

February 1, 2026



WEEK 22 – THE DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST (Mark 6:14-29, pp. 171-177)

This week's readings focus on the death of John the Baptist at the hands of Herod Antipas. Herod's execution of John seems to indicate a turning point in his relationship with God's Word and the temptations he faced in his life.

Why did Herod imprison John? _____

Why did Herod protect John? _____

Why was Herod perplexed by John? _____

Why did Herod gladly hear John? _____

Both John and Jesus continue to preach the truth of God's Word to hostile audiences. **What does this teach us about being faithful Christians in this world?** _____

What "hostile" audiences do we face today? _____

What temptations do we face when we encounter hostility to the Word of God? _____

Herod's response to John is mixed. He is interested in what John has to say, and perhaps even convicted by it; but he is not willing to admit his sins or turn away from them.

Why do people sometimes have a mixed response to God's Word?

What influences took Herod away from gladly hearing God's Word?

¹⁶ And these are the ones sown on rocky ground: the ones who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with joy. ¹⁷ And they have no root in themselves, but endure for a while; then, when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately they fall away. (Mark 4:16-17 ESV)

The word "tribulation" often evokes ideas of disaster or persecution that threatens our lives. But for Herod, **"tribulation arises in the form of a dinner party, where Herod must decide between saving John or saving face in front of his guests."** (CFM, p. 175)

What are some examples of mundane tribulations that make us choose between following or rejecting Jesus in daily life? _____

How can we prepare for lives as faithful Christians in the face of every-day tribulation? _____

For Next Time:

WEEK 23 – JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND (Matthew 14:12-21, pp. 179-185)