

Linage of the Herod's

Herod the Great embraced the elite Roman culture of luxury and excess. This infatuation with Rome, along with generous gifts, established him among influential romans and the Senate. He was appointed procurator of Judaea by Julius Caesar in 47 B.C. Because of his loyalty to Rome he was appointed king of the Jews (at the suggestion of his friends Mark Antony and Octavian) by the Roman Senate in 40 B.C. While there was great opposition from the Jews (because Herod was not a member of the royal family) he eventually took possession of the kingdom in 37 B.C.

Mark Antony's involvement with Cleopatra was a serious threat to Herod since she wanted to reunite Judaea and Syria with the Ptolemaic kingdom. Following the battle of Actium, in which Egypt fell to Rome, Herod's position was assured because of his loyalty to Octavian (who was now the new emperor Augustus.)

To eliminate any threat from the Hasmonaeen family, whom he had displaced from the throne, Herod systematically had their leaders killed. (Including his Hasmonaeen wife Mariamne, and the two son's she had bore him.) Even though Herod tried in many ways to placate the Jews, including the restoration of the temple, they never did forgive him for destroying the royal family.

Even though Herod the Great was well learned, had proved himself in diplomacy and battle, and had undertaken many elaborate building projects, he is best remembered for his cruelty. Any threat, real or imagined, was swiftly dealt with, as is illustrated in the slaughter of the infants of Bethlehem (*Mt. 2.*)

Herod the Great died at the age of 70 (4 B.C.), within years of the birth of Jesus and John the Baptist.

Antipas, or Herod the tetrarch, inherited his title along with the Galilean and Peraean sections of his father's, Herod the Great's, kingdom. He divorced his first wife, the daughter of Nabataean king Aretas, to marry his niece Herodias, who was his half-brother Philip's wife. John the Baptist denounced this marriage as unlawful. Because of John's large following, Antipas was careful not to over react. However, on the instance of Herodias, Antipas had John imprisoned. Then on the occasion of Antipas' birthday Herodias coaxed her daughter, Salome, to "dance naked before the king and his court." In appreciation of this Antipa offered Salome any gift she desire. Her request, as instructed by her mother, was for the head of John the Baptist (*Mt 14:6; Mk 6:22.*)

Following this Antipas' former father-in-law, king Aretas of Arabia, waged war against Antipas over a border dispute (at the urging of his daughter who Antipas had discarded to marry Herodias.) Antipas was badly defeated in this war and sent to Rome for help. Legions were dispatched but before they could punish king Aretas emperor Tiberius died. Caligula, the new emperor was not concerned over this matter so the army turned around and went home. (The Jews believed this defeat of Antipas was God's punishment for killing John the Baptist.)

Antipas is the Herod that Pilate sent Jesus to. Antipas simply asked idle questions and mocked him before sending him back to be crucified. (*Lk 23:7*)

When Agrippa became king of the Jews, Antipas' wife Herodias was envious. Although Antipas was content with his situation, Herodias continually nagged her husband that he should be king, not his nephew Agrippa. Eventually Herodias wore Antipas down and he agreed to petition the emperor to be made king.

When Agrippa learned of his uncle's plan, he sent a messenger to his old friend emperor Caligula with letters accusing Antipas of planning a revolt. When Caligula asked Antipas if he had armor for seventy thousand men, as claimed in Agrippa's letters, he couldn't deny it - this was common knowledge. Caligula considered this sufficient proof of Antipas guilt, and rewarded Agrippa for warning him of the revolt by giving him his uncle's tetrarchy as well as his wealth. Antipa was banished to Gaul (A.D. 39.) When Herodias challenged the emperors decision against Antipa, her wealth was also given to Agrippa, and she was banished to Gaul with her husband..

Agrippa, or Herod the King, lived an extravagant life, so much so that he was deeply in debt. But because of his family, and friends in Rome, there was always someone to save him from the trouble he would get in.

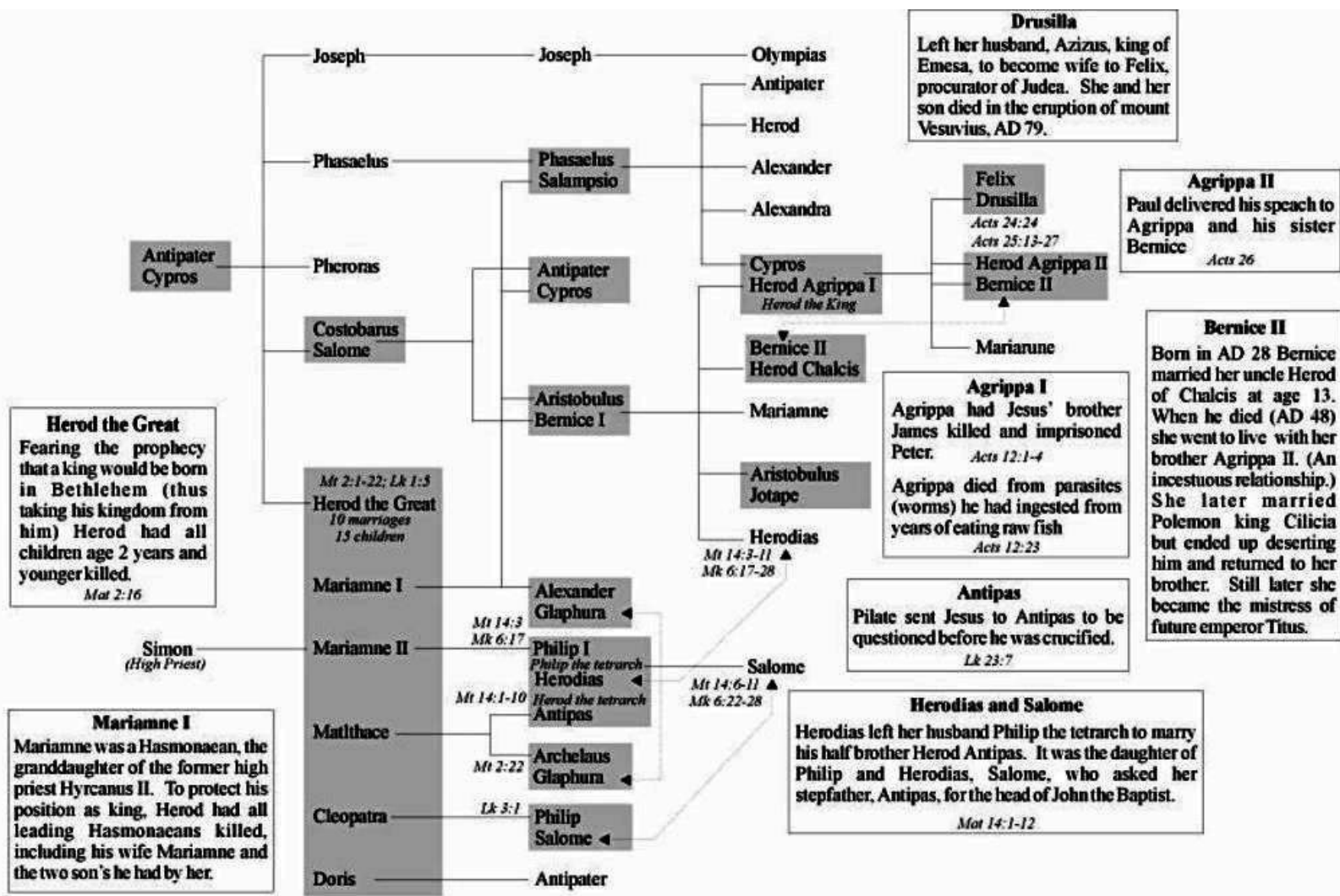
However, Agrippa had once told his friend Caius that he looked forward to the day when emperor Tiberius would die and Caius would become emperor. A short time later Agrippa accused Eutyclus, a freeman, of stealing some of his clothing. Since Eutyclus had overheard Agrippa's comment to Caius, he asked that the charges against him be brought before the emperor. Doing so gave Eutyclus the opportunity to embellish the story and tell Tiberius of Agrippa's desire to see him dead. This landed Agrippa in prison.

After six months in prison news came that Tiberius was dead and Agrippa's good friend Caius was now the new emperor Caligula. Agrippa and his guards were celebrating the good news with wine when word came that the emperor was not dead, only ill! Agrippa was immediately beaten and thrown back in his cell, the guards fearing that should news of their party get out they would certainly be killed. But, in the morning it was learned that the Tiberius was indeed dead.

Emperor Caligula not only released his old friend Agrippa from prison, but also made him king of north east Palestine. When his uncle Antipas was banished to Gaul, Galilee and Peraea were added to Agrippa's kingdom. Then when Claudius became emperor, Judaea and Samaria were added to his kingdom.

Agrippa is best remembered for the death of Jesus' brother James, imprisoning Paul (*Acts 12:21*), and his incestuous relationship with his sister Bernice. He died at the age of 54 (A.D. 44.)

<http://www.imt.net/~gedison/herod.html>



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