

Timeline Leading to Birth of Jesus

David & Solomon Kingdoms

Split Kingdoms – Judea south, Israel north

Assyrian Captivity – 722 BC

Babylonian Captivity – 586 BC
– Daniel 620-538 BC

Persian Kingdoms
– Daniel 620-538 BC

Alexander the Great 356-323 BC

Antiochus IV Epiphanes 215-164 BC

Hanukkah 164 BC

Hasmonean Dynasty 140-36 BC

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(Maccabean Family)

Roman Rule 63 BC – 70 AD

Pompey (General) 106–48 BC
(63 BC)

Julius Caesar 100 BC-44 BC
(49-44 BC)

Mark Antony 83-30 BC

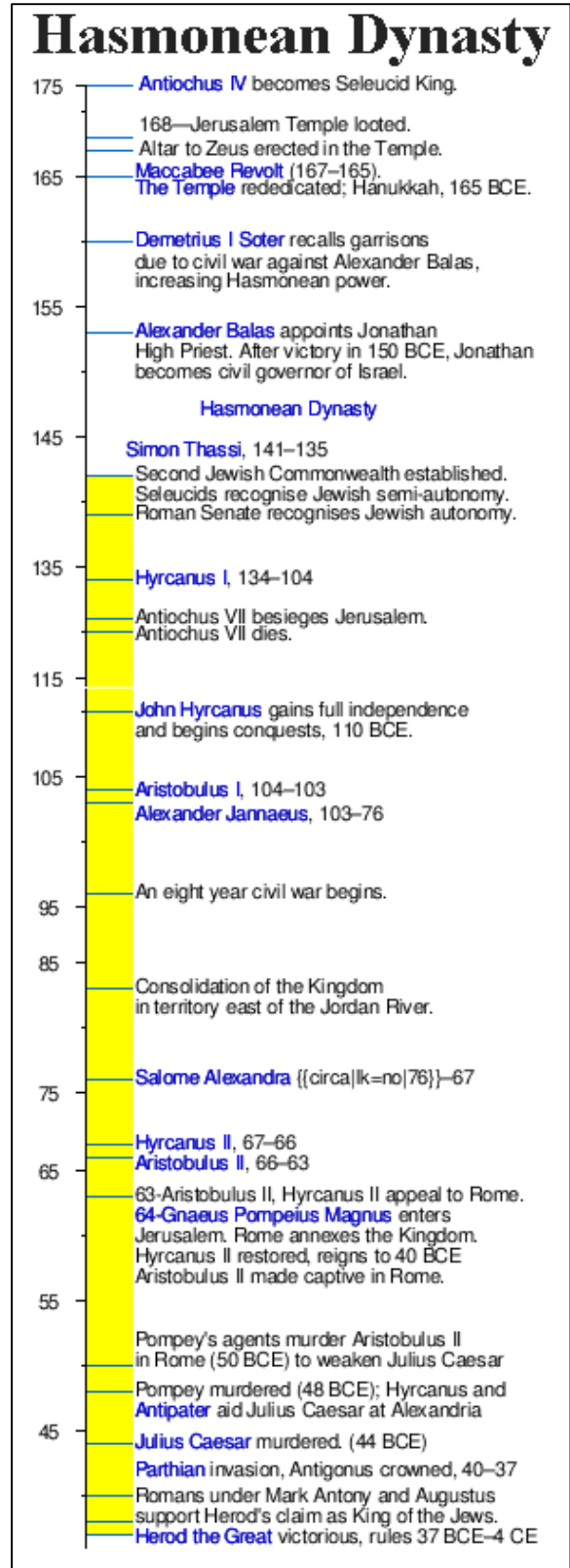
Cleopatra 69-30 BC

Augustus Caesar 63 BC – 14 AD
(27 BC – 14 AD)

Herod the Great 72 BC – 4 BC
(40 BC – 4 BC)

BIRTH OF JESUS

Around 6-5 BC



The History Surrounding of the Birth of Christ

To understand the birth of Christ it is important to understand the historical setting which Matthew and Luke refer to when they mention Augustus Caesar and Herod the Great. This lesson is about that history.

Every character in this story leading up to the birth of Christ is important. It is history that every Jew knew about from his or her childhood. These stories were told and retold around campfires and dinner tables for hundreds of years. Yet, it is not possible for us to give a complete biographical sketch of the important characters that make up the story.

So what I have done is to compile brief histories of some of these characters and I put them on our web site either as documents for you to download or links for you to read the material on the originating sites. In this lesson we will focus primarily on HEROD THE GREAT, because he is the great villain in the birth narrative. But I think it is important to hear the stories of other side characters that make up the complete picture of the world into which Jesus was born. Doing so will give you a better understanding of what the people and family of Jesus felt when they heard Augustus Caesar and Herod the Great.

The side characters in this story that are entwined in this tapestry are:

- Pompey
- Julius Caesar
- Mark Antony
- Cleopatra
- Augustus Caesar
- Herod the Great and his wives

We don't expect or require that you read all this material. It would take you many hours. But do take the time to read a few biographical sketches and I am sure if you have an inquiring mind like I do, you will want to read more. The documents and links will remain on the site indefinitely so take your time and enjoy the hidden history behind the birth of Jesus.

We begin this study with the reading of parts of the Christmas story. That is so that the details of Matthew and Luke are clear in your mind. While you read the story ask yourself probing questions. If you are studying together with a group, allow the group to discuss their observations. It leads to good discussions and inquires that one person alone does not have.

Here is the story in chronological order:

- Luke 1:26-38 – Announcement to Mary
- Matthew 1:18-25 – Announcement to Joseph
- Luke 2:2-20 – The Birth Story
- Matthew 2:1-12 – The Star and Magi
- Matthew 2:13-23 – The Flight from Herod

Questions and Observations

- What do you know about each of the people mentioned in the passages?
- What do you find strange, weird, unsettling, or curious?
- What things in the story raise questions in your mind?
- Who were these Magi guys and how many were there?
- What are the miracles contained in the stories? (There are quite a few)

Augustus Caesar and Herod the Great

The end of the Hasmonean Dynasty brings us to the doorstep of the birth of Christ. Mark Antony and Cleopatra, Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar (Octavian) along with Herod the Great play an important part in this transition.

For our lesson today we focus on Herod the Great.

Luke 2:1-5 we are told that a Caesar Augustus census took place in the entire Roman world.

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered, to Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child (Luke 2:1-5).

Matthew's Gospel chapter 2 informs us of the role of Herod the Great.

*16 Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men. 17 ^aThen was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: 18 ^b“A voice was heard in **Ramah**, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they ^care no more.”*

“But when Herod was dead, behold an angel of the Lord appears in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead that sought the young child's life” (2:19-20).

For Full Text See: [Scripture-Birth of Jesus.pdf](#)

Caesar Augustus (formerly Gaius Octavius) Born 23 September 63 BC, Augustus died just short of his seventy-sixth birthday, 19 August 14 AD

Herod the Great was born around 72 BC and Herod died in late 4 or early 5 BC around the age of seventy

Herod the Great

Introduction

It is important for us to carefully study Herod's life in order to properly understand the events surrounding Christ's birth, specifically Herod's cruel destruction of Bethlehem's infants and why it did not raise more of an uproar.

The life of Herod the Great goes beyond the pages of his personal biography and ascends and descends his entire family tree. His descendants go on to be the villains throughout the New Testament story from John the Baptist to James, Peter and Paul. If the truth were known perhaps the descendants of Herod's family still persecute the church to this day. Truly the sins of the parents are visited upon the children in the Herodian story.

We must remember that bad guys can turn into good guys as illustrated in God's family tree. Just look at Jesus' own ancestry - Jacob, Rahab, Bathsheba, etc. Where sin abounds grace does much more abound. There is no sin so gross, no evil so sinister, no morals so corrupt, no vulgarity so low, no corruption so vile, no wickedness so depraved as to be beyond the reach of the amazing grace of God. God so loved the world that he sent his only son into the pit of poisonous vipers so that he might rescue those whose hearts could never turn to him of their own accord except for his intervention and grace.

List of the Herods

In our story of the Herods we shall fix our gaze on five of the infamous Herods of New Testament history.

1. Herod Antipater - The father of the clan
2. Herod the Great - murderer of Bethlehem's children
3. Herod the Tetrarch - who killed John the Baptist
4. Herod Agrippa I - who killed James and imprisoned Peter
5. Herod Agrippa II - who heard Paul's appeal and said "Almost you persuade me to be a Christian."

It is worthwhile, if not essential, to have a clear view of the character of each of these pseudo-monarchs for each plays an important role in the maze of Gospel history without which one would be confused, or at least oblivious to the connection of these characters in the story of Jesus.

To understand how Herod fits into the historical milieu we need to paint a background mural which requires that we take a few steps back to see the broader picture. (If you have done the previous course on the Intertestamental Period you already have the paint and canvas.)

Background:

Antiochus Epiphanes (215-163 B.C.) attempted to eradicate the Jews and their religion by entering into the temple and offering a pig as a sacrifice on the altar of burnt offerings and placing a statue of Zeus in the Temple.

Rather than annihilate the Jews he succeeded in infuriating a few faithful zealots of which Mattathias was the forerunner. When mandated to bow before the idol in his village he refused and ran the monarch's representative through with a sword. Upon Mattathias' death his son Judas Maccabeus took up the "sword becoming the Zorro" of Palestine.

The result of the ensuing thirty-year guerrilla war was victory for the Maccabeans and a line of priest-kings known as the Hasmoneans. Hasmonean was the name of Simon, last surviving descendant of Judas Maccabeus.

Herod Antipater: (pronounced ant-TIP-pater)

Antipater, the first of the Herods, came to power due to the weak leadership of the later Hasmoneans. The story is complex so hang onto your eyeballs and try to keep all these names in focus. Here we go!

Herod was not a full Jew but an Idumaeen, or half-Jew. Josephus, the great Jewish historian, considered him a full Idumaeen. (Josephus, War I, 6,2, p123) Idumaea was a southern province of Palestine. They were Edomites who had aided Nebuchadnezzar in conquering the Jewish state. They came under the prophetic gun of the Old Testament prophets. Edomites were descendants of Esau while full-Jews were sons of Israel (i.e. Jacob) and inheritors of Abraham's covenant and blessings. (Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, p250, Vol 5) Herod, however, considered himself a Jew because of the conquest of Idumaea by the Hasmoneans in 165 B.C. and 126 B.C. respectively. (Fausset p283)

Antipater was appointed governor of Idumaea (Josephus, Ant XIV. p 1:3, 10) and was noted by Josephus to be a man of great wealth. It all came about after the death of Alexandra the Maccabean queen. Her eldest son, Hyrcanus II, assumed the throne but because he was weak and never really deserved the throne he gave up his throne to his brother Aristobulus after only three months of ruling.

Antipater seized upon the weakness of Hyrcanus as a way to wedge himself into power. He quickly convinced the weak Hyrcanus that he was unjustly deprived of his throne and that he should flee to Arabia for asylum and solicit the assistance of the king of Arabia. So he fled to Petra.

Enter Rome, stage left. Rome by this time had conquered the east. Pompey, the leading contender for the Roman throne, stepped in to reinstate Hyrcanus since he felt that Aristobulus had evidenced disloyalty to Rome. Pompey laid siege to Jerusalem for three months and upon winning spared the temple and reinstated Hyrcanus as priest. Jerusalem was made subject to Rome and forced to pay tribute. Herod Antipater, behind the scenes, made himself useful to the Romans fighting skirmishes and helping to bring Palestine under full Roman rule.

About this time Antipater married a rich Arabian named Cypros by whom he had four sons. Phasael, Herod, Joseph, Pheroras, and daughter Salome. (Jos. Ant. XIV, 7, 3,121 War 1, 8,9,181)

In 48 B.C. Pompey was defeated by Julius Caesar in Egypt, thus the Roman Empire under the Caesars was still in the embryonic stage. In that battle Herod Antipater risked his life for Julius Caesar and for this was made a Roman citizen exempt from taxes, and given the post of procurator of Judea. Julius Caesar also gave Hyrcanus the appointment of high priest and the title of "ethnarch" (ethnic king) of the Jews.

Herod Antipater assisted Hyrcanus though all the while he knew him to be a weak puppet king. He placed his sons in charge of administrator Phasael, governor of Jerusalem, and son Herod (the Great) as governor of Galilee Herod became governor of Galilee at the age of twenty-five.

Herod the Great - The Struggle for Power:

Herod the Great immediately endeared himself to the Romans and Galileans by quickly capturing and executing Ezekias, a leading bandit, and his followers. The execution broke Jewish law and those Jews who suspected him of becoming too powerful demanded he be tried before the Sanhedrin. Hyrcanus the high priest ordered him to trial. Herod showed up for the trial, not as an accused but dressed as a king in purple and attended by a bodyguard.

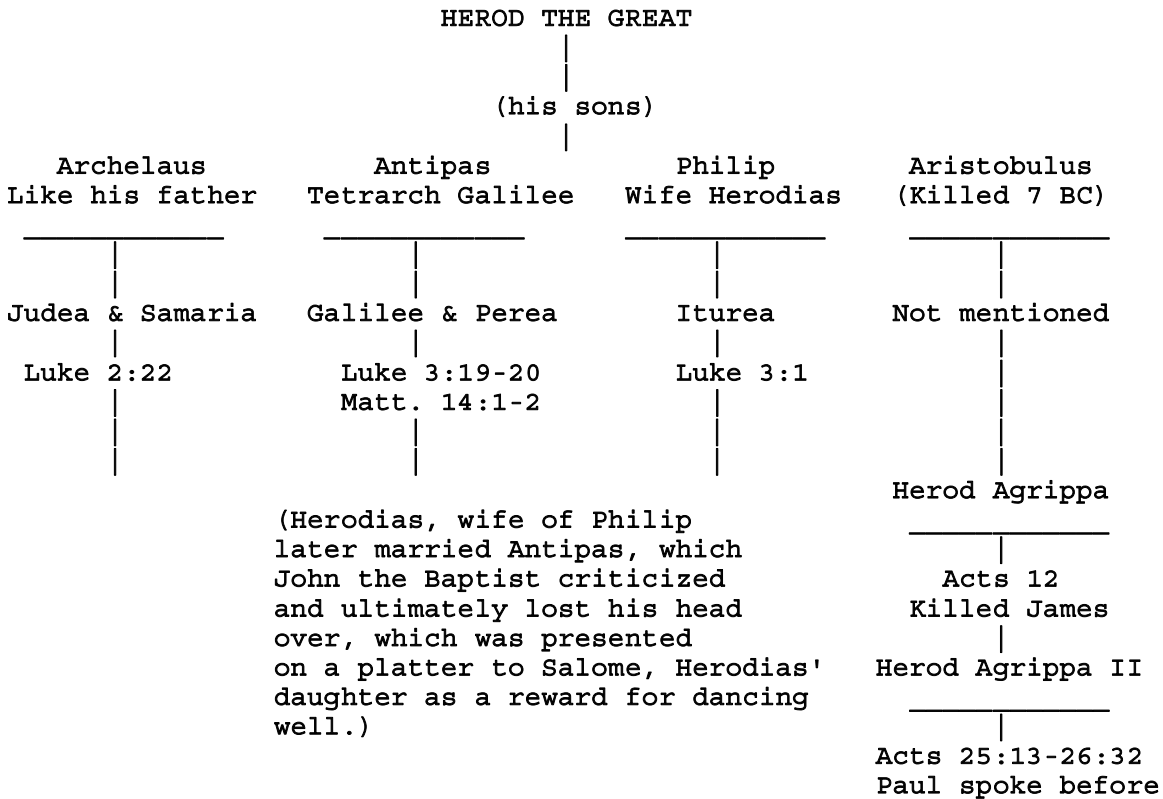
The Roman governor of Syria ordered Hyrcanus to release Herod or pay the price, thus Herod was acquitted in a mock trial and fled to Syria under the protection of Sextus Caesar. Sextus appointed him governor of Coele-Syria. Sextus was murdered shortly thereafter by Julius Caesar's enemy Bassus. Herod's father, Antipater, a friend of Caesar, sent his two sons Herod and Phasael with armies to defeat Bassus, which they did and continued in the region to collect taxes. (Remember Cassius, Brutus, and friends murdered Julius Caesar - "Et tu Brute") Now the ruler of Syria appointed Herod the Great as governor of Coele Syria and promised to make him king of Judea.

The plot thickens! The Herod clan was slowly growing in power. In the mayhem that followed the assassination of Julius Caesar, and subsequent struggle of Augustus Caesar (Octavian), Antipater (the father) was murdered - poisoned. Herod then avenged his father's death by stabbing his co-regent Malichus, by whom the dastardly deed was done.

A successive line of political upheavals, minor wars, revolutions and intrigues followed in which Herod was victorious thus endearing himself to the people.

Herod was married to his first wife, Doris, and by her had a son, Antipater. (Not another one!) She was most likely an Idumaeen, not a full Jew. Herod became betrothed to a Jewess named Mariamne (try to pronounce that one) who was granddaughter of Hyrcanus (how convenient) and daughter of Aristobolus' son Alexander and niece to Herod's arch enemy, Antigonus (appropriate name for an enemy). This strengthened Herod's claim to a throne - at least if he married Mariamne he would have a blood tie to the legitimate kingship.

Chart of Herod's Descendants



Herod's Problems and Intrigues:

(What do you expect. It's Roman times!) After successfully defending himself against Jewish claims that he was usurping Hyrcanus' power, Antony (of Antony and Cleopatra) appointed Herod tetrarch of Judea. (Can you smell a rat?) A tetrarch is a ruler of a fourth part of a region.

Antigonus enlisted the Parthians to invade Palestine which they did, and made him king instead of Hyrcanus. Hyrcanus and Herod's brother Phasael were captured and put in chains while the illusive Herod escaped to Masada, then Petra. Antigonus mutilated Hyrcanus thus removing any possibility of him being again qualified a high priest. (Now, why didn't Herod think of that?) Brother Phasael was poisoned or committed suicide. No one knows for sure. (Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible, Vol. 3 p 130)

To make this complicated story a little shorter - Herod finally fled to Rome where in 40 B.C. Antony and Octavian with the Roman Senate made him "king of the Jews." He promptly returned, with the help of Roman armies, to Jerusalem to lay siege to it. He then proceeded to Samaria where he married the beautiful Mariamne and returned to declare himself legitimate king. Finally in 37 B.C. Jerusalem fell and Herod won his long-awaited prize.

Herod's problems were not over however. To prevent the Roman soldiers from plundering Jerusalem and profaning the temple he offered each a handsome reward from his own wealth,

as well as a huge bribe to the Roman general Sossius. Josephus reported that he also bribed to have Antigonus carried away in chains and later beheaded.

About this time Herod began a series of murders that were to characterize his reign until his death. One of his first acts as "king of the Jews" was to eliminate his opposition. Firstly he murdered the whole Sanhedrin (seventy elders, except two). Secondly, he put to death Hyrcanus, his wife's grandfather. Thirdly, he had Mariamne herself put to death. Fourthly, just four days before his death he ordered the death of his eldest son Antipater. Fifthly, siezed with a fatal and painful disease of the stomach

and bowels, he ordered that the nobles be called together and locked in a great hippodrome to be murdered upon his death to assure himself that the Jews would mourn his death. (Fausset p 284)

Herod's Murders

1. Malichus - by stabbing for poisoning Antipater, Herod's father
2. The 68 members of the Sanhedrin
3. 45 aristocrats of Jerusalem
4. Antiochus - led away captive and axed at the bribe of Herod to the Romans
5. Hyrcanus II - grandfather of wife Mariamne
6. Mariamne - executed because of Herod's jealous rage.
7. Soemus - executed for betraying to Mariamne that Herod ordered her killed if he did not return alive from his meeting with Octavius in Egypt.
8. Alexander and Aristobulus - Mariamne's two sons
9. Antipater - his eldest son
10. Children of Bethlehem under 2 yrs
11. Attempted to murder all of the nobles at his death in the hippodrome

(This is by no means an exhaustive list. The treachery, death and executions seemed non-stop.)

It was during the period of his disease that the wise men showed up at his doorstep to inquire of one born "King of the Jews." One can only imagine the rage of jealous paranoia that must have besieged the heart of one who spent a lifetime pursuing the title "King of the Jews." So many murders, so much intrigue even evil men cringed. He spared no one who assailed, or was perceived as a threat or even a competitor for his throne.

It is not surprising that Herod secretly ordered the death of all males in Bethlehem under two years of age. (Probably not more than a handful of children compared to his other massacres!) Josephus does not record the event so unworthy of note among so many atrocious crimes. If he would kill his own beloved wife and first born child why would he hesitate to kill babies in a small village?

Augustus Caesar (Octavian) upon hearing about Herod's murder of his own son said, "*It would be better to be of Herod's swine than his sons.*" (It was a play on the Greek words swine, "hus" and son, "huios".) (Fausset p 284)

Herod's Death

Eusebius, one of the early church fathers and early church historian, records his observations concerning Herod's sickness and death. We quote it here in full.

In this connection it is worthwhile to recall the price paid by Herod for his crime against Christ and the other babies. Instantly, without the shortest delay, divine justice overtook him while still alive, giving him a foretaste of what awaited him in the next world. This is not the place to list the ways in which he dimmed the supposed glories of his reign by the successive calamities that befell his house, the revolting murder of wife, children, and all who were bound to him by the closest ties of blood and affection. No tragic drama is as dark as their story, of which Josephus has given a full account in his Histories. How, from the moment of the plot against our Saviour and the other helpless infants, a scourge wielded by the hand of God struck Herod and drove him to death, we should do well to hear from the lips of that historian. In Jewish Antiquities Book XVII he describes his terrible end in these words:

Herod's sickness grew steadily worse as God exacted punishment for his iniquities. He was consumed by a slow fire which gave no clear indication to the touch of the burning heat that added so much to his internal miseries. He had an overpowering desire for food, which it was impossible to satisfy, ulceration of the intestines with agonizing pains in the lower bowel, and a clammy transparent humour covering the feet. The abdomen was in the same miserable state, and in the genitals mortification set in, breeding worms. Breathing was constricted and only possible when sitting upright, and it was most offensive because of the heavy stench and feverish respiration. He suffered in every part convulsions that were unbearably severe. Those who practiced divination and had the gift of foretelling such things declared that God was exacting a penalty from the king for his continual wickedness.(2)

Such is the story as told by Josephus in the Antiquities. In Book II of the Histories he gives a very similar account of Herod's last days:

From then on the sickness spread through his entire body, accompanied by a variety of painful symptoms. He had mild fever, and unbearable itching all over his body, constant pains in the lower bowel, swellings on the feet as in dropsy, inflammation of the abdomen, and mortification of the genital, producing worms; as well as difficulty in breathing, especially when lying down, and spasms in all his limbs. The diviners said that his diseases were a punishment. But though he was wrestling with so many disorders he hung on to life, hoped for recovery, and planned his own treatment. He crossed the Jordan and tried the hot baths at Callirrhoe, which empty their water into the Dead Sea - water sweet enough to drink. The doctors there decided to warm up his whole body with hot oil by lowering him into a bathful of it, but he fainted and turned up his eyes as if in a faint. The noise of his attendants beating their breasts brought him back to consciousness; but having no further hope of recovery he ordered the distribution of 50 drachmas a head to the soldiers, and large gratuities to the officers and to his gentlemen.

By the time he arrived at Jericho on the return journey he was melancholy-mad, and in a virtual challenge to death itself he proceeded to devise a monstrous outrage. He brought together the most eminent men of every village in the whole of Judaea and had them locked up in the Hippodrome. Then he sent for his sister Salome and her husband Alexas and said: ' I

know the Jews will greet my death with wild rejoicings; but I can be mourned on other people's account and make sure of a magnificent funeral if you will do as I tell you. These men under guard: as soon as I die, kill them all - let loose the soldiers amongst them; then all Judaea and every family will weep for me willy-nilly'

Later he was so tormented by lack of food and a racking cough that his sufferings mastered him and he made an effort to anticipate his appointed end. He took an apple and asked for a knife, it being his habit to cut up apples when he ate them; then looking round to make sure there was no one to stop him he raised his hand to stab himself.

Josephus goes on to relate that just before he died Herod gave orders for the execution of yet a third of his lawful sons in addition to the two already executed, and that his life was instantly broken off, to the accompaniment of agonizing pains. Such was the final end of Herod; he paid a just penalty for the children he had put to death in Bethlehem and its neighbourhood in his attempt against our Saviour. (Eusebius, p23-25)

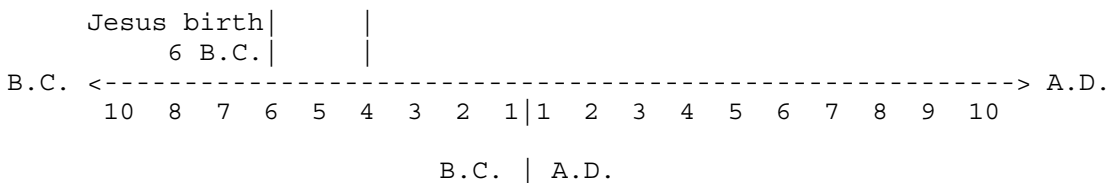
Herod's death would have been calculated based on other secular historical events in the Spring of 4 B.C. Therefore Jesus' birth would have been 5 or 6 B.C., not A.D. 1.

King Herod the Great, the bloody ruler of ancient Judea, died from **a combination of chronic kidney disease and a rare infection that causes gangrene of the genitalia**, according to a new analysis of historical records.

Read about the scientific study and determination of what caused Herod's diseases and death. (See also the links to other articles on our web site, www.MinistryToday.org

<https://www.newscientist.com/article/dn1844-gruesome-death-for-brutal-biblical-ruler/>

Herod's Death 4 B.C.



Herod's Successes

Herod was not without merit and with such merits he tried to buy himself into the favor of the Jews. Many were his illustrious construction projects.

- 1) He rebuilt the temple of Apollos at Rhodes, which had been destroyed by fire. Josephus records this as perhaps his greatest work.
- 2) He built an amphitheater and a theater and introduced heathen sporting events in honor of Caesar which took place every fifth year in Jerusalem to the condemnation of the religious right.
- 3) He rebuilt Samaria and its temple and called it Augusta, in honor of Augustus Caesar. He built other heathen temples, among them a temple of white marble dedicated to Augustus Caesar. The Jews were so disenfranchised with these despicable acts that men contrived to assassinate him but were discovered by a spy and put to death. The spy however was ripped to shreds by a mob in Jerusalem. Thereupon Herod built the famous tower or fortress of Antonia, near the temple, to intimidate the Jewish crowds.
- 4) He succeeded in impressing many more liberal Jews when in the 13th year of his reign he spent nearly all resources to import grain from Egypt when severe famine struck the land of Palestine.
- 5) Probably the most famous of Herod's works to impress the people and gain their favor was the rebuilding of Solomon's temple to the extent that it rivaled Solomon's original in scale and beauty. (Fausset p 284) The actual construction began in 20 B.C. and was finished in a year and a half. The surrounding buildings and additions continued to be made over a forty-six year period. Calculate it yourself. Twenty years from 20 B.C. to A.D. 1, subtract four years for the proper year of Christ's birth, making it 16 years before Christ's birth when construction began. Add thirty years, the age of Jesus when the question was posed to him in John 2:20.

The title "Herod the Great" was given him in recognition of the construction of the temple. Rabbinic literature recorded, *"He who has not seen the Temple of Herod has never seen a beautiful building."* (Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible Vol 3, p134)

Herod

Cleopatra, Mark Antony, and Augustus

There are powerful connections between Herod, Mark Antony, Cleopatra and Augustus Caesar. Understanding these complicated relationships and political intrigues will give you a better understanding of the times into which Christ was born.

Cleopatra

The fourth powerful opponent of King Herod was Cleopatra. As we just saw in the situation with Alexandra and how she went to Cleopatra, who in turn, reported everything to Marc Antony, Herod had serious problems with Cleopatra.

Cleopatra's Expansion of Territories

Because of her relationship with Marc Antony her territory was increasing greatly. After his expedition against Armenia in 34 B.C. she persuaded him to give her all of Phoenicia, the coast of Philistia south of the river, a portion of the Arabia, and the district of Jericho with its balsam plantations and many palm trees. The area of Jericho was Herod's most fertile portion of land in his whole kingdom.

Herod received Cleopatra in Jericho

It is interesting that every time Cleopatra visited her territories King Herod received her with celebration, although he despised her. Whenever she made attempts to trap him he would never give in. When the famous civil war broke out between Marc Antony and Octavius (later Augustus) Herod desired to take the cause of Marc Antony and help him in any way that he could.

Cleopatra/Herod War with Arabian King, Malchus

Cleopatra persuaded Marc Antony to order King Herod to go and fight against Malchus, the Arabian king. Malchus was late on his tribute and Cleopatra wanted him punished. But it was obvious that her real intent was that they would weaken each other or hopefully kill each other. This way she could easily overcome either of them. Herod did as Marc Antony ordered him and fight against Malchus. When Herod had achieved the initial victory over the Arabs, Cleopatra came and gave help to the Arabians which resulted in Herod's defeat.

In 31 B.C. a great earthquake happened in Herod's territory which killed over 30,000 people. At this time Herod made attempts to negotiate with the Arabs and sent an envoy to Arabia to make peace.

When they arrived the Arabs slew them. When Herod heard what had happened he immediately gathered his army and attacked the Arabs and defeated them, he then returned home. Herod and Octavius

On September 2nd, 31 B.C. Marc Antony was defeated by Octavius at the Battle of Actium. This was devastating to Herod. He knew that he would answer ultimately to Octavius for everything.

Herod then made a shrewd move, he murdered Hyrcanus II and accused him of plotting with the king of the Nabateans. This would eliminate any possible rival who might rule in Judea, and his hopes were that somehow Octavius would allow him to remain as the ruler of Judea.

Meeting in Rhodes 30 BC

In the spring of 30 B.C. Herod set out to meet with Octavius in Rhodes. But before he left he gave instructions to two of his friends that if he were to be executed they were to kill Alexandra and Mariamne, so that his sons and his brother Pheroras would rule in his place.

When King Herod arrived in Rhodes to stand before Octavius he played his part well. He admitted right away that he was a loyal friend of Marc Antony and that he did not fight against Octavius because of his war against the Arabs.

His argument to Octavius was that if he was loyal to Marc Antony then his loyalty would benefit Octavius. Octavius allowed Herod to remain as the ruler of Judea. Herod returned home.

Meeting on Coast of Phoenicia

Later that year, in the summertime, Octavius came to the coast of Phoenicia on his way to Egypt. Herod met him and greeted him to Ptolemais with great celebration and a gift of 800 talents and supplies for the Roman soldiers during that hot season. Octavius was delighted.

In August of 30 B.C. Octavius marched through Egypt and it was at this time that Marc Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

When Herod heard this he came to Egypt to congratulate Octavius. Octavius gave him the title of king and returned to him not only Jericho, but also Gadara, Hippos, Samaria, Gaza, Anthedon, Joppa, and Straton's Tower (later became Caesarea).

https://www.bible-history.com/herod_the_great/herodherod_the_king_3725_bc.htm

Further study of this relationship is related in Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews. We have placed links on our web site so you can download Josephus' works and read it for yourself.

Index to Josephus Works

<https://penelope.uchicago.edu/josephus/>

Sources and Recommended Reading:

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