

Resurrection Life of Jesus Church

THE ORIGIN STORY OF JESUS

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PART 97: THE ARRIVAL OF JESUS

THE REIGN OF HEROD

King Herod would become known as Herod the Great but there was nothing great about him. He was a murderer, a thief, and a hater of God as you will see in the text below.

One of Herod's first acts as king was to murder 40 of the most prominent Sadducees and take possession of their estates and wealth. He used this money to compensate the Roman soldiers who had done the killing for him. He also had a mercenary force protecting him that consisted of Jews from abroad since he did not trust the local Jews.

Herod was paranoid and was willing to go to any length to protect his kingship. Even his own family members were not safe as he murdered his second wife, Mariamne, two of their sons, a brother-in-law, Hyrcanus II, and many more.

He stripped the Sanhedrin of its political power and the Sadducees and Pharisees were reduced to religious parties. As a result of this brutal oppression, an underground rebellion came into being known as the Zealots.

When Herod received the news that the Messiah had been born in Bethlehem, he ordered the murder of all male children two years and younger. **Matthew 2:1-18**

“Herod endowed his realm with massive fortresses and splendid cities, of which the two greatest were new, and largely pagan, foundations: the port of Caesarea Palaestinae on the coast between Joppa (Jaffa) and Haifa, which was afterward to become the capital of Roman Palestine; and Sebaste on the long-desolate site of ancient Samaria. In Jerusalem he built the fortress of Antonia, portions of which may still be seen beneath the convents on the Via Dolorosa, and a magnificent palace (of which part survives in the citadel). His most grandiose creation was the Temple, which he wholly rebuilt. The great outer court, 35 acres (14 hectares) in extent, is still visible as Al-Haram ash-Sharīf. He also embellished foreign cities—Beirut, Damascus, Antioch, Rhodes—and many towns. Herod patronized the Olympic Games, whose president he became. In his own kingdom he could not give full rein to his love of magnificence, for fear of offending the Pharisees, the leading faction of Judaism, with whom he was always in conflict because they regarded him as a foreigner. Herod undoubtedly saw himself not merely as the patron of grateful pagans but also as the protector of Jewry outside of Palestine, whose Gentile hosts he did all in his power to conciliate.



Unfortunately, there was a dark and cruel streak in Herod's character that showed itself increasingly as he grew older. His mental instability, moreover, was fed by the intrigue and deception that went on within his own family. Despite his affection for Mariamne, he was prone to violent attacks of jealousy; his sister Salome (not to be confused with her great niece, Herodias' daughter Salome) made good use of his natural suspicions and poisoned his mind against his wife in order to wreck the union. In the end Herod murdered Mariamne, her two sons, her brother, her grandfather, and her mother, a woman of the vilest stamp who had often aided his sister Salome's schemes. Besides Doris and Mariamne, Herod had eight other wives and had children by six of them. He had a total of 14 children.

In his last years Herod suffered from arteriosclerosis. He had to repress a revolt, became involved in a quarrel with his Nabataean neighbours, and finally lost the favor of the Roman Emperor Augustus. He was in great pain and in mental and physical disorder. He altered his will three times and finally disinherited and killed his firstborn, Antipater. The slaying, shortly before his death, of the infants of Bethlehem was wholly consistent with the disarray into which he had fallen. After an unsuccessful attempt at suicide, Herod died. His final testament provided that, subject to Emperor Augustus' sanction, his realm would be divided among his sons: Archelaus should be king of Judaea and Samaria, with Philip and Antipas sharing the remainder as tetrarchs.”¹

THE MESSIAH IS COMING

The people living in Judea were totally disillusioned after more than 400 years of political instability, infighting, rebellion, wars, renegade kings, and no central leadership at the end aside from scribes and rabbis who fought among themselves. Their faith in God was gone.

What remained was a religious system where the Pharisees affirmed life after death in contrast to the Sadducees who denied life after death and judgment by God.

The Jews had a new temple, courtesy of Herod with daily sacrifices, but there was no power or hope, just an antiquated religious system governed by adherents of the Talmud and the Kabbalah.

JESUS FINALLY ARRIVED

The Son of God was not born in a palace or prominent household, but to an unknown virgin who was engaged to a humble carpenter from Galilee. Jesus was born in a

¹ <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Herod-king-of-Judaea>

stable; is it any wonder that the Jews had a hard time accepting Him as the Messiah?
Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38

JOHN THE BAPTIST

The Jewish people who clung to the prophecies knew that God would send a messenger to prepare them prior to the coming of the Messiah. **Malachi 4:1-6**

God finally spoke to a priest named Zacharias after being silent for more than 400 years. **Luke 1:5-25**

God didn't ask the Jewish people for permission to send the Messiah nor did He consult with the religious or political leaders. Everybody was simply informed that God's program was happening – take it or leave it! It is up to mankind to accept or reject the offer.

SUPERNATURAL EVENTS

God would not allow the Jewish people to claim ignorance and the birth of the Messiah was heralded in such a way that people could not deny that something supernatural had taken place. **Luke 2:1-20**

The arrival of the Messiah was heralded in the temple. **Luke 2:22-39**

King Herod and the political leaders in the palace were notified. **Matthew 2:1-17**

Twelve years after the incarnation, Jesus visited the temple as a child and astonished the religious leaders with His knowledge and understanding the Scriptures. **Luke 2:42-52**

The general consensus was that the Messiah would have supernatural power and rally the Jewish people to drive out the Romans and establish an earthly kingdom like it was in the days of King David. Jesus did not fit the preconceived ideas of the Messiah.

PREPARING THE WAY

Some 30 years after the incarnation of Jesus, his cousin, John, began laying the groundwork for the Messiah and caused quite a stir in Judea. **Matthew 3:1-12**

The Jews living at the time of Jesus were looking for a Messiah that would have supernatural power and rally the Jewish people to drive out the Romans. He would establish an earthly kingdom as it had been in the days of King David. The problem is that the incarnated Son of God did not fit their preconceived ideas.

The mindset of the people is apparent when they asked if John the Baptist was the Messiah. **Luke 3:1-15**

When John introduced the term "baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire," the people had no clue what he was talking about. **Luke 3:16-18**

The apostles were carried away with the dissimulation even after spending three and half years with Jesus. **Acts 1:6-8**

SUMMARY

The family of Herod, blood descendants of Esau, outright rejected the idea of a divine Messiah. Any Jew claiming to be the Messiah was hunted down and killed. **Acts 5:34-37**

The Sadducees did not hold to a resurrection of the dead and therefore a Messiah was useless to them unless he became a temporary earthly ruler that drove out the despised Romans.

The Pharisees acknowledged life after death, but they sought a Messiah that could drive out the hated Romans and establish a kingdom with them ruling underneath.

The common people were confused and didn't understand the simple message defined since the first sacrifice after the fall of mankind. An innocent animal had to die and shed its blood to atone for the sins of the one performing the sacrifice. It was a glimpse into the future when the Son of God would be incarnated, live a sinless life, and die for the sins of mankind. Despite the many prophets sent by the Lord, the people were clueless about the need to repent and live a holy life. They were like sheep without a shepherd. **Matthew 9:35-38**

Who is Jesus to you?

Remember, it's not so important how you begin your life after salvation, but how you finish it!

Do you have an ear to hear with?