

## Matthew 14

### Preaching the Gospel May Cost You Your Head!

John the Baptist was another unpopular Prophet of God, He upset the organised religion of his day. Herod was the Tetrarch (ruler of one quarter of all his father's lands) one of four sons of Herod the Great and called Herod Antipas. When Herod the Great died Antipas ruled over Galilee and Peria. Jesus was thought by Herod to be a resurrected John the Baptist. There was some belief in resurrection at that time! John had been brought up in the wilderness and was called to a prophetic ministry to bring the message of the King and His Kingdom.

### **Luke 1 v 17, 80**

*17 It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

*80 And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.*

### **Matthew 14 v 1-13**

*At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, 2 and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him." 3 For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. 4 For John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." 5 Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet. 6 But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, 7 so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. 8 Having been prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." 9 Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests. 10 He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. 11 And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. 12 His disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus. 13 Now when Jesus heard about John, He withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by Himself; and when the people heard of this, they followed Him on foot from the cities.*

John had been arrested because he spoke out against Herod Antipas taking his brother Philip's wife from him which was forbidden under the Mosaic law.

### **Leviticus 18 v 16**

**16 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.**

At the same time Herod was afraid of the people because they accepted John as a Prophet from God. Evil hearts find ways of doing evil deeds and to please a woman's request, John loses his head and Jesus loses a friend and spends time on His own.

### **Matthew 14 v 14-21**

*14 When He went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick. 15 When it was evening, the disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and the hour is already late; so send the crowds away, that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away; you give them something to eat!" 17 They said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." 18 And He said, "Bring them here to Me." 19 Ordering the people to sit down on the grass, He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food, and breaking the loaves He gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds, 20 and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets. 21 There were about five thousand men who ate, besides women and children.*

Just five loaves and two fish are enough to give food to all these people and see something left over. This is not the first time of feeding a large number of mouths from a small amount of food.

### **2 Kings 4 v 42-44**

*42 Now a man came from Baal-shalishah, and brought the man of God bread of the first fruits, twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. And he said, "Give them to the people that they may eat." 43 His attendant said, "What, will I set this before a hundred men?" But he said, "Give them to the people that they may eat, for thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and have some left over.'" 44 So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the Lord.*

A whole episode of miraculous events through the Prophet Elisha take place in this chapter. The first fruits of the crop of corn, note this important principle; when we give God first place in our thoughts and affections, when we do all things for Him, rather than for the family or the boss or leaders in the church, miracles are likely to happen. If you would like to see a financial miracle God must have the first fruits of your income.

In Matthew 14 there were actually 5000 men aside from women and children who sat down to eat. In the Lord there is an abundance of everything. How many did He feed? Maybe 10000 or even more perhaps. Who can tell what God can do? He healed the sick and fed the hungry and there was plenty left over.

### **Matthew 14 v 22-36**

*22 Immediately He made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away. 23 After He had sent the crowds away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray; and when it was evening, He was there alone. 24 But the boat was already a long distance from the land, battered by the waves; for the wind was contrary. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea. 26 When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." 28 Peter said to Him, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." 29 And He said, "Come!" And Peter got out of the boat, and walked on the water and came toward Jesus. 30 But seeing the wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 When they got into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 And those who were in the boat worshiped Him, saying, "You are certainly God's Son!" 34 When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent word into all that surrounding district and brought to Him all who were sick; 36 and they implored Him that they might just touch the fringe of His cloak; and as many as touched it were cured.*

Jesus **made** the disciples get into the boat. He sometimes commands us to do things. If we are truly His disciples we will obey Him. The boat goes through troubled waters, sometimes a picture of our lives! Jesus seemed far away from them and they were being battered by the waves. Then they saw Him walking on the sea and they were afraid. He speaks to them but first Peter has a problem and wonders if it is the Lord speaking. How often are we like this? He is called to walk on the water, at first it is fine, he responds by faith, where did this faith come from? He heard Jesus.

### **Romans 10 v 16-21**

*16 However, they did not all heed the good news; for Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. 18 But I say, surely they have never heard, have they? Indeed they have; "Their voice has gone out into all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world." 19 But I say, surely Israel did not know, did they? First Moses says, "I will make you jealous by that which is not a nation, By a nation without understanding will I anger you." 20 And Isaiah is very bold and says, "I was found by those who did not seek Me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me." 21 But as for Israel He says, "All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people."*

Faith is a spiritual not a natural sense. Peter could only walk in the Spirit for a short time, as soon as he used a natural sense, he saw the waves; he began to sink. However, Jesus didn't leave him in the lurch, He took hold of his hand and helped him into the boat. Both Peters and our fears and doubts cause us to sink also. The wind stopped when they got into the boat. Obedience to His commands brings us into a place of security. Faith is the only way to please God. It was faith that saved us, a free gift from God