

# The death of John the Baptist

Week of 14<sup>th</sup> July 2024

## Read Mark 6:14-29

- How do you feel when you read this story?
- ‘King Herod heard of it...’ (v 14)  
What had he heard?
- Why do you think people suggested that Jesus was in fact John the Baptist raised from the dead, or else Elijah or one of the prophets?
- What do we know about John the Baptist prior to this account (see 1:4 -14)
- How does Herod feel about John the Baptist? Notice some conflicting feelings. Why might he have felt threatened by John?
- What prompted Herod to have John imprisoned? What contemporary examples can you think of where leaders have used imprisonment or murder as a way of silencing critics?
- Who has the power in this story, and how do they use it? What does this tell us about power and its use?
- In what ways does Mark shape this account to foreshadow the Messiah’s death?
- This story is sandwiched between the account of Jesus sending out the twelve, and the verse which records their return (v30). Why do you think this might be? What does this suggest about discipleship?

In your closing prayers include the Christians in many parts of the world who still face torture and death because of their faith.



*The beheading of Saint John the Baptist*  
by Caravaggio (1610)

The Herod in this passage is **Herod Antipas**, the son of Herod the Great (who ordered the massacre of the innocents).

About 4 AD Herod Antipas inherited part of his father’s kingdom after the Roman emperor Augustus adjusted his father’s will, and he ruled the areas of Peraea and Galilee, east and north of the River Jordan, while his brother Archelaus reigned over Judea.

When Jesus was arrested, Pilate first sent him to Antipas, as Galilee was under his jurisdiction.

In 39 AD Antipas was accused by his nephew Agrippa I of conspiracy against the Roman emperor Caligula, who sent him into exile in Gaul.