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## IX. THE HERODS.

- A. Herod the Great, son of Antipater, an Idumean, was born 74 BC.
1. He was made governor of Galilee by his father at the age of 25.
  2. He reigned as King of the Jews from 37 to 4 BC.
  3. Gundry describes Herod: "Herod was scheming, jealous, and cruel; he killed two of his own wives and at least three of his own sons. It was he who had the infants in Bethlehem slaughtered according to Matthew's nativity account (ch. 2). Augustus once said that it was better to be Herod's pig than his son (a word-play, since the Greek words for pig and son sound very much alike). But Herod was also an efficient ruler and a clever politician, who managed to survive the struggles for power in the highest echelons of Roman government" (Gundry 12-13).
  4. Herod married Mariamne, a descendant of the Hasmonians, thus strengthening his claim to the throne.
  5. Herod's greatest achievement was his building program. He proved to be a miniature Augustus in building projects. Josephus informs us that there was not any place in the kingdom fit for the purpose that was not without something to Caesar's honor (The Jewish Wars 1.21.4). The program included the following:
    - a. Samaria. Renamed Sebaste in honor of Augustus. "His extensive building operations support the contention that he encouraged the cult of the Emperor, for all the many temples he built throughout Palestine were dedicated to Caesar" (Russell 37).
    - b. Jerusalem. Strengthened the walls, and erected 3 towers; built the fortress of Antonia (named to honor Mark Antony); the temple platform; the walls around the temple area (the Western Wall or 'wailing wall' of the Jews); rebuilt the temple; a theater; an amphitheater.
      - (1) Work on the temple was begun in 20/19 BC. The temple proper was finished in 1 1/2 years; 8 more years were spent on the courts.
      - (2) Work on the surrounding buildings was still going on during the ministry of Christ (cf. Jn. 2:20-22).
      - (3) The work was completed during the time of the procurator Albinus (AD 62-64), just a few years before the destruction by Titus in AD 70.
    - c. Other ruins of the Herodian period can be seen at Ashkelon, the Herodium, Masada, Machaerus, Jericho, Caesarea, and other places in Palestine.
  6. Herod goes down in infamy as the one who tried to have the infant Jesus put to death.
  7. Herod died of cancer of the intestines and dropsy in 4 BC.
  8. Charles Pfeiffer says Herod "must go down in history as one of the world's great failures. That he was jealous even of the infant Jesus shows the extent to which the desire for worldly sovereignty may lead a man astray" (110).
- B. Herod's Successors.
1. His Sons. They lacked his ability and ambition.
    - a. Archelaus — Ethnarch of Judea— 4 BC to AD 6 (Mt. 2:22).
    - b. Herod Philip (son of Cleopatra) —Tetrarch of Judea and Trachonitis -4 BC to AD 34 (Lk. 3:1).
    - c. Herod Antipas — Tetrarch of Galilee —4 BC to AD 39.
      - (1) Rebuked by John the Baptist for marrying Herodias, the wife of Philip (son of Mariamne). He had John beheaded (Mt. 14:3-12, Mk. 6:17-29).
      - (2) Jesus called him "that fox" (Lk. 13:32).
      - (3) Jesus stood trial before him (Lk. 23:7-12).
  2. His Grandson.
    - a. Herod Agrippa I — King of Judea — AD 37 to 44. He was the son of Aristobulus, the son of Mariamne.
    - b. Executed James the Apostle (Acts 12).

3. His Great Grandchildren (born to Herod Agrippa I).

- a. Bernice became the consort of her brother Herod Agrippa II (Acts 25:13).
- b. Herod Agrippa II — Tetrarch of Chalcis and of northern territory — AD 48 to 70. Paul made a defense before him (Acts 25: 12 — 26:32).
- c. Drusilla married Felix, procurator of Judea —AD 52 to 59 (?). (See complete chart in Tenney 370).

C. The Roman Procurators.

1. As a result of the misrule of Archelaus he was removed from office by Augustus in AD 6. Roman governors ruled the territory. The ones of biblical importance are listed:
  - a. Pontius Pilate —AD 26 to 36 —Jesus Crucified.
  - b. M. Antonius Felix —AD 52 to 59 — Paul tried (Acts 23—24).
  - c. Porcius Festus —AD 59 to 61 — Paul tried (Acts 25—26).
  - d. Florus — raided the Temple treasury and "ignited the Jewish revolt of AD 66—73" (Gundry 15).

D. The Jewish Priesthood.

Gundry reminds us that 'in spite of the Herod 's and the Roman governors, the Jewish priesthood and the Sanhedrin (a kind of Jewish Supreme Court) largely controlled local matters affecting daily life" (Gundry 15).