

John the Baptist Confronts Herod Antipas

Mark 6:14-29 explains how John the Baptist, the one who came to prepare the way for Jesus the Messiah, lost his life. He boldly confronted a ruler regarding his sinful actions and was beheaded for doing so. Yet Jesus commended John.

Read Mark's record of what happened to John in Mark 6:14-29. Then read Jesus' statements about John in Matthew 11:7-15. Note that Jesus knew why John had been arrested. Although Jesus didn't mention the details of John's arrest, He still expressed words of praise and affirmation for the one who had prepared the way for His coming, and confronted Herod.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. How might the answer Jesus gave to John's disciples to take back to John have reassured him?
2. How did Jesus affirm John in his statements in Matthew 11:7-15?
3. What did John do that got him into trouble? Why do you think he did it?
4. It is clear from Scripture that John was correct in what he told Herod. (Note that the Bible tells us John had confronted Herod himself; he may not have publicly condemned him as portrayed in *Jesus of Nazareth*; see <https://www.discoverbedrocktruth.org/johnthebaptistconfrontsherod/>). What points might we emphasize to make the case that John was right to confront Herod as he did?
5. Apart from the often-stated principle that pietists hold that God's spokesmen should not address political issues because they're political, not spiritual, what points might someone emphasize in making the case that John should *not* have confronted Herod? How valid are these?
6. Why might God have wanted John to confront Herod about His sin, despite the risk and the cost John eventually would pay for doing so?
7. Who is in a better position to confront political leaders about their sins, and the sins of the nation, than God's spokesmen — preachers and pastors?
8. Respond to the following observations. What conclusions might we draw from them?
 - a. Jesus could have chided John for confronting Herod and for being involved in politics, but He did not.
 - b. Jesus could have chided John for offending Herod and for not being "winsome," but He did not.
 - c. Instead of criticizing John, Jesus praised him.
 - d. Significantly, even though John's confrontation of Herod appealed to God's moral law and Jesus had come to usher in an "age of grace," apparently Jesus was OK with John's about God's moral law in the age of grace?