

Mark: The Mysterious Messiah

Week 12: Mark 6:14-29

Introductory Exercise: Why do people get so concerned when political candidates are beholden to companies, unions, and other "special interest" groups?

Just before this week's reading, what act of Jesus has spread the news of the coming kingdom of God around the Galilean region, and what public reaction to Jesus came directly before that?

In the family tree of the Herods, which one hears about Jesus in the opening verses of this week's reading? By what literary means does the book of Mark announce that John the Baptizer has met his end? Take a quick look at Mark 1:14 just as a reminder that this is not the first mention of John's troubles.

Looking a bit more closely at Mark 6:15-16, what does this "some say... others say..." structure remind you of? Why is the variation in public opinion important in the book of Mark?

Which Old Testament story is echoing through the account of John's arrest and execution? (Hint: the first echo of the story came in the way that John dresses.) What tensions are at work in the House of Herod concerning John's fate?

In John 6:22, whose daughter is Herodias in our translations? What happens when Herod swears a rash oath here, and what Old Testament echoes are at play in this part of the story? What do Mark 6:19 and Mark 6:24 have to do with the way people translate it?

What grisly detail does the girl add when she comes to Herod with the request from her mother? What at this point makes the execution of John inevitable in the mind of Herod? Knowing how the second half of the gospel approaches its end, what echoes are you anticipating in the career of another public prophet?

What do John's disciples do when they hear of John's execution? Again, what echo does this set up?

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