

## **Matthew 14: 1-12**

Antipas was a son of Herod the Great, after whose death he became ruler of Galilee. He married the daughter of Aretas, King of Arabia, but later lived with **Herodias**, the wife of his own half-brother Philip. This union with **Herodias** is mentioned and blamed by **Josephus** (Ant., XVIII, v) as well as in the N. T., and brought Antipas to ruin. It involved him in a war with Aretas in which he lost his army.

**Josephus** regarded this calamity which befell Antipas "as a punishment for what he did against **John that was called the Baptist**; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards **God**, and so to come to baptism" (Ant., XVIII, v, 2).

The N. T. gives the reason why **Herodias** sought John's head. As she had married Herod Philip -- not the tetrarch of the same name -- who lived as a private citizen at Rome, by whom she had a daughter, Salome, she acted against the law in leaving him to marry Antipas. John rebuked Antipas for the adulterous union, and **Herodias** took vengeance (**Matthew 14:3-12**; **Mark 6:17-29**). **Josephus** does not say that John's death was caused by the hatred of **Herodias**, but rather by the jealousy of Herod on account of John's great influence over the people. He was sent to the frowning fortress of Machærus on the mountains east of the Dead Sea, and there put to death (Jos., "Ant.", XVIII, v, 2).

It was before this Herod that **Our Lord** appeared and was mocked (**Luke 23:7-13**). Antipas had come to Jerusalem for the Pasch, and he is named with **Pilate** as a persecutor of **Christ** (**Acts 4:27**). The enmities that existed between him and **Pilate** were caused by **Pilate's** having put to death some Galileans, who belonged to Herod's jurisdiction (**Luke 13:1**); a reconciliation was effected as related in Luke, xxiii, 12. When **Herodias** saw how well her brother Agrippa had fared at Rome, whence he returned a king, she urged Antipas to go to Cæsar and obtain the royal title, for he was not king, but only tetrarch of Galilee -- the N. T. however sometimes calls him king (**Matthew 14:9**; **Mark 6:14**), and **Josephus** likewise so styles Archelaus (Ant., XVIII, iv, 3), though he was never king, but only ethnarch. Contrary to his better judgment he went, and soon learned that Agrippa by messengers had accused him before Caligula of conspiracy against the Romans. The emperor banished him to Lyons, Gaul (France), A. D. 39, and **Herodias** accompanied him (Jos., "Ant.", XVIII, vii, 2). **Josephus** (Bel. Jud., II, ix, 6) says: "So Herod died in Spain whither his wife had followed him". The year of his death is not known. To reconcile the two statements of **Josephus** about the place of exile and death, see Smith, "Dict. of the Bible", s. v. "Herodias" (note).

**Nicephorus** says this of the dancing daughter, "As she was journeying once in the winter time, and a frozen river had to be crossed on foot, the ice broke beneath her, not without the providence of God. Straightaway she sank down up to her neck. This made her dance and wriggle about with all the lower parts of her body in the water. Her wicked head was glazed with ice, and at length severed from her body by the flowing ice."

## **Matthew 14: 13 & 23**

- Our Lord was surely grieved at the unjust death of John the Baptist, and this is part of the reason for withdrawing.
- Christ goes away to be alone also to teach us the necessity of prayer and that silence is necessary for prayer.
- Prayer is the fruit of silence and solitude.

**CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy, AUG. 20, 2006 (Zenit.org).- Benedict XVI warned of the danger of falling into "hardness of heart" as a result of excessive daily occupations.**

Addressing several thousand people gathered today in the courtyard of the papal summer residence of Castel Gandolfo to pray the Angelus, the Pope suggested that prayer and contemplation take precedence in the "surge" of daily life.

The Holy Father spoke of St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1091-1153), a doctor of the Church whose feast day is today, as an example of one who knew how to balance prayer with activity.

The saint wrote in a letter to Pope Eugene III: "See where these accursed occupations can lead you, if you continue to lose yourself in them -- without leaving anything of yourself for yourself."

**Benedict XVI said: "It is necessary to pay attention to the dangers of excessive activity, regardless of one's condition and occupation, observes the saint, because -- as he said to the Pope of that time, and to all Popes and to all of us -- numerous occupations often lead to 'hardness of heart,' 'they are no more than suffering for the spirit, loss of intelligence and dispersion of grace.'"**

"This admonition is valid for all kinds of occupations, including those inherent to the governance of the Church," the Pope added in his address which elicited much applause among those present. Many of the crowd, unable to enter the overcrowded courtyard, heard his words from outside the papal residence.

Priorities

"How useful for us also is this call to the **primacy of prayer!**" said the Bishop of Rome.

The Holy Father said St. Bernard "was able to harmonize the monk's aspiration for solitude and the tranquility of the cloister with the urgency of the important and complex missions in the service of the Church."

"For him, love is the greatest force of the spiritual life," the Pontiff said. "God, who is love, creates man out of love and out of love rescues him."

**14:13-21** The Multiplication of the Loaves. (Mark 6: 30-44)

**“You give them something to eat.”**

Jesus takes the fives loaves and two fish, blesses them and gave them to the disciples

And then a miracle happens

But it happens at the hands of the disciples

Jesus blesses the bread but then he gives it to the twelve

It was then that the multiplication occurs

The twelve go out and then everybody has enough to eat

Mt 14:22-33 Jesus passed by walking on the sea (**Mark 6:45-52**)

- Take heart I AM; have no fear
- The number one command in the Bible: Do not be afraid

**Mark 6:51-52** “for they did not understand about the loaves, but the hearts were *hardened*.”

They don't get it about Jesus because they don't understand the loaves

Matthew and Mark are saying –

- You can't understand Jesus if you don't get it about the bread.
- If you don't know the story about the bread, you are going to misunderstand Jesus

This event of Jesus walking on the Sea is followed immediately by **John 6:26 – 69**

- The Bread of Life Discourse

**Mt 15:32-39** Another story about Bread and a Boat (**Mark 8:1**)

**Matthew 15: 33** How can one feed these men with bread here in the desert?

- Dah! Obviously the Apostles haven't read chapter 14
- The desert evokes Exodus 16 and the manna

**Matthew 16: 5 ( Go to and read Mark 8:14-21)**

“Now they had forgotten to bring bread...”

- What bread did they forget?

**Mark 8:8** “They all ate and were satisfied and took up the pieces that were left over, seven baskets full.”

- They forgot the miraculous bread – the Wonder Bread

**Mark 8:15** And He cautioned them, saying, “Take heed beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod.”

**Mark 8:16** And they discussed it with one another saying, “We have no bread.”

**Mark 8:17 Jesus said to them...**

“Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread?

Are your hearts *hardened*?

Having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear?

And do you not remember?

When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up? And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you take up?

Do you not yet understand?”

Three times we are told they have no bread

Then they discuss the fact that they have no bread

Then Jesus asks them, “Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread?”

We were told there is one loaf in the boat

- How does that square? Is it a contradiction?

**What is the one loaf?**

Mark is making a connection between the loaf and Jesus Himself

Jesus is the bread

**Mark 6:41** “he blessed and broke” the bread.

The same expression is used at the Last Supper in instituting the Eucharist;

- Mt 26:26
- 1 Cor 11:24
- Luke 24:13-15, on the Road to Emmaus, Christ is made known to the disciples in the “breaking of the bread.”

**“The Breaking of the Bread”** is the expression that the first Christians used to designate the Eucharist and the Mass: cf. Acts 2:42, 46; 20:7,11; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17

### **Matthew 14:28-33**

#### **Bernard of Clairvaux,**

“If you will not be submerged by life’s violent storms, do not turn away your eyes from the splendor of this star! If the storms of temptations arise, if you crash against the rocks of tribulation, look to the star, call upon Mary. If you are tossed about on the waves of pride, of ambition, of slander, of hostility, look to the star, call upon Mary. If wrath or greed or the enticements of the flesh upset the boat of your mind, look to Mary. If you are disturbed by the immensity of your crimes...if you begin to be swallowed up by the abyss of depression and despair, think of Mary! In dangers, in anxiety, in doubt, think of Mary, call upon Mary. Let her name not leave your lips nor your heart, and that you may receive the help of her prayer, do not cease to follow the example of her conduct...If she hold you, you will not fall, if she protects you, you need not fear.”

### **15:21-28 The Canaanite woman**

- God draws back in order that she will pursue and her desire for Him will grow and her desire is rewarded.

We have already covered Matthew 16:1-12

### **Matthew 16: 13-21**

#### First Announcement of Suffering and Death

Jesus knows full well that He is going to **suffer** and **die**, **rise** on the third day, and then **ascend** to the Father until He comes **again** in glory at the end of time.

**MT 16:21** Jesus makes this known to them for the first time.

#### **Pope**

Therefore, like King Richard the Lionhearted, departing for the Crusades, He must appoint a **prime minister** to take His place.

**Read MT 16:15-19** Jesus, the Davidic King, appoints a *prime minister* to stand in His place to *lead* and to *govern* the Kingdom with His authority, **until He returns in power.**

As Jesus and the disciples come to Caesarea Philippi, He turns to Peter and says, “who do you say that I am? Peter answers, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” To this great confession Jesus responds, “Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this **rock** I will build my Church, and the powers of death will not prevail against it.”

The play on the word **Rock** is perfect in Aramaic, but flawed in Greek.  
*Kepha & Kepha; Petro & Petra.*

In using this phrase Jesus was drawing from the prophet **Isaiah**, the most well known of the prophets, for the Jewish people.

**Isaiah 51:1-2**

“You who seek the Lord; look to the **rock** from which you were hewn, and to the quarry from which you were digged. Look to Abraham your father and to Sarah who bore you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him and made him many.”

*God established His covenant family Israel on the Rock of Abraham, and now Christ restores the covenant family of God on the **Rock** of Peter .*

**MT 16:19** Jesus goes on to say, “**I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.**”

**In order to understand this we go again to the prophet Isaiah.**

**Isaiah 22:15-22**, *Hezekiah*, the Davidic King, dismisses *Shebna*, the former prime minister or master of the palace, and appoints *Eliakim* as the new prime Minister.

Hezekiah tells his new prime minister that he shall be a father to Israel and, “**I will place on his shoulder the Key of the house of David; he shall open**

**and none shall shut; and he shall shut and none shall open.”(Isaiah 22:21-22).**

Here Jesus, the Son of David, the new Davidic King, appoints Peter to be His Prime Minister to rule in His place once He has ascended to the Father until He comes again in Glory.

### **Significance of the Keys**

**Isaiah 22:15,**

**Is 22:13** *Over the household* Technical phrase for *Prime Minister*:

- **Genesis 40, 41** Joseph over the house of Egypt
- Al Bayyit
- Moses is “over the house” of God in Numbers 12:7
- Jotham is “over the house” of the King who has leprosy and is forced to leave 2 Kings 5:15
- Pope is Prime Minister “over the house”
- **Lk 12:32ff.** Who is the wise steward that the master puts “over the house”?

**Is 22:23** Fasten a peg in a sure place. Pope is Prime Minister of **unity**; lose the peg and the tent unravels (**33,000+ Protestant Denominations**)

Matthew is not the only one who emphasizes this understanding of Peter as the one who acts as Christ’s Prime Minister to rule and guide and teach the household of God in the place of the Davidic King.

**Luke** affirms this understanding from the Last Supper as **Christ commissions Peter to be the guardian of the faith**, keeping it from every lapse and strengthening his brothers in it:

“You are those who have continued with me in my trials; as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you (plural), that he might sift you (plural) like wheat, but I have prayed for you (singular) that your faith may not fail; and when you (singular) have turned again, strengthen your brethren” (**LK 22:28-32**).

Jesus makes it clear to the Apostles that they are the foundation stones of the kingdom he is establishing, and *Peter is to have a special mission; to guard* the redeeming truth of Christ.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, confirmed this mandate to Peter after His Resurrection:

**John 21:15-17:**

“When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Feed my lambs.’ A second time he said to him, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me?’ He said to him, ‘Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Tend my sheep.’ He said to him a third time, ‘Do you love me?’ Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, ‘Do you love me?’ And he said to him, ‘Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Feed my sheep.’”

The Old Testament frequently referred to the Messiah as the Good Shepherd who must **feed, teach** and **govern** God’s people who have been abandoned.

Jesus is the Good Shepherd, the “Chief Shepherd” as Peter calls Him in **1 Peter 5:4**.

Before He ascended into heaven, Jesus commissions Peter to continue His role as the shepherd of the flock – to be Jesus’ representative upon earth. Jesus’ words to Peter, “Feed my lambs, feed my sheep,” explain Peter’s mission as one of guarding our Lord’s whole flock without limitations.

- Feed is equivalent to **direct** and **govern**.

Peter is made the shepherd and guide for the whole Church.

**LG 18 “Jesus Christ put Peter at the head of the other Apostles, and in him he set up a lasting and visible source and foundation of the unity of both faith and communion”**

Where Peter is, there is Christ’s Church.

### **MT 17:24, 27**

Matthew verifies this role of Peter in Ch.17 as Peter pays the temple tax for Christ and himself:

v. 24 “When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the half-shekel tax went up to Peter and said, ‘Does not your teacher pay the tax?’”

v. 27 Jesus said to Peter, “However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook, and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel; take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.”

### **Matthew 16:21-26**

16:22 Peter rebukes Jesus not because he does not want Jesus to suffer;

- Peter rebukes Jesus because he does not want to suffer with Jesus.

Why do I say this? Listen to Jesus’ words in **16:23-28**:

Jesus tells the Apostles clearly,

- if they want to be his followers,
- they too must deny themselves,
- take up their cross and follow Jesus to Calvary.

### **Peter didn’t get it because he didn’t get about the loaves.**

Only when we have eaten and drunk deeply of the love of God through prayer and the Eucharist will we be able to renounce ourselves and give love to others.

### **Pope Benedict XVI in Deus Caritas Est (God is Love)**

Man cannot live by oblation, descending love alone. He cannot always give, he must also receive. Anyone who wishes to give love must also receive love as a gift. Certainly, as the Lord tells us, one can become a source from which rivers of living water flow. Yet to become such a source, one must constantly drink anew from the original source, which is Jesus Christ, from whose pierced heart flows the love of God (John 19:34).

### **If we are going to give love generously,**

Then it is first necessary to eat and drink deeply of the love of God by means of: meditation; Eucharist; Eucharistic thanksgiving.

### **Matthew 17:1-8 The Transfiguration**

It is in the context of Jesus telling the Apostles explicitly that He will be killed that the mysterious episode of Jesus' Transfiguration takes place on a high mountain, before three witnesses chosen by Himself; Peter, James and John. Jesus' face and clothes become dazzling with light, and Moses and Elijah appear, speaking "of His **departure**, which he was to accomplish at Jerusalem." (**Luke 9:31**) A cloud covers Him and a voice from heaven says: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to Him."

For a moment Jesus discloses His divine glory, confirming Peter's confession. He also reveals that **He will have to go by the way of the Cross** (and so will we) at Jerusalem in order to "enter into His glory." **Luke 24:26**

Moses and Elijah had seen God's glory on the Mountain; the Law and the Prophets had announced the Messiah's sufferings (**Luke 24:27 thus the disciples should have known the Messiah would have to suffer and die and not be scandalized by the Cross and so fall away.**)

Christ's suffering and death is the will of the Father: the Son acts as God's suffering servant from **Isaiah 42:1**

**Byzantine Liturgy** "You were transfigured on the mountain, and your disciples, as much as they were capable of it, beheld your glory, O Christ our God, so that when they should see you crucified they would understand that your Passion was voluntary, and proclaim to the world that you truly are the splendor of the Father."

**St. Leo the Great**, "The Lord was transfigured, that He might take away the scandal of the Cross from the hearts of his Disciples." For it was these same three who witnessed also the Agony in the Garden.

The Transfiguration gives us a foretaste of Christ's glorious coming, when he "will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body." But it also recalls that "it is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God." **Acts 14:22**

**Augustine**

“Peter did not yet understand this when he wanted to remain with Christ on the mountain. It has been reserved for you, Peter, but for after death. For now, Jesus says, “God down to toil on earth, to serve on earth, to be scorned and crucified on earth. Life goes down to be killed; Bread goes down to suffer hunger; the Way goes down to be exhausted on his journey; the Spring goes down to suffer thirst; and you refuse to suffer?”