

A dramatic, dark night sky filled with heavy, dark clouds. Several bright, glowing lightning bolts are visible, illuminating the clouds and creating a sense of intense energy and conflict. The overall mood is somber and powerful.

Herod Agrippa II

Inherited A Flawed

Personality

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Overview

HEROD AGRIPPA II

INHERITED A FLAWED PERSONALITY

Herod Agrippa IIS story is told in Acts 25:13-26:32.

Like great-grandfather, like grandfather, like father, like son—this tells the story of Herod Agrippa II.

He inherited the effects of generations of powerful men with flawed personalities.

Each son followed his father in weaknesses, mistakes, and missed opportunities. Each generation had a confrontation with God, but each failed to realize the importance of the decision.

Herod Agrippas great-uncle, Herod Antipas, actually met Jesus during his trial, but failed to see Jesus for who he was. Agrippa II heard the gospel from Paul, but considered the message mild entertainment. He found it humorous that Paul actually tried to convince him to become a Christian.

Like so many before and after, Agrippa II stopped within hearing distance of the kingdom of God. He left himself without excuse.

He heard the gospel but decided it wasn't worth responding to personally. Unfortunately, his mistake isn't uncommon. Many who read his story also will not believe. Their problem, like his, is not really that the gospel isn't convincing or that they don't need to know God personally; it is that they choose not to respond.

What has been your response to the gospel? Has it turned your life around and given you the hope of eternal life, or has it been a message to resist or reject?

Perhaps it has just been entertainment. It may seem like too great a price to give God control of your life, but it is an even greater price by far to live eternally apart from him because you have chosen not to be his child.

Paul faces King Agrippa II

Acts 25:13-26

A few days later King Agrippa arrived with his sister, Bernice, to pay their respects to Festus.

During their stay of several days, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. "There is a prisoner here," he told him, "whose case was left for me by Felix.

When I was in Jerusalem, the leading priests and other Jewish leaders pressed charges against him and asked me to sentence him. [16] Of course, I quickly pointed out to them that Roman law does not convict people without a trial. They are given an opportunity to defend themselves face to face with their accusers.

"When they came here for the trial, I called the case the very next day and ordered Paul brought in. but the accusations made against him weren't at all what I expected.

It was something about their religion and about someone called Jesus who died, but whom Paul insists is alive. I was perplexed as to how to conduct an investigation of this kind, and I asked him whether he would be willing to stand trial on these charges in Jerusalem.

But Paul appealed to the emperor. So I ordered him back to jail until I could arrange to send him to Caesar."

"I'd like to hear the man myself," Agrippa said. And Festus replied, "You shall—tomorrow!"

So the next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived at the auditorium with great pomp, accompanied by military officers and prominent men of the city. Festus ordered that Paul be brought in.

Then Festus said, "King Agrippa and all present, this is the man whose death is demanded both by the local Jews and by those in Jerusalem.

But in my opinion he has done nothing worthy of death. However, he appealed his case to the emperor, and I decided to send him.

But what shall I write the emperor? For there is no real charge against him. So I have brought him before all of you, and especially you, King Agrippa, so that after we examine him, I might have something to write.

Festus Confers with Agrippa Respecting Paul

Acts 25:13-27

Agrippa had the government of Galilee. How many unjust and hasty judgments the Roman maxim, Acts 25:16, condemn!

This heathen, guided only by the light of nature, followed law and custom exactly, yet how many Christians will not follow the rules of truth, justice, and charity, in judging their brethren!

The questions about God's worship, the way of salvation, and the truths of the gospel, may appear doubtful and without interest, to worldly men and mere politicians. See how slightly this Roman speaks of Christ, and of the great controversy between the Jews and the Christians.

But the day is at hand when Festus and the whole world will see, that all the concerns of the Roman Empire were but trifles and of no consequence, compared with this question of Christ's resurrection.

Those who have had means of instruction, and have despised them, will be awfully convinced of their sin and folly. Here was a noble assembly brought together to hear the truths of the gospel, though they only meant to gratify their curiosity by attending to the defence of a prisoner.

Many, even now, attend at the places of hearing the word of God with "great pomp," and too often with no better motive than curiosity.

And though ministers do not now stand as prisoners to make a defence for their lives, yet numbers affect to sit in judgment upon them, desirous to make them offenders for a word, rather than to learn from them the truth and will of God, for the salvation of their souls. But the pomp of this appearance was outshone by the real glory of the poor prisoner at the bar.

What was the honour of their fine appearance, compared with that of Paul's wisdom, and grace, and holiness; his courage and constancy in suffering for Christ!

It is no small mercy to have God clear up our righteousness as the light, and our just dealing as the noon-day; to have nothing certain laid to our charge. And God makes even the enemies of his people to do them right.

Paul's Defence before Agrippa

Acts 26:1-11

Christianity teaches us to give a reason of the hope that is in us, and also to give honour to whom honour is due, without flattery or fear of man.

Agrippa was well versed in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, therefore could the better judge as to the controversy about Jesus being the Messiah. Surely ministers may expect, when they preach the faith of Christ, to be heard patiently.

Paul professes that he still kept to all the good in which he was first educated and trained up. See here what his religion was.

He was a moralist, a man of virtue, and had not learned the arts of the crafty, covetous Pharisees; he was not chargeable with any open vice and profaneness. He was sound in the faith.

He always had a holy regard for the ancient promise made of God unto the fathers, and built his hope upon it. The apostle knew very well that all this would not justify him before God, yet he knew it was for his reputation among the Jews, and an argument that he was not such a man as they represented him to be.

Though he counted this but loss, that he might win Christ, yet he mentioned it when it might serve to honour Christ.

See here what Paul's religion is; he has not such zeal for the ceremonial law as he had in his youth; the sacrifices and offerings appointed by that, are done away by the great Sacrifice which they typified.

Of the ceremonial cleansings he makes no conscience, and thinks the Levitical priesthood is done away in the priesthood of Christ; but, as to the main principles of his religion, he is as zealous as ever.

Christ and heaven, are the two great doctrines of the gospel; that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

These are the matter of the promise made unto the fathers. The temple service, or continual course of religious duties, day and night, was kept up as the profession of faith in the promise of eternal life, and in expectation of it.

The prospect of eternal life should engage us to be diligent and stedfast in all religious exercises. Yet the Sadducees hated Paul for preaching the resurrection; and the other Jews joined them, because he testified that Jesus was risen, and was the promised Redeemer of Israel.

Many things are thought to be beyond belief, only because the infinite nature and perfections of Him that has revealed, performed, or promised them, are overlooked.

Paul acknowledged, that while he continued a Pharisee, he was a bitter enemy to Christianity. This was his character and manner of life in the beginning of his time; and there was everything to hinder his being a Christian.

Those who have been most strict in their conduct before conversion, will afterwards see abundant reason for humbling themselves, even on account of things which they then thought ought to have been done.

His Conversion and Preaching to the Gentiles

Acts 26:12-23

Paul was made a Christian by Divine power; by a revelation of Christ both to him and in him; when in the full career of his sin. He was made a minister by Divine authority: the same Jesus who appeared to him in that glorious light, ordered him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles.

A world that sits in darkness must be enlightened; those must be brought to know the things that belong to their everlasting peace, who are yet ignorant of them.

A world that lies in wickedness must be sanctified and reformed; it is not enough for them to have their eyes opened, they must have their hearts renewed; not enough to be turned from darkness to light, but they must be turned from the power of Satan unto God.

All who are turned from sin to God, are not only pardoned, but have a grant of a rich inheritance.

The forgiveness of sins makes way for this. None can be happy who are not holy; and to be saints in heaven we must be first saints on earth. We are made holy, and saved by faith in Christ; by which we rely upon Christ as the Lord our Righteousness, and give up ourselves to him as the Lord our Ruler; by this we receive the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and eternal life.

The cross of Christ was a stumbling-block to the Jews, and they were in a rage at Paul's preaching the fulfilling of the Old Testament predictions.

Christ should be the first that should rise from the dead; the Head or principal One. Also, it was foretold by the prophets, that the Gentiles should be brought to the knowledge of God by the Messiah; and what in this could the Jews justly be displeased at?

Thus the true convert can give a reason of his hope, and a good account of the change manifest in him. Yet for going about and calling on men thus to repent and to be converted, vast numbers have been blamed and persecuted.

Festus and Agrippa Convinced of Paul's Innocence

Acts 26:24-32

It becomes us, on all occasions, to speak the words of truth and soberness, and then we need not be troubled at the unjust censures of men.

Active and laborious followers of the gospel often have been despised as dreamers or madmen, for believing such doctrines and such wonderful facts; and for attesting that the same faith and diligence, and an experience like their own, are necessary to all men, whatever their rank, in order to their salvation. But apostles and prophets, and the Son of God himself, were exposed to this charge; and none need be moved thereby, when Divine grace has made them wise unto salvation.

Agrippa saw a great deal of reason for Christianity. His understanding and judgment were for the time convinced, but his heart was not changed.

And his conduct and temper were widely different from the humility and spirituality of the gospel.

Many are almost persuaded to be religious, who are not quite persuaded; they are under strong convictions of their duty, and of the excellence of the ways of God, yet do not pursue their convictions.

Paul urged that it was the concern of every one to become a true Christian; that there is grace enough in Christ for all.

He expressed his full conviction of the truth of the gospel, the absolute necessity of faith in Christ in order to salvation. Such salvation from such bondage, the gospel of Christ offers to the Gentiles; to a lost world.

Yet it is with much difficulty that any person can be persuaded he needs a work of grace on his heart, like that which was needful for the conversion of the Gentiles. Let us beware of fatal hesitation in our own conduct; and recollect how far the being almost persuaded to be a Christian, is from being altogether such a one as every true believer is.

Vital statistics:

Occupation: Ruler of northern and eastern Palestine

Relatives: Great-grandfather: Herod the Great. Father: Herod Agrippa I. Great-uncle: Herod Antipas. Sister: Bernice, Drusilla

Contemporaries: Paul, Felix, Festus, Peter, Luke

Lessons from his life:

Families pass on both positive and negative influences to children. There are no guarantees of multiple opportunities to respond to God

Key verse:

“Then Agrippa said to Paul, Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?” (Acts 26:28).

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

Matthew Henry Concise Bible Commentary