part of people. But anyone who leads people must be prepared to ward off undue exaltation by those they lead; it is not necessarily what they receive, but how they respond to it that matters.

Read: Acts 12:19-25

Observation (What happened?):

Why did the people of Tyre and Sidon go so far to please Herod?

What was happening to the gospel as Herod died?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):

Do you think the people of Tyre and Sidon believed Herod was a god? Why did they say it?

Do you think Herod truly believed he was a god? Why did he let them say it?

Insight:

The life of King Herod Antipas was no secret during his lifetime. He came to the throne through political intrigue, deception, and murder. He was petty, deceitful, and contemptuous of the Jews and other provincial cultures around him. So why did the people of Tyre and Sidon give him worship? Fear and self-serving dishonesty. Why did Herod accept the praise? He loved his absolute power and the resulting adulation. But that's not too different from many situations today. And that is why the gospel is so hated and despised among many of the world's powerful people. Jesus overturns these ideas. In Mark 9:35 he tells his disciples, *"If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all."* (NIV) This is completely counter to the human perspective, even among the religious people of Jesus' time. All are equal before the God who gives life, gifts, experiences, and position. So how do you think the God who is Creator and Sustainer feels when a person takes credit for his work? He tells us in Isaiah 42:8 *"I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another."* (NIV)

Application (What does it mean to me?):

How do you give glory to God in your family, your friends, and your place of work?

Do your attitudes, actions, and words match your desire to honor God?