

Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino, Judaism Before Jesus,

Session 13, Herod the Great

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This is Dr. Anthony Tomasino and his teaching on Judaism before Jesus. This is session 13, Herod the Great.

So, we're finally at the end, really, of the intertestamental period. We're coming right up to the days of the New Testament, and we're coming up to one of the most colorful figures of this era, somebody that we, fortunately, know a lot about, a lot more than I'll be able to share in this session. We know a lot about him because of the fact that Josephus used the notes of Nicholas of Damascus, who was Herod's personal secretary, as his personal historian, as a basis for a lot of his work.

So, we actually have a lot of information about Herod the Great, as he is known. Now, whether or not he was great, well, that's a matter of perspective. Most people who know anything at all about Herod, most New Testament people, of course, or people who are Christians, know him as the man who perpetrated the slaughter of the innocents, where the children around Bethlehem, under two years of age, were killed by Herod as he was trying to secure the kingdom against the possible threat of the Messiah.

Now, for the slaughter of the innocents, I would have to say that a lot of scholars don't believe that it's a historical event. I don't have a problem with it. When you read about the other things that Herod was doing and the kind of events that he was involved in, when you know about the kind of paranoia that he had and the kind of man he was, I think that the death of a couple of dozen infants or so would not have been something that would have been outside of his abilities to not only to do, but even to be able to get away with in those days.

So, the idea that the slaughter of the innocents is something which is a fairy tale, no, I think it's something which really kind of epitomizes the kind of person that he became, particularly in his later years. A man is driven really by his ambition and also by his paranoia. And you kind of wonder, I would love to have a psychoanalytical profile of Herod the Great because what kind of things happened in that man's childhood to make him as insecure and yet as totally brash and as totally as maybe wild might be a good word for it, as he was.

So, we've already talked a little bit about him, of course. We know he was the son of Antipater, the governor of Idumaea. He was of Edomite descent and therefore not considered a good Jew.

I'm sure many people would have reminded the leaders of Jerusalem that the Bible says that no Edomite was to enter into the assembly of the Lord until the seventh generation. But at any rate, the Edomites were not favored people. They were not well-liked by Jews in general.

He was appointed as governor of Galilee and immediately got in trouble when he put down the rebellion very violently of the Galileans and slaughtered many of the people there. Herod is described as being a very powerful man, an excellent horseman, a good warrior, all those wonderful qualities that you would want in a he-man type of ruler of the realm. Last time, as we were hearing, Antigonus invaded Judea circa 40 B.C. around that point, became the king, appointed himself as king and high priest of Jerusalem, and Herod had to flee.

His first stop on his flight was into Egypt, where he was probably expecting to find Mark Antony. But he did not. Mark Antony had already left.

Mark Antony had already returned to Rome. So, what Herod had to do is he had to borrow some money, which he did, a lot of money. He borrowed a lot of money from a lot of people and bought his way to Rome.

Now once he got to Rome, he put his money to good work. This is Mark Antony. He also got an audience with Mark Antony.

He offered, of course, bribes and was assured by Mark Antony that more money would come if he would put him back into the role of the ruler in some capacity in Jerusalem, in Judea. Well, Mark Antony did something for Herod that was probably beyond Herod's wildest dream. He went before the Roman senate, and he presented Herod, the son of Antipater, and asked that this man be made the king of Judea.

I'm pretty sure that's not what Herod was expecting, but that was what Mark Antony requested. And so, the senate took it under advisement and appointed Herod to be king of Judea in 40 BC. Now, being appointed king of Judea and actually being king of Judea are two separate things because the Romans were quite willing to appoint him, but they weren't willing to commit any troops at that point to install him as king of Judea.

Furthermore, Herod didn't have a ton of money to throw around at this point. But he returned to Judea and did manage to raise an army. Eventually, he managed to persuade the Romans to provide him with the troops he needed, and he had to deal with a governor who was absolutely refusing to cooperate with him.

The governor was receiving bribes from Antigonus, and as long as he was getting money from Antigonus, he was just going to ignore that little piece of paper that said that Herod the Great was king. So eventually, the Romans had to intercede for him

and ordered the governor to provide Herod with the resources he needed to install himself as the king and his own person as high priest. So, once he enters Jerusalem with his Roman troops and has control of the place, they remove Antigonus from office.

And here's something interesting that goes on because apparently, at this point, Antigonus is actually executed, which is not something that the Romans typically would do to a king. So it seemed like they made an interesting concession, but when you consider that it was their own incompetence that allowed this guy to escape so frequently, you almost can't blame Antigonus. If the Romans were going to leave the doors open, he would just escape, walk out, and take himself back to Jerusalem.

One of the things that Herod decided to do almost immediately was to marry Mariamne, the granddaughter of Heracles. In this way he thought he was going to be securing his connections to the throne. This, he believed, would legitimize his role as king.

Now, there was another problem with this. Herod was already married. He had another wife and a son at this time.

And because of this, he had his other wife, his first wife, banished with her son. Apparently, he didn't actually divorce at this point, but Mariamne really became his one and only for a while. That would not continue that way.

So, Herod's reign is typically divided into three phases. The first phase is called the period of consolidation. That goes from 37 to 27 BC.

It takes him about 10 years to get this kingdom of his under control. Now we've got all the different factions, we've got all the people who are fighting against one another, all the people who hate him, and Herod is trying to herd cats. So it takes him a while.

After the consolidation period, we had a prosperous period, which went from 27 BC to 13 BC. And then the period we call the period of domestic turmoil. Well, you know, you can kind of extend that through this whole time here.

But this really is the main quality that seems to characterize the last years of Herod's reign. He's having lots of trouble at home and in the family. This continued until the time of his death in 4 BC.

So, consolidation. Let's talk about trying to consolidate his kingdom. Herod has to overcome several hostile forces, and four I'm going to talk about here include the Judean people, the nobility, the remaining Hasmoneans, and finally, Queen Cleopatra, who doesn't much like Herod.

So, the Judeans. What's the Judeans' beef here? Well, first of all, they just hate because he's not really Jewish. He's only half-Jewish.

He's sort of Jewish. And because he's sort of Jewish, the Jews resented him. They hadn't forgotten either what he had done to the people up there in Galilee.

His ruthlessness had warned them that he was not somebody they could trust. They felt he had usurped the throne. There were really two lines of thinking here.

We had the people who thought that the throne belonged to the Hasmonean family and that since he was not a Hasmonean, he should not have the throne. And then there, of course, was the more traditional line, which said the throne of Jerusalem belonged to the line of King David, and it should be a descendant of David who had the throne. Nobody thought that the throne should belong to an Idumaeans.

So, there was no precedent for Herod to be king of Judea. They had suffered it as brutality, not only the episode in Galilee but also further episodes of his ruthlessness, where he put down riots in ways that seemed utterly barbaric. And he forced a kind of martial law on the people.

At one point in his reign, he banned all public assemblies of any sort. If a group of people were found meeting on the streets, they would be immediately disbanded, probably taken away and questioned, or maybe given a good beating or something. All these things made the people resent him and his rule.

They weren't quite going to throw citrons at him like they threw the citrons at Alexander Janus because they knew that it meant death. The nobility had their own set of problems. The Sanhedrin had been in control of much of Judea and had been kind of the steady presence.

When you've got all this stuff going on with Heraclius and Aristobulus and Aristobulus' sons, the one constant in all this has been the Sanhedrin, who've been trying to keep things together. And the Sanhedrin exercised a fairly large amount of power. When Gabinius had divided the kingdom into these five administrative districts, each one has its own ruling council.

Those ruling councils exercised more power than the high priest himself. They were answerable only to the Romans. So, these people had gotten used to flexing their muscles, so to speak.

Well, Herod gutted the Sanhedrin power. He basically took away all of their civil authority. Herod was a, we might say, a hands-on ruler.

The buck stopped with him. And the Sanhedrin could still allow, was still allowed to assemble. They could deal with religious questions.

But as far as civil questions, as far as matters of the law, the Sanhedrin had been rendered powerless to deal with those kinds of things. Another part of the nobility, we might say, that Herod had to deal with was his own sister, a lady by the name of Salome. And again, this is going to become difficult because so many of these people have the same name.

This is not the same Salome who has the dance of the Seven Veils, if you want to think of it that way. But this is another Salome. And she is a true, to say the least, a very ambitious woman.

The Herodians, Herod and his sister, were wealthy, and the Antipater was a wealthy sheik, but not what anybody would particularly call a cultured people. They were kind of like rich farmers or something like that. They're kind of a scratch beneath the surface.

You're going to find that the veneer doesn't go very deep. So, these people tended to be ruthless and tended to solve their issues in violent ways. And there was also a certain amount of jealousy here.

Salome very much resented the Hasmoneans, and particularly she resented Mariamne and Mariamne's mother. So, Salome was constantly causing trouble for Herod and trying to stir up issues. And there's some good possibility that she had her own eyes on maybe becoming another queen of Judea.

Who knows? So, the Hasmoneans and their problems. Well, among the issues that Herod was having with these people were his own mother-in-law. And he had married Mariamne, who was the granddaughter of Hercules.

And his mother-in-law, Alexandra, treated Herod with open contempt. She made no bones about her disdain for this man and considered him to be beneath her daughter. Now, you know, that's kind of normal for a mother-in-law in some ways.

But on the other hand, most people are not the mother-in-law of a homicidal megalomaniac. So, you know, you have to tread lightly along these lines. So, no doubt Herod would have taken her out of the way.

But he didn't really feel like he could get away with it because, unfortunately for him, she had a very powerful best friend. You know, her best friend forever was Cleopatra. And so, Herod could not really do much about Alexandra because of Cleopatra.

And furthermore, Cleopatra didn't like him either. And we'll get to that just a little bit more in a moment. So shortly after Herod had become the king, he installed a man as high priest who was kind of a commoner that he thought would be safe and would be no threat to his own personal power.

Well, Alexandra did not like this. She wanted her own son, who would have been Mariamne's brother, installed as high priest instead. He was a 16-year-old lad, apparently a very good-looking fellow.

And all the people were really in favor of him being installed as high priest. They, you know, 16 years old seems awfully young for a high priest, but the people were behind it. Alexandra wanted it.

Herod hated the idea. He hated the idea, of course, because he would become a threat to Herod's own power. Well, this led to a little bit of trouble.

Cleopatra flexed her muscles, and Mark Antony ordered Herod to install the young fellow, Aristobulus, as high priest. So, Herod arranged it so that this young fellow would have an accident. And it happened while he had built this wonderful, nice pool where he could cool off in the hot summer days.

And the new high priest was cavorting in the pool with a couple of servants. And, oh dear, their roughhousing got a little too rough, and the young man was drowned. Yes.

Alexandra cried bloody murder. It wasn't quite bloody murder, but it was certainly murder. But she complained, of course, to Cleopatra, and Cleopatra complained to Mark Antony, and Mark Antony was sort of like, eh, probably what I would have done.

Anyway, so his mother-in-law, his wife, Mariamne, is also a bit of a problem for him because Mariamne is not really that infatuated with her husband. This is a political marriage, an arranged marriage, and there are questions about whether or not she truly loved him. Now, Herod loved her deeply.

He was totally, totally devoted to Mariamne. The fact that she didn't return his love in the same way hurt him and also kind of fed into his own insecurities a little bit. Let's talk for a minute about Cleopatra here.

Of course, she's friends with Alexandra, but she also wants to add Palestine to her own kingdom. And she kind of, oh, Mark Antony, could you please give me Palestine? Why was she so interested in Palestine? Well, a couple of reasons, but one of the main reasons was because of the produce of Palestine, and particularly the date trees that were up there, which produced some of the best dates in the entire

Middle East, and she could have made a killing selling those dates. It's a lovely thing here.

Notice the nose. This is supposedly one of the most beautiful women ever to live. Not exactly according to our standards of beauty.

The nose is very large and prominent, but to Romans, having a large nose was considered a sign of beauty and strength. Blaise Pascal, the philosopher and mathematician, made this little quip: If Cleopatra's nose had been a little bit smaller, the face of the entire world would have been changed.

Lovely quote. But yes, because of the fact that she was so enticing and had such a noble nose, she managed to seduce not only Julius Caesar but Mark Antony as well. So she received from Mark Antony several key lands in Palestine.

And of course, this did not make Herod at all happy to have his land being cut up and parceled off to keep Cleopatra happy. So, the Cleopatra problem was solved in 31 BC when the Battle of Actium forced Antony and Cleopatra to commit suicide. And so at that point, Herod now finds himself having to ingratiate himself to the new kid on the block, a fellow by the name of Octavian, who is given eventually the title Augustus.

So first, however, before he could deal with that issue, he had to take care of another little problem, another potential source of tension in his kingdom. Hyrcanus was still around, the old high priest. Even without his ears, Herod viewed him as a threat.

And so, he had Hyrcanus murdered. So now begins the prosperous era of Herod's reign. Herod presented himself to Augustus as a victim of Mark Antony's treachery.

Look at me. I'm a poor fellow. Mark Antony has treated me badly.

And Augustus, of course, well, yes, I certainly understand that. He kind of treats everybody that way, you know. It's not especially beneficial to be the friend of Mark Antony because of Mark Antony being twisted around the finger of Cleopatra.

Augustus returned to Herod all the lands that Mark Antony had gifted to Cleopatra. He also confirmed him in his post as king of Judea and conferred upon him still further honors in respect for his service and his loyalty to the Roman governor. Now, another Hasmonean is going to fall before this real prosperous period begins.

And this is the wife of Herod. This is Mariamne herself in 29 BC. In 29 BC, Herod, when he was going off to Rome to present himself before Augustus, Herod had

placed the care of Mariamne into the hands of one of his most trusted bodyguards and told this bodyguard, if I do not return, I want you to kill her.

Well, Mariamne is sitting there in her palace, waiting for her husband to return, and she's talking, well, I don't think he ever really loved me anyway. And this bodyguard friend says, oh, he's totally devoted to you, my dear. Well, imagine this: he instructed me that if he doesn't return, I'm to kill you.

That's how devoted he is to you. For some reason, Mariamne didn't like that idea very much. And so, when Herod returned, she gave him the cold shoulder, more so than usual, and didn't really want to have anything to do with him.

And Herod is like, what's wrong? I thought she would have loved me, and I don't know what's going on. And well, here is where his sister steps in and says, that little shrew, she's been committing adultery while you've been gone, with your own bodyguard. And so, believing the charges, because he had no reason not to believe the charges, Herod had Mariamne strangled to death.

In the same place where he had married her, by the way, which is kind of sad and ironic. But after having Mariamne murdered, he went on a drinking binge and nearly killed himself by overindulging in alcohol. Alexandra, now seeing her son-in-law, former son-in-law, I guess you might say at this point, in such a condition, decided to plot to take over the kingdom for herself.

And the plot was betrayed. She herself was now executed as well. The only remaining possible rivals for the Hasmoneans for the throne were Herod's own sons by Mariamne.

So, that ends the period of consolidation. For the prosperous era, really the main thing that we can talk about for this period is the building projects. Herod went on a building binge.

Now, he was in kind of a competition with Augustus. Augustus had bragged that he had found Rome a city of bricks and had left it a city of marble. Well, Herod is trying to do the same thing with Judea.

He is trying to make Judea a great nation and to make Jerusalem a showcase city. And for any nation to be great, you had to have a great temple. And so Herod decided that he wanted to replace that little structure that had been built way back in 515 BC with a temple that befitted a great kingdom.

Well, the people of Jerusalem were not real beholden to this idea. What does this Idumaeon know about building a Jewish temple? So, he hired a bunch of Jewish

craftsmen to design the thing. And when the people saw the designs, it was like, oh, that's not bad.

You know, that's not bad. Furthermore, they said, well, you know, we can't have a bunch of foreigners coming in here and working on this thing. You know, this is holy work, and it has to be done by holy people.

And so, what Herod did was he had a bunch of priests trained to become carpenters so that the work could all be done by priests. Well, you know, we might let you go forward with this, but we can't stop making our sacrifices. Some people think that this might just be a plot to destroy the temple.

You know, he says, I tell you what we'll do. We will build the new temple without destroying the old one. That's literally what he did.

They built the new temple around the old structure and then disassembled the old structure and brought it out. In order to have the room for this temple complex, they had to completely level off the surface of the mountain. They filled it up with crushed stones.

They built a retaining wall all around it. The temple complex actually covered several acres and was, at the time at least, the largest temple complex, the largest complex for religious purposes ever built in the history of the world. And the way that the temple was described was absolutely glorious.

They say that as you're coming across the Mediterranean, you could see the sun shining off of the gold foil on the top of the roof of the temple from miles out at sea. The rabbis later, who had never said anything good about Herod, said that you could not have said that you had seen beauty unless you had seen Herod's temple. It was considered one of the great wonders of the world, and people came from all over the Roman Empire to bring wealth and offerings to the temple of the God of Israel in Jerusalem.

So, quite a remarkable accomplishment there. Caesarea became his showcase city. A really great nation needs a really great port, but they did not have one.

So, what he decided to do was to make himself a city that would really showcase the wealth of his land. He built a remarkable place with a wonderful theater in it, a really Greek-style city. There's no other way to describe it, but a stupendous accomplishment in what he did with Caesarea.

He also built a number of fortresses, including right within Jerusalem itself. He rebuilt the Acre. Remember the Acre, that old fortress inside Jerusalem where they put the Greek soldiers? Well, he rebuilt this now.

It became the Fortress Antonia, named after, of course, Mark Antony. It's kind of hard once you get started and once you've named a project to stop mid-course. It probably was a little bit embarrassing to him at this point.

But anyway, it was renamed the Antonia. So, the Acre gets rebuilt. He also didn't just reserve his beneficence to the Jews.

He also poured out a lot of money on the Greek cities within his realm. Not only was the great temple of the Lord built in Jerusalem, but a whole bunch of pagan temples were built all over Judea and Galilee and those regions with money and funds provided by Herod the Great. He rebuilt the city of Samaria, the city that had been destroyed by John Hyrcanus.

It was renamed Sebaste, which was the equivalent of Augustus in Greek. And it became another Greek city. Caesarea, we can't emphasize enough how this was really the greatest port city in the East.

It really was. And because of all these marvelous things that Herod was doing, he had quite a reputation around the Roman Empire. And I think this is one thing that kind of surprised me as the more I studied this and learned that Herod and his family and some of his associates were really quite famous in Rome in these days.

And some of the Roman satirists were actually making jokes about Herod. He was like one of the things you talk about around the water cooler. Hey, you hear what Herod did now? But another thing that he did, which was very, very important, was secure the rights of Jews throughout the Roman Empire.

The Jews were allowed to live according to their own laws, according to their own customs, and to do the kinds of things that would enrich their Jewish identity. He himself, he questioned it a little bit. One of the things during this point is, with regard to his foreign policy, he managed to forge a close friendship with Augustus and with Agrippa, who was one of Augustus's other generals.

But he surrounded himself with Greek counselors, Greeks. He brought these people into Jerusalem. He learned philosophy from them.

He erected these pagan temples. He was very careful to avoid offending the Jews with any of his habits, which was kind of funky because here he was meticulous about making sure that he bathed properly, that he washed his hands according to the Jewish customs. All of his palaces that he built, he made Masada Palace.

He had Herodium, another palace, and they were always equipped with ritual bathing pools where you could go and do your cleansing, which was required for the

Jewish rituals. He avoided assiduously, you know, all of the things that were considered to be against the Jewish kosher laws. This led one witty fellow to remark that he would rather have been Herod's pig than Herod's son, playing a little bit upon the fact that the Greek word for pig and son sounds very similar.

But the idea, of course, was that Herod's pigs were well-fed and well-kept, whereas his sons had a nasty tendency to die. Let's move on. So, let's move on to the last portion here.

This is one of the coins from Herod's realm, and one of the things that's interesting here about this coin is you'll see what's missing here. There is no face on this coin. Typically, coinage, even, of course, to this day, we have the faces of our presidents on our coins.

If you looked at the coins of the Greek monarchs, they also pictured the face of the gods or themselves at various times. No faces on these coins. Why? Because the Jews considered that to be a graven image.

So, you were not to offend the Jews by putting graven images upon your coinage. There are some ruins of Caesarea here, and people are having a nice time, but this can't begin, of course, to tell you the kind of glory that this place had back in the day.

He used some concrete that hardens in water. It's a fairly new invention at this time, and they used it to build out underneath the water here so they could have these wonderful dock systems where people could come in. This is a model of Herod's temple, and you can kind of get an impression of what it looked like, but it was much, much taller than either the temple of Second Temple, whether the temple built in 515 or even for that matter, than the Temple of Solomon.

It's kind of hard to do it justice here because this is just a model, of course. You can see from back here that it's not all that big, but the complex itself was huge and beautiful and a wonder, as I've said before. So, let's talk about his domestic misery from 13 BC to 4 BC.

Herod's paranoia led him to kill three more of his sons. He had 10 wives. His first wife, Doris, was a commoner.

She's the one that he had sent away and banished with her son. She had a son by the name of Antipater. When he was beginning to think that maybe his other sons were plotting to take his throne from him, he recalled her and her son back to Jerusalem to provide yet another potential rival for his throne.

We got Mariamne, who is the mother of Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he had killed. Alexander and Aristobulus, the two boys, were sent off to Rome to get a good Roman education. Mariamne II had two wives named Mariamne, believe it or not.

She had a son by the name of Herod. He had a wife by the name of Malthus, and she was a Samaritan, which also I'm sure didn't win him any friends, but she was a mother of a couple of fellows by the name of Archelaus and Antipas. Then a lady by the name of Cleo of Jerusalem, and she was the mother of a fellow by the name of Philip.

Several of these boys are going to later inherit some power and some governorships. But Alexander and Aristobulus, the two sons of Mariamne, once they returned from Rome, didn't exactly warm up to their dad, as you might imagine, knowing that he had killed the mother. So, Salome decided to exacerbate that situation by slandering them to Herod, and eventually, Herod came to believe that they were plotting against them and had them both executed.

So, Herod's suspicion, his dislike, grew. He built a number of fortresses, and Herod was remarkable in this place because he was kind of playing the shell game. He was always afraid somebody was trying to kill him.

So, he had these fortresses built in various places around his empire, and then he'd go, and he'd live at one fortress for a while. Then he had moved to another fortress, and he wouldn't leave a forwarding address. So, people didn't know exactly where he was at because he was always fearful of people during this period.

Near the end of Herod's life, his son Antipater tried to secure the throne. He was going to try to assassinate Herod. It was kind of one of those remarkable little conspiracies.

They were going to poison him, so Antipater gets Herod's cupbearer to put poison in the wine, but somehow the cupbearer ends up drinking the cup himself and ended up dead. So when this guy suddenly dies of a cup that was meant for Herod, Herod, of course, knows that somebody was trying to kill him. As I said, just because you're paranoid doesn't mean that everybody isn't out to get you.

So, Antipater is arrested, he is investigated, and eventually is executed. So, during this period, of course, we have the incident of the slaughter of the innocents. Jesus was born probably sometime around six years before Christ.

Let's figure that. But at that time, Herod was thoroughly in his paranoid delusion, thinking that everybody was plotting against him. And when these three wise men, or however many there were, show up in Jerusalem saying, hey, we hear there's a

new king in Jerusalem! You know? Herod was not about to take something like that lying down.

So, Herod dies in 4 BC. He's about 70 years of age at this point. He does leave a few sons behind, and all three sons are vying to be made the king of Judea.

When the dust settles, none of them is appointed king of Judea. Rather, they are all appointed governors of various realms in Judea. One of these sons we know quite well.

One of them is Herod, and he becomes quite prominent in events in the New Testament. We also have Philip, who's way up north in Trachonitis, who is also named in the New Testament. Archelaus, who was given the governorship of Judea, didn't last very long, because he was deposed after a very few years and sent off into exile for his incompetence and because of his graft.

So, some of the fortresses that were built. Herod apparently, supposedly, was buried in Herodium, and what I understand is they just recently think they've discovered his tomb. This was something which, for a very long time, they had no idea where he was buried.

There's a legend, which may or may not be true, that Herod had ordered that all of the most noblemen in all the cities in Judea were to be gathered together in a stadium when he was lying in his deathbed, and that when he died, Herod wanted all those noble men slaughtered so that there would be a great cry of grief that would go up at the death of Herod. Thankfully, blessedly, that commandment was never carried out, if there ever actually was a commandment of that sort or not. But these are the kinds of actions that people believed of Herod at this time.

So, what can we say about this man, besides the fact that he left the mess in his wake? So here we've got Archelaus, governor of Judah up until 4 AD. Herod Antipas, who governed Galilee until 39 AD, he also got deposed and sent into exile, and this of course is the man who was over the trial of Jesus. And then Philip, who governed Ileria and Trachonitis, he died in 34 AD, and he actually died of natural causes.

Not all of these men met tragic ends. But what can we say about Herod? Why do we call him the great? I would say mainly because of his great building projects, but you can't ignore the way that he secured the rights for Jews throughout the empire. This was a fairly significant accomplishment.

Because of Herod's work, because of his tireless efforts on behalf of his people, the Jews remained quite secure in Judea. Even after the great revolt in 70 AD, even after the loss of their temple, the Jews continued to be able to exercise some rights and a

kind of privileged place in the Roman empire. So, they didn't have to like him, and they didn't.

But on the other hand, they couldn't say that Herod had done nothing for them because he certainly had. But by the end of his reign, by the time of his death, the animosities were growing to a place where you knew something was going to break. And it took a few decades, but it eventually did.

This is Dr. Anthony Tomasino and his teaching on Judaism before Jesus. This is session 13, Herod the Great.