

The Rise of King Herod and the Herodian Dynasty The First Century BC

For the next three lessons we are going to discuss King Herod and his descendants, the Herods of the New Testament who interacted with Jesus during His earthly ministry. King Herod the Great was the “King of the Jews” when Jesus was born and was the King who greeted the “Wise Men from the East.” The reason Herod is so instrumental is because he has dealings with the Greeks (Ptolemies of Egypt), the Romans (Pompeii, Julius Caesar, and Octavius) and the Maccabees (Jews who ruled Israel from 142 BC to 37 BC). Herod ties together all these together. A study of the 1st century BC opens the New Testament.

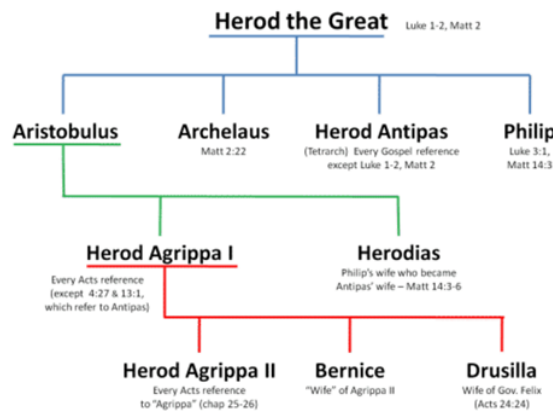
Herod’s life can be broken down into 3 phases:

1. Birth to Becoming King of the Jews: (73 BC to 40 BC) – Part I
2. Battle for Jerusalem and Builder of Judea (40 BC to 4 BC) – Part II
3. Brutal King to Broken Empire at Death (4 BC to 2 BC) – Part III

The Herodian Dynasty continues to AD 70 and the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple.

The Jews (Judah) Had 3 Royal Families Throughout their History

1. **The Davidic Dynasty – 1011 BC to 586 BC** – From King David to King Zedekiah – 425 years
For 483 years, from 586 BC to 103 BC, Israel was a province under Persia and then Greece.
2. **The Hasmonean (Maccabean) Dynasty – 103 BC to 37 BC** – 66 years of Maccabean kings.
Mattathias (167-166 BC), Judas Maccabeus (166-160 BC), Jonathan (160-143 BC), Simon (143-135 BC), John Hyrcanus I (135-104 BC); then the Maccabees declared themselves royalty kings.
Aristobulus (104-103 BC), **Alexandar Jannaeus** (103-76 BC), **Salome Alexandra** (76-67 BC), Hyrcanus II (67 BC), **Aristobulus II** (66-63 BC), the Romans enter and install Hyrcanus II again.
Hyrcanus II (63-40 BC), but then Parthia supports Antigonos (40-37 BC) as King of the Jews.
3. **The Herodian Dynasty – 37 BC to AD 70** – A total of 107 years of Herodian Rule over Judea.
Herod the Great (Luke 1-2, Matt. 2) is the man we will study. He had four sons, all called Herod. Herod Aristobulus (not mentioned in Scripture), Herod Archelaus (Matthew 2:22), Herod Antipas (every mention in the gospels except the ones listed here), Herod Philip (Luke 3:1; Matt. 14:3). Herod the Great’s grandson (son of Aristobulus) is called Herod Agrippa (every mention in Acts except Acts 4:27 and Acts 13:1 which is Herod Antipas). Herodias, the daughter of Aristobulus, (Matt. 14:3-6) married her uncle Herod Philip, but then divorced him and married uncle Antipas. Herod Agrippa II (son of Herod Agrippa, grandson of Aristobulus, married Bernice (Acts 25-26).
Drusilla is the wife of Governor Felix and is the great granddaughter of King Herod (Acts 24:24).



The Davidic Dynasty of Kings (1011 BC to 586 BC)

The Torah (edited and ensconced as Law – see Genesis 14:14 – “*pursuit as far as Dan.*”) **Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Song Solomon** were written.

The Assyrian Empire (911 BC-609 BC)

The earlier portions of **Kings and Chronicles; Jonah** – Prophet to Nineveh; **Isaiah** – Prophet to God’s People; **Nahum** – Prophesied about Ninevah; **Hosea** - Prophet to the Northern Kingdom **Amos** - Prophet Northern Kingdom; **Joel** - Prophet to the Southern Kingdom; Israel falls 722 BC. **Micah** – Prophet to the Southern Kingdom near the end of Israel; **Obadiah** – Southern Kingdom.

The Babylonian Empire (609 BC-539 BC)

The Latter Portions of **Kings and Chronicles; Jeremiah; Lamentations; Ezekiel; Daniel; Habakkuk Zephaniah**; all these prophets wrote to encourage Judah to remain faithful to Yahweh, and not move to idolatry (like the Northern Kingdom) and fall to Babylon, who’d conquered Assyria.

The Babylonian Exile (609 to 539 BC) – the Jews were taken to Babylon in successive waves

NO KINGS OVER ISRAEL (586 BC to 103 BC)

Beginning with the fall of Jerusalem and the Destruction of the Temple in 586 BC, there were no kings over Judah (the Southern Kingdom). Judah came to be known as JUDEA, home of the JEWS.

The Persian Empire (539 BC -333 BC)

The Persians conquer Babylon in 539 BC (read Daniel 5) and become the world’s third empire. The books of **Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi** are written during this time. Most importantly, the scroll of **Chronicles** is written to “encourage the Jews” of God’s purpose. **Chronicles** is the last book of the Hebrew Scriptures and starts with Eden; cuts off dramatically. Esther, the Jewish woman, marries the Persian king Xerxes (see Esther). Xerxes destroys Athens.

The Grecian Empire (333 BC-146 BC)

Xerxes had destroyed Athens in 480 BC, and for the next 150 years, Greeks hated the Persians. Alexander the Great of Macedon (Greece) took an army to the east (modern Turkey) and went to war against the Persians, eventually defeating the Persians and leaving the world Hellenic. During the time of the Grecian Empire, **The Apocrypha** and **The Dead Sea Scrolls** were written. After Alexander’s death, his kingdom was divided among his four generals with two of them, Seleucia (Seleucid Empire of the North) and Ptolemy (Ptolemaic Empire of the South) turning against each other. Juda was the land bridge between the North (Syria, Turkey, Iraq) and Egypt.

The Hasmonean (Maccabean) Dynasty (103 BC to 37 BC)

Though the Maccabees revolted from the Greeks in 167 BC under Mattathias, it wasn’t until 142 BC they gained their independence. The Maccabees took the position of High Priest, but it wasn’t until Aristobulus (103 BC) they took the throne of Judah. This created a great firestorm. The Hasidic (pure) Jews knew the High Priest was to be from the House of Zadok (High Priest during David’s reign, and a direct descendant of Aaron) and the king from the House of David. This is the beginning of the rise of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes in Judea.

The Roman Empire (146 BC-AD 476) – Rome was founded in 753 BC and became a Republic in 509 BC.

In 146 BC, Rome destroys Carthage and Corinth, and the world’s fifth empire begins. As the Romans continue moving east, the HASMONIANS signed a treaty with the Romans (

The Herodian Dynasty (37 BC to AD 70)

The Roman Empire allowed the title “King of the Jews.” and appointed Herod in 40 BC. After a siege of Jerusalem, Herod deposed Antigonus, decapitated him, and had his head sent to Rome. King Herod brings together Rome (Caesar and Octavius), Greece (Antony and Cleopatra) and the Hasmonean Dynasty of Israel. He rebuilt Judea during his reign and is worth a close examination.

A Timeline of the First Century and the Rise of Herod the Great.

A few lessons ago we looked at **John Hyrcanus** (135-104 BC), the first Maccabean High Priest of Israel. In 127 BC, Hyrcanus went to conquer **Idumea** (Edomite territory). Hyrcanus defeated the Edomites and made their land part of Judah, forcing them to be circumcised. The Edomites were descendants of Esau.

100 BC – Julius Caesar is born (b. July 12, 100 BC and d. March 15, 44 BC).

91-88 BC – The assassination of Marcus Livius Drusus leads to the Social War (91-88 BC) in Italy.

76 BC – The Hasmonean King of the Jews, Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC) dies, replaced by **Salome**.

73 BC - Herod was born in 73 BC in Petra, the capital of Idumea.

67 BC - General Pompey moves into Turkey to drive out Mithridates VI. Rome on Judea's doorstep.

67 BC - Queen Salome of Judea dies and her two sons, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II vie for the throne.

66 BC – Aristobulus II dethrones his older brother. Hyrcanus II flees to Petra and Antipater protects him.

63 BC – Both boys go to Damascus to appeal for help from Pompey. The Roman general goes to Jerusalem to see the Temple. The supporters of **Hyrcanus II** were in the city and opened the gates and let Pompey come into the city (April-May 63). Aristobulus was still in control of the Temple area. He was able to hold out there for three months. Finally, on a Sabbath day, the Romans stormed the Temple taking Aristobulus II captive and placing Hyrcanus II as High Priest. **Pompey's entering the Temple in 63 BC turned the Jews against Rome.** Not trusting the Jews, Pompey appoints Antipater (father of Herod) as pro-consul of Jerusalem, a political position.

***Herod is 10 years old when he moves with his father to Jerusalem in 63 BC.**

61 BC – Aristobulus II was taken to Rome and paraded (Triumph of Pompey) – eventually escaped.

60 BC – Pompey, Crassus, and Julius Caesar formed the First Triumvirate in Rome.

57 BC – Alexander, one of the two sons of Aristobulus II not been captured by Pompey revolted. The Syrian proconsul Aulus Gabinius with Marc Antony crushed the rebellion. Herod would later marry Alexander's daughter, Mariamne, in an attempt to appease the Hasmonean supporters.

56 BC – Aristobulus II and his other son (Antigonus) escaped from Rome to stir up trouble.

56 BC – Pompey, Crassus, and Julius Caesar renewed their Triumvirate coalition in Rome.

55 BC – Alexander attempted for a third time to stir up a revolt in Judea (wanting Hasmonean rule).

54 BC – Gabinius was replaced by **Crassus** as proconsul of Syria. Crassus raided the Temple for money. The Jews turned to a rising PARTHIA (a new Persian Empire) for help to resist the Romans.

51 BC – Crassus is killed in a battle with the Parthians, the neo-Persian Empire from the East.

49 BC – After Crassus' death, there is a shared rule between Pompey and Julius Caesar.

“In 49 BC civil war broke out between the two sides [Julius Caesar versus Pompey]. Caesar gained control of Rome and Pompey crossed the Adriatic. Caesar released Aristobulus from custody in order that he might take a lead in anti-Pompeian activity in Syria, where Pompey's party was in power, but before Aristobulus could leave Rome on this mission he was poisoned by Pompey's partisans. About the same time his son Alexander was also put to death (poisoned) at Antioch by orders of Metellus Scipio, proconsul of Syria from 49 to 48 BC. Metellus was Pompey's father-in-law and acted on Pompey's instructions. Footnote: In 60 BC Pompey had married Caesar's young daughter Julia; her untimely death in 54 did much to loosen the bonds uniting the two men.’ [F. F. Bruce, *Israel and the Nations*. Eerdmans, 1969. p. 186]

48 BC – At the battle of Pharsalus (Thessaly), Julius Caesar defeats the forces of Julius Pompey. Julius was now Supreme Commander. Pompey then fled to Egypt (Greece) for refuge under Ptolemy XIII. Ptolemy killed Pompey soon after he landed. When the Jews heard of his death, they remembered his forced entry into Temple and declared his death Divine judgment.

- 47 BC** – Julius with three thousand of his soldiers landed at Alexandria hoping to find Pompey. After learning of his assassination, Julius turned his attention to the internal conflict between King Ptolemy XIII and his rival sister Queen Cleopatra. Ptolemy, so "blockaded him and his army...in the palace quarter of Alexandria throughout the winter of 48-47 BC" (*F. F. Bruce*, p. 186). Antipater from Idumea, sponsor of Hyrcanus, and father of Herod the Great, rescued Caesar.
- 47 BC** – On his way back to Rome, Julius Caesar made a stop in Judea to thank Antipater for sending aid to him while he was stranded in Egypt. He gave Roman citizenship to Antipater including tax-exempt status and made him Procurator of Judea. Antipater his two sons as military prefects. **Herod is giving military rule over Galilee and Phasael is given military rule over Judea, and Herod is brutal with the rebels who lived in Galilee. Only in his mid-twenties, he wipes out the Galilean rebels including a prophet named Hezekiah. The Sanhedrin wants Herod executed. Herod brought soldiers to the trial to intimidate the Sanhedrin and the trial is "suspended."**
- 46 BC** – Sextus Caesar (cousin of Julius Caesar) was assassinated by a Pompeian sympathizer, Caecilius Bassus, who then took control of Syria. Julius Caesar immediately dispatched an army to Syria
- 44 BC** – The siege of Syria as still going on when **Julius Caesar was assassinated March 15, 44 BC.** This plunged the Roman world into confusion. Brutus and Cassius (two of the assassins) were opposed by Mark Antony (soldier) and Octavian (Caesar's grandnephew and adopted son). **Cassius had been appointed proconsul of Syria and Antipater sided with him (as did Herod).**
- 43 BC** – A rival of Antipater, by the name of **Malichus**, bribed the butler of Hyrcanus II to poison Antipater as he dined with Hyrcanus. This murder of Herod's father (Antipater) had a huge impact upon Herod. It may have been the moment when he decided to go after the throne. The Parthians were looking for an opportunity to make the Judeans their puppet state. Like Antipater, Herod was a loyal friend of Rome. There was a power struggle in Judea between Hyrcanus II and Antigonus (son of Aristobulus II), each of them wanting Rome's blessing. The Parthians were willing to support whichever. Eventually, Antigonus turned to Parthia.
- 42 BC** – The major confrontation between the forces of Brutus/Cassius and Antony/Octavian occurred at the **Battle of Philippi** (in Macedonia). **Antony and Octavian** were victorious. Brutus and Cassius both committed suicide. Antony and Octavian divided the regions of the empire among themselves. **Antony** took the East (Egypt, Syria, Palestine) and Octavian took the West (Rome).
- 42 BC** – **Antigonus** (sole surviving son of Aristobulus II) made an attempt to take control of Galilee away from his uncle Hyrcanus II. However, Herod intervened. Antigonus was banished (Parthia).
- 42 BC** – The defeat of Brutus and Cassius had serious implications for Syria and Judea.
- 41 BC** – When **Antony** came to Syria, he had to reorganize the leadership of Syria and Palestine underneath capable people he knew he could trust. Since **Antipater** had supported Cassius in his war against Antony, the two sons of Antipater (**Herod and Phasael**) were in a very precarious situation with Antony, now that Antony had control of all once held by Cassius. Herod befriended Antony, "Remember *how loyal* I was, not *to whom* I was loyal."
- 40 BC** – As soon as **Antony** stabilized everything in Syria and Palestine, he headed to Egypt to consort with **Cleopatra** during the winter of 41-40 BC, and then on to Italy in the Spring to strengthen relations with **Octavian** that had somewhat weakened. The **Parthians** moved in with Antigonus. **Herod took his family and fled to Idumea (Masada) and kept his family there for three years.**
- 40 BC** – Herod goes to Rome and gives a first-hand account of the Parthian invasion. Octavian and Antony submitted a proposal to the Roman Senate that Herod be declared **King of Judea** in December 40 BC. But a king in theory is one thing, and a king in fact is another. Herod would now have to go back to Judea, regather his troops, and re-subjugate Judea. Herod came marching to Jerusalem.
- Next week: Herod the Great, King of Judea (40 BC to 4 BC)**