



BIBLE RADIO PRODUCTIONS

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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1622 ~ John Imprisoned.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

Throughout the history of all the nations on earth, there have only been a few leaders and rulers not wanting to excessively control their people or be in a position where they answered to no one. For citizens to blindly believe and do what ruling dictators say only makes these rulers more unaccountable. In the 19th Century, a famous statement about a leader's lust for power said: "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

In the Jewish line of kings, many thought that they were above the law and could take human life using their command as king. These Jews seemed to forget that God is over all people. In Romans Chapter 14, it says: "Each of us will give an account of himself to God." Many modern people don't believe in a Judgment Day promised at the end of this age. They want to live for the here-and-now and worry about such things later. But those who neglect their opportunities now may not be given the time to fix things up later with God.

King Herod the Great and his descendents played a significant role in Jewish history during much of the last century BC, and the first half of the first century AD. Herod was born in 74 BC but wasn't a Jew. His father had been a pious man who had worshipped the Jewish God sincerely but the Jewish people always looked down on his family as being racially impure. Herod had an Arabian mother, and it was commonly held that one could only be a Jew if one was born from a Jewish mother.

Herod the Great ruled Judaea for 34 years until his death in 4 BC. He ruled with the support of the Roman army and in compliance with the Roman powerbrokers of the time. Herod organised an extensive building program after an earthquake in 31 BC destroyed many homes and killed thousands of people. He also repaired and enlarged the temple built by Zerubbabel after the Babylonian exile. This project wasn't finished in his lifetime because it took 46 years to complete.

Herod the Great was succeeded by his sons Antipas, Philip and Agrippa, but these men were called district rulers and weren't kings. After some time, however, Herod Agrippa made a trip to Rome and was made a king. The history of the Herods is very complicated, as can be expected when Herod the Great had ten wives and had some of his sons executed for treason.

A daughter of the Jewish High Priest, Herodias married her half uncle, Herod Philip, and they had a daughter who is not named in Scripture. Other historical documents call this girl Salome.

Herodias divorced her husband Philip when Antipas agreed to also divorce his wife. This scandal had never been laid to rest as it is recorded in the Scriptures.

A Jewish woman could not marry another man while her first husband was still alive. The subsequent marriage of Antipas and Herodias was illegal and immoral under Jewish law.

A well-known 19th Century writer had a saying: "Sooner or later in life, we all sit down to a banquet of consequences." In today's Bible Adventure, Herod Antipas was called to account by none other than the popular man in the wilderness, John the Baptist. Herodias looked for revenge at the first opportunity.

John the Baptist had plenty of time to think while he was in prison. He couldn't be more than 35 years old at this time and it seemed that ministry was over. There were no law courts to examine and investigate a charge against him. John sat in prison awaiting Herod Antipas's good pleasure. For someone who always wanted to spend his days in the great outdoors, John must have found prison life quite a trial.

Knowing he had served God faithfully, John the Baptist could have been disappointed that Jesus didn't help him in some way. But for Jesus' part, as soon as He heard that John had been arrested, Jesus moved away to Galilee. As time went by, doubts began to creep into John's mind. Although John's disciples visited him in prison, doubts feed on loneliness. Was Jesus really doing the role of the Messiah? Should He be spending so much time healing people rather than teaching and setting up His new kingdom?

When you find yourself in a sea of doubt, do what John did. He sent two of his disciples to visit Jesus with a question: Was Jesus both the Chosen One and the Messiah? John knew what he had experienced with the Lord Jesus but time drags for those who live shut off from what's going on in the world. Discouragement and depression can crowd a person's mind to get a warped view of even the most important things.

When John's disciples returned with Jesus' message, John was lifted above his past doubts to faith in Jesus again. He understood that he may have to suffer death at the hands of Antipas. He could see that there would never be any reconciliation between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees. Jesus made no attempt to be a soldier leader of the Jewish people and fight against the Roman overlords.

John the Baptist was prepared to lay down his life if that was God's will for him. In some parts of the world every year, thousands of Christians who love the Lord Jesus refuse to deny Him or return to worshipping some former cultural idol.

These people are often executed for their faith but God's Kingdom remains their future home. Jesus also suffered death, and we and all His disciples can expect to suffer in some ways too. Jesus said in John's Gospel, Chapter 15: "If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you."

We mustn't compromise so that we will escape suffering. An elderly pastor wrote in his Bible study notes that if God has allowed us to go through great troubles, we will receive His divine comfort, which will deepen our sensitivity to others and enrich our ministry among the believers in Christ. He warned, "Don't, whatever you do, ask God to deliver you from the painful or sorrowful experiences; they are worth much, much more than they cost."

How should we handle life's hurts and sorrows? Some advise pretending that they don't exist. Others say to display a full vent of your emotions – to kick and shout and scream to let out those pent-up feelings. These are not very Biblical or mature ways of handling negative emotions. The right way is to neither deny them or aggressively express them, but rather, acknowledge them and present these issues to the Lord. Denial only pushes them down inside us and expression dumps them on others. We should take our troubles, whatever type they are, in prayer to God and fully express them to Him. We should tell God we're hurt and thank Him that He loves us. We have a wonderful opportunity to ask Him for help to handle our feelings in a way that glorifies God and honours His Name.

If you are still a doubter about the claims of the Lord Jesus being the King of kings and Lord of lords, then start reading the Gospels, asking if Jesus is real, He will reveal Himself to you. Being a Christian is about a daily relationship with Him. We cannot be right in God's eyes by trying to be good or practise religious rituals or trying to keep God's laws. We need to die to ourselves and our own plans so that we can pursue something far more important – the cause of Christ – and then from this, we find our God-given destiny.

This week's memory verse is James, Chapter 1, Verse 6: "When you pray, you must believe and not doubt at all."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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