

Analyzing a Narrative Painting

Evidence Sheet

THE MARTYRDOM OF SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST

Gospel of Mark, 6:22–29

For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death and could not do so; for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy listening to him. A strategic day came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his lords and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee; and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests; and the king said to the girl, “Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you.” And he swore to her, “Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom.” And she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask for?” And she said, “The head of John the Baptist.” Immediately she came in a hurry to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me the head of John the Baptist on a platter.” And although the king was very sorry, yet because of his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her. Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded him to

bring back [John’s] head. And [Herod] went and had [John] beheaded in the prison, and brought [John’s] head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about this, they came and took away [John’s] body and laid it in a tomb.

Gospel of Matthew, 14:3–12

For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. For John had been saying to him, “It is not lawful for you to have her.” Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet. But when Herod’s birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. Having been prompted by her mother, [the daughter] said, “Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist.” Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests. He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. And [John’s] head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. [John’s] disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.

*Scripture quotations taken from
the New American Standard Bible.*