

28.19 John the Baptist Preaching and Imprisoned (John 3:22–36; Luke 3:19, 20)

✓ “*Check*” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows

[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Flannelgraph figures of John and disciples with a river/lake background or pictures of the same
- Photo of a wedding with the bride, groom, and attendants

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:

- *Jews*: descendants of Shem (Noah’s son), and Abraham. In the Old Testament we called them Israelites before they went to Babylon. After they returned from Babylon in Ezra’s and Nehemiah’s time, they were called Jews. Most Jews in Jesus’ time did not believe in Him but chose, rather, to believe their own traditions.
- *wrath of God*: anger that condemns those who do not believe on Jesus Christ as Saviour
- *weddings in Jesus’ day*: Have you been to a wedding? Who are the people who are all dressed up in what is called “the wedding party”—the people who stand up with the bride and groom? They are friends [or relatives] of the bride and friends [or relatives] of the groom. At the wedding they are very happy because their friends are getting married. [Show photo of a wedding that the students may be aware of and identify the bride, groom, and attendants.] In Jesus’ time the groom and his best friend would go to get the bride before the actual wedding ceremony. The groom’s friend helped the groom, but after they had gotten the bride, the friend of the groom was really happy because now the bride and groom were getting married.

Scripture: (ESV)

John 3:22 After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he remained there with them and was baptizing. 23 John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there, and people were coming and being baptized 24 (for John had not yet been put in prison).

25 Now a discussion arose between some of John’s disciples and a Jew over purification. 26 And they came to John and said to him, “Rabbi, he who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you bore witness—look, he is baptizing, and all are going to him.” 27 John answered, “A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.’ 29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease.”

31 He who comes from above is above all. He who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks in an earthly way. He who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He bears witness to what he has seen and heard, yet no one receives his testimony. 33 Whoever receives his testimony sets his seal to this, that God is true. 34 For he whom God has sent utters the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. 35 The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

Luke 3:18 So with many other exhortations he [John] preached good news to the people. 19 But Herod the tetrarch, who had been reproved by him for Herodias, his brother’s wife, and for all the evil things that Herod had done, 20 added this to them all, that he locked up John in prison.

Introduction/Review:

When Jesus Christ was born, we learned, wise men came from the East to worship Him. They first went to Jerusalem to ask where to find Jesus. Herod the Great, a wicked king, learned from the priests that the Messiah or Christ was to be born in Bethlehem. Telling the wise men about this place, Herod also added, “When you have found him, come back and tell me so that I may also go worship Him.”

Did the wise men go back to Herod? No. What did Herod do when he learned the wise men had gone back to the East? [He slew all the boy babies in the area of Bethlehem who were two years old and younger.] What do you think about Herod’s character? [Allow answers.]

[Teacher, beware and choose what to teach younger children regarding the perverted relationships of Herodias, Herod Antipas, and Philip in this story.]

Before Herod died, he divided up Israel into three or four parts and let three sons rule over these areas. One of the sons named Philip ruled up in northeastern Israel near Syria. [Locate these places on a map.] He had married his ✓cousin (or niece) who was named Herodias. (She had already married and divorced an uncle in Rome, according to Sunday School Lessons in Online Bible.). Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee and Perea in northwestern Israel. He had married the daughter of the king of Arabia. However, when he met Philip’s wife Herodias, who was also his cousin (or niece), he decided he wanted to marry her. So he sent his wife back to her father. Herodias divorced Philip and became the wife of Herod Antipas.

Can you see all the wickedness in this terrible situation? I know we hear so much about divorce in our culture that this story seems commonplace, but God says in Malachi 2:16 that He hates divorce. These divorces and remarriages were even more wicked than most because of the intermarrying within the family. It is strictly forbidden by God in the Bible to marry the wife of one’s brother, to say nothing of the other sins involved in this family. Oh, Herod Antipas was a wicked man in his marriage and in many other things he did as a ruler; e.g., murdering, being cruel, and being drunk.

Jesus had gone to Jerusalem for the Passover; He had cleared all the sellers out of the Temple; He had talked to Nicodemus about finding eternal life. In the verses about Nicodemus, we have one of the most famous verses of the Bible, one that tells us about eternal life. Say John 3:16 with me: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life,” or the New Living Translation, “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that every-one who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

Story:

Jesus’ baptizing

Jesus and His disciples (John, maybe James, Andrew, Peter, Philip, Nathanael) now left Jerusalem and went into the country outside of Jerusalem. It was called the land of Judea. Just as John the Baptist had done, they baptized people who repented of their sin. Actually, Jesus did not do the baptizing, but His disciples did baptize.

John the Baptizer, too, was still baptizing, only he was no longer in the south near Jericho on the Jordan River but ✓way up northeast of Jerusalem, in an area that had lots of water. (The location is undetermined but may have been an area on the road to Damascus.*) Why did they need lots of water? [Because the baptism was dipping, not sprinkling.]

The report of John’s disciples

The Jews (or maybe one Jew) talked to some of John the Baptizer’s disciples, asking about baptism (✓or purifying, according to the text, for the Jews purified their bodies in pools of water near the Temple). Maybe those Jews (or the Jew) gave John’s disciples some information about Jesus, for those disciples came to John to inform Him, “Master, that One you said is the Lamb of God when you were at the Jordan River—we hear he is baptizing, too, and all kinds of people are coming to Him for baptism.” ✓I think those disciples were

maybe a bit jealous for John. After all, John was the first to baptize. Now Jesus was baptizing more people than John.

John's ministry

John answered with about ten verses of Scripture that show a real man of God who knew his proper place under God. [Teacher, use the visual found at the end of this lesson to highlight John's eight points.] He said, (1) "No one will receive unless God in heaven gives. You know that I told you, (2) 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him.' You know how the friend of the bridegroom is full of joy when he hears the voice of the groom. (3) That's how I am: I am full of joy because the 'groom,' so to speak, has come.

(4) "He must increase, but I must decrease. (5) He [Jesus] who came from heaven is over all. He who came from earth (✓me—John) is from the earth. (6) What that heavenly Person [Jesus] has seen [in heaven] he tells us, but no one [especially of the Jews] believes Him. (7) If one believes, he is absolutely convinced that God is true, for the one [Jesus] whom God has sent speaks the words of God. (8) The Father loves the Son and has given all things to Him."

Then John said something that we all need to know and memorize and remember. He said, "He that believes on the Son has everlasting life; and he that does not believe the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him." What does this verse say about the ones who believe—trust—Jesus completely? [He or she has everlasting life.] What did John say about the ones who do not believe the Son? [1. Shall not see life; 2. God's wrath abides on him.] "*Shall not see life*" means will not have everlasting life with Christ. "*The wrath of God abides on him*" means the one who does not believe in Christ is doomed to have everlasting death in hell.

Herod's sin

Do you remember who was the ruler of this part of Israel—the place where John was baptizing? [Herod Antipas.] What sinful thing had he done besides murdering people and living like a drunken man? [Had divorced his wife and had married his brother's wife.]

John gives us an example of how preachers today should speak against the sins of those in places of authority, for John personally and publicly told Herod Antipas, "You are disobeying God by taking your brother's wife for yourself! This is a wicked sin in God's eyes!"

Was John brave, or what? I might have been afraid to speak against the sins of my leader, but John was brave and bold.

John's imprisonment

How do you think Herod felt? [Angry.] This is what he did: he put John in prison. Oh, no! What will happen to John the Baptizer? Will he get out of prison? Will he get to preach again? We will learn what happened to him in a later lesson, but we know that he had faithfully and bravely prepared the way for Jesus Christ, and, just like the bridegroom's friend, he was happy that Jesus Christ had begun His work.

*"The word *Enon*, or *AEnon*, means a *fountain*, and was doubtless given to this place because of the fountains there. On the situation of the place nothing certain has been determined. Eusebius places it 8 Roman miles [1000 paces or about 1620 yards—our mile is 1760 yards] south of Scythopolis or Bethshen, and 53 north-east /of Jerusalem . . . on the west side of the Jordan" (Barnes in Online Bible).

"If one starts at Sychar, at the foot of Mount Ebal, and follows the Damascus road northward for seven miles, he comes upon the valley called Wady Farah. In this beautiful wady the stream flows eastward, having Salim three miles to its south and 'Ainun four miles to its north. For the most part the valley is narrow, and hemmed in by rocky cliffs. But if one follows the course seven miles eastward from the Damascus road, he comes upon a beautiful valley, about one mile wide and three miles broad—a place every way suitable for the gathering of multitudes to hear the preaching of John. A perennial stream, with copious springs all along its course,

furnishes, even in the longest, driest summers, the “much water” required for baptism” (FFG in Online Bible).

Lessons from this lesson:

- Jesus is God: John said, “He who comes from above is above all . . . He bears witness to what he has seen and heard” and “The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him” John 3:31, 32, 35, 36).
- Follow the example of John, who was not jealous of Christ. Of course, Jesus was not a man of whom to be jealous. Nevertheless, we should honor those who with integrity seem to prosper more than we do.
- Be brave to proclaim God’s message even though it may bring you difficulty. God is in charge; He will take care of you.
- Have you believed on the name of the Son of God, or are you under the wrath of God?

Activities:

- Play dough: wedding ring, crown, prison
- Review or work on catechism regarding regeneration: [Note: Some people consider the word *catechism* to be a Roman Catholic term. It simply means “instructing by asking questions and receiving answers.” If you wish to use a different term, just say, “Q and A.”]
 1. How could the Son of God suffer? [Christ, the Son of God, became man that He might obey and suffer in our nature.]
 2. What is meant by the atonement? [Christ’s satisfying divine justice by His sufferings and death in the place of sinners.]
 3. What did God the Father undertake in the covenant of grace? [To justify and sanctify those for whom Christ should die.]
 4. What is justification? [It is God’s forgiving sinners and treating them as if they had never sinned.]
 5. What is sanctification? [It is God’s making sinner holy in heart and conduct.]
 6. For whom did Christ obey and suffer? [For those whom the Father had given Him.]
 7. What kind of life did Christ live on earth? [A life of perfect obedience to the law of God.]
 8. What kind of death did Christ die? [The painful and shameful death of the cross.]
 9. Who will be saved? [Only those who repent of sin and believe in Christ.]
 10. What is it to repent? [To be sorry for sin and to hate and forsake it because it is displeasing to God.]
 11. What is it to believe in Christ? [To trust in Christ alone for salvation.]
 12. Can you repent and believe in Christ by your own power? [No. I can do nothing good without God’s Holy Spirit.]
- Sing songs that review the life of Christ found on the Songs page at teachingthebibleto kids.org.
- Refer to the Antipas coin pictures and Herodian Dynasty chart to inform about Herod Antipas.
- Review questions: (Game: Divide the class into those who are X’s and O’s. Play Tic Tac To.)
 1. Who was baptizing? [Jesus’ disciples and John the Baptizer.]
 2. Why was it important for baptisms to have plentiful water? [Because baptism is by dipping.]
 3. Fill in the blank. John the Baptizer said, “I am not the _____, but I have been sent before him.” [Christ.]
 4. Fill in the blanks. John likened himself to a friend of the _____ who is very _____. [Bridegroom; happy.]
 5. Fill in the blank. John said, “He [Jesus] must increase, but I [John] must _____.” [Decrease.]
 6. What remains on people who do not believe/obey the Son? [God’s wrath.]

7. Why did Herod Antipas lock up John in prison? [Because John rebuked Herod because he married his brother's wife and for all the evil things he did.]
8. Where did Jesus go after He heard John was imprisoned? [To Galilee; Capernaum.]
9. Why was Jesus' living in Capernaum significant? [It fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy about Zebulun and Naphtali's having light dawn on them.]
10. After John's imprisonment Jesus began to preach, "Repent." Why was it time to repent? ["For the kingdom of heaven is at hand."]

Memory Verse[s]:

- John 3:36—Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.
- John 1:1–14:
 - 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
 - 2 He was in the beginning with God.
 - 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.
 - 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.
 - 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.
 - 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
 - 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.
 - 8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
 - 9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.
 - 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.
 - 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.
 - 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:
 - 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.
 - 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Handwork:

- Color the clipart picture found below. Use watercolor or a blue gel pen to color the water.
- Or older students may cut black paper to resemble bars of a jail or prison and glue them over the picture of John the Baptizer that has Luke 3:20 written on it. A facsimile of the bars before they are cut is found below.

Jews

wrath of God

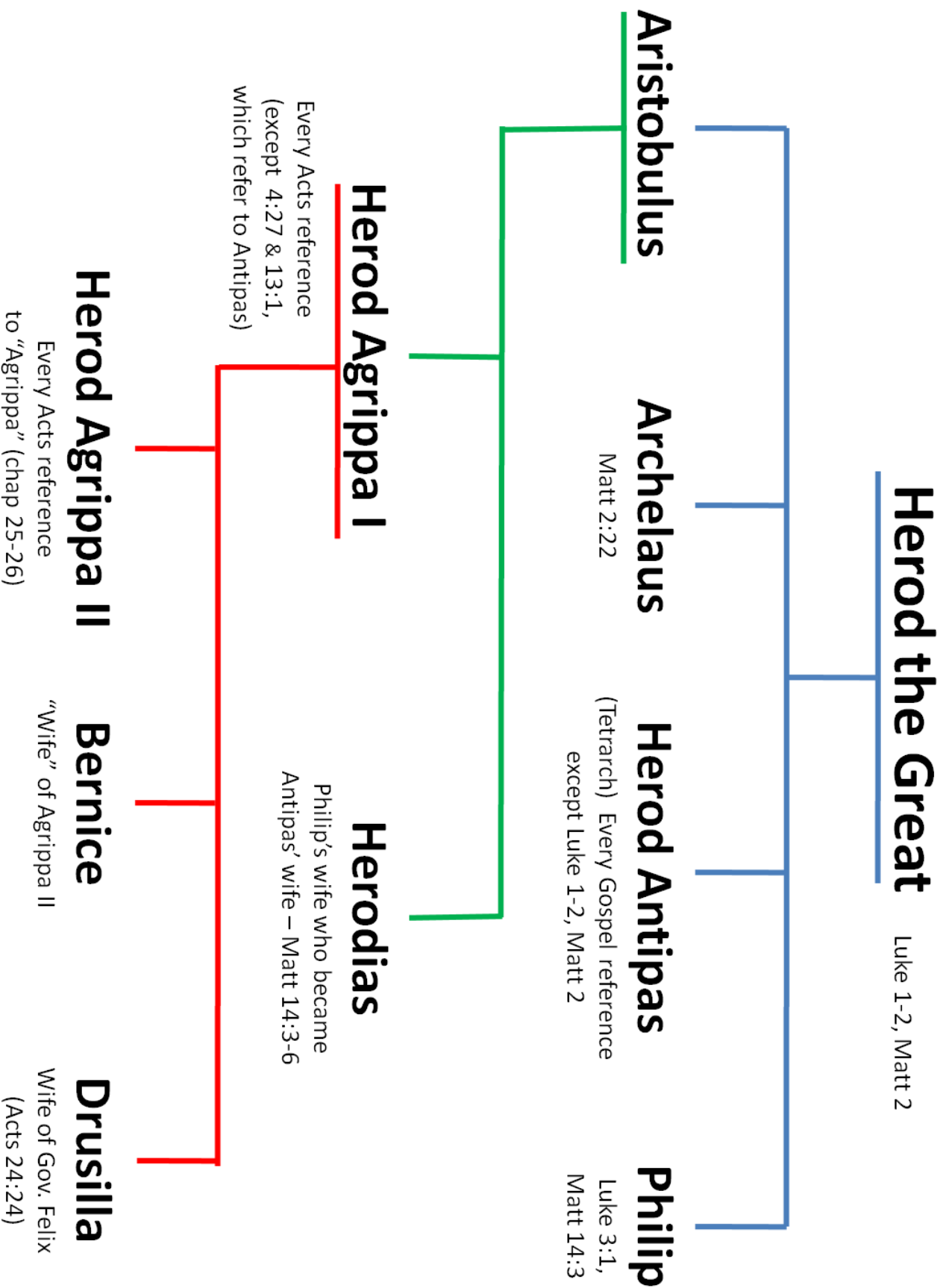
weddings in Jesus' day





<https://apis.xogrp.com/media-api/images/3b2912f7-4edf-4612-b559-c341bba04d93> John was the friend of the bridegroom.





John the Baptizer's Proclamations

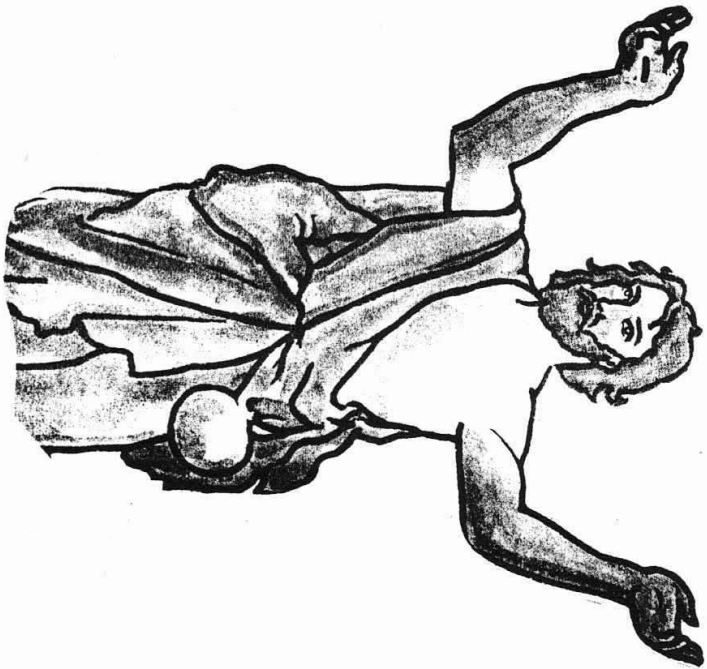
- 1. No one will receive unless God in heaven gives.**
- 2. I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before Him.**
- 3. The friend of the bridegroom is full of joy when he hears the voice of the groom. I am full of joy because the 'groom' has come.**
- 4. He must increase, but I must decrease.**
- 5. He [Jesus] who came from heaven is over all. He [John] who came from earth is from the earth.**
- 6. What that heavenly Person [Jesus] has seen he tells us, but no one [especially of the Jews] believes Him.**
- 7. If one believes, he is absolutely convinced that God is true, for the one whom God has sent [Jesus] speaks the words of God.**
- 8. The Father loves the Son and has given all things to Him.**

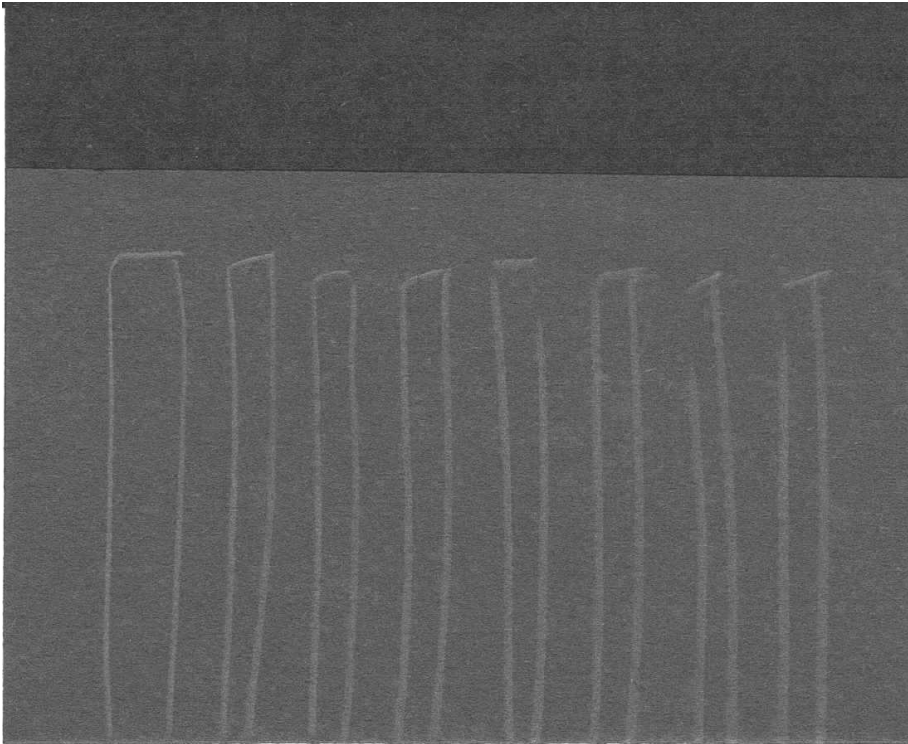



Herod Antipas



Herod did not like it when John the Baptist preached the truth
(Luke 3:20).





(fold) 

Cut a folded, black, 8"x5½" piece of construction paper as shown on the light lines. Open the fold, and glue over the above picture of John.