



## SoulShare

December 12, 2020, 9:00—10:30 am Breakfastless Virtual Discussion

HEROD

I am Herod -- the KING!

I have done great things for Israel. My Temple is larger than Solomon's! My court is more glorious than the nation has seen for a thousand years and I keep the peace with Rome.

Yet there are enemies everywhere who question my authority and threaten my throne. I must constantly be on the alert for plots and schemes. Even my own flesh and blood -- some of my misbegotten sons -- have turned against me and had to be dealt with.

Some think me cruel, but I truly had no choice. For the good of the kingdom, I must overcome personal desires. There is no doubt that my dynasty will survive, but the immaturity and shallowness of the would-be assassins proved that their reign would end in disaster. My presence is essential to the accomplishment of the goal, to restore Israel to its glory. All that remains is to enlarge the borders.

And this is not an easy task or one for the simple or unsophisticated. Rome has the power and must be placated, but the world is a complex and dangerous place. Given the right circumstances, a deal can be struck with some other powerful nation and thus be justly rewarded with more territory. Only a shrewd and experienced ruler like myself would have the vision to see such an opportunity and the intelligence to carry out such a plan.

Some question the authority of my throne. They say I am not of royal blood. But David was not of royal blood! They say I was chosen by Caesar and David was chosen by the prophet. But there are no prophets now. They say I do not follow the law. But David did not follow the law, and he was beloved by God.

The Magi are not to be ignored for they are privy to secret knowledge, but they are not politicians. Descendants of David are as common as the sands of the sea and even if one is born to be king, this is not the right time. An infant king would be under the control of guardians who surely do not know how to rule with the subtlety required. Yet, the people are sheep and would accept a child king to their detriment should one be declared. And Rome would surely crush any they do not trust.

Thus my duty is clear, to my kingdom, my dynasty and the return of the glory to Israel. Small minds will misunderstand, but my place in history is secure. All will someday know and recognize me for the key role I played in the future of the world. Matthew 2

*Remember that these monologues are essentially historical fiction, based on the Scripture but filling in plausible subjective details, both emotional responses and motivations. Your first task is to decide if they are reasonable.*

### *Herod – Discussion*

*Can we learn from Biblical “bad guys,” people whose actions are recorded in Scripture?*

*What is the danger of dividing the world into “really bad people” and “all the rest of us”?*

*Herod was appointed governor of Galilee by his father, Antipater, who had a good relationship with Julius Caesar. Young Herod travelled to Rome to seek favor and was eventually named tetrarch by Mark Antony. When pleading with the Roman Senate for his brother, He was unexpectedly named “King of the Jews.” He kept the good will of Rome by collecting taxes and ridding the countryside of bandits. Can we imagine how and why the development of Herod’s character went the way it did?*

*Is it believable that he had a larger goal which might actually be noble in concept?*

*If Herod really believed that the future of the nation depended on him, how would that develop into the belief that he was justified killing rivals, including his own sons?*

*What other examples of this phenomenon have been seen in world history? (An apparently noble purpose leading to evil behavior.)*

*Is the proverb “power corrupts” a danger for ordinary people?*

*Can a Christian be sucked in by this sort of danger?*

*How might it happen?*

*What can prevent it?*

*Have we seen examples of it among Christian leaders?*

*How can this understanding inform how we pray for leaders, both secular officials and Christian leaders?*

*What were the thoughts behind Herod’s reaction to the message of the Magi?*

*What life-changing decision might he have made at that point?*

*What is required for a person to completely change the whole direction of his/her life?*

*What is necessary for a person to have the ability to make that sort of life altering decision – in other words, to repent?*

*Can you see a point in your own life where you made a life-altering decision, either for the right or for the wrong?*

*Are you able to make a right decision, even if it contradicts what you previously believed?*