4

Clearheaded or Beheaded?

Key References: Matthew 14:1-13; *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 22, pp. 214-225; Our Beliefs, nos. 8, 22, 12















powertext

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship" (Romans 12:1).

Have you ever tried to talk to someone on the phone, but been interrupted by a bad connection? It's disappointing. That disappointment is what God feels when He tries to communicate with people whose minds are clouded with harmful substances that interfere with the connection.

powerpoint

We worship God when we offer Him our bodies and minds.

Day after day John the Baptist waited in his gloomy dungeon cell. John thought a lot about his days beside the Jordan. He remembered going for walks in the early morning and long hours of quiet talking with God. He remembered preaching to hundreds of people, who later lined up for baptism. He also remembered the many priests and leaders who mumbled and argued and wished he would just go away.

One of the reluctant listeners had been Herod Antipas himself—the ruler of the local area. John recalled noticing him on the edge of the crowd, listening.

"Repent and be baptized," John had preached. "Repent of your selfish ways—your lying, your pride, your adultery. Don't be like Herod, taking his own brother's wife for himself. 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near' [Matthew 3:2]."

Sabbath

DO Do this week's activity on page 33.

4

Sunday

READ Read Romans 12:1 and this week's story, "Clearheaded or Beheaded?"

CREATE Find a clean piece of paper. Tear off a little all around the edges so the edges are ragged. Write your power text, Romans 12:1, in the center of the paper. Roll the paper in slightly from both edges like a scroll. Place it where you will see it all week.

PRAY Thank Jesus for His sacrifice for you.

Monday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 10:31 and Proverbs 3:5, 6.

LIST In your Bible study journal, list all the things you can do to glorify God.

THINK What does it mean to you to "trust in the Lord with all your heart" and to submit to God "in all your ways"? (Proverbs 3:5, 6).

PRAY Ask God for the understanding you need to worship Him in all you do.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 14:1-13.

DISCUSS With an adult you trust, discuss how John's life was an act of worship to the end. Then discuss ways that your life can be an act of worship every day.

PRAY Ask God to help you worship Him by offering Him your entire being—body and mind.

John had watched Herod out of the corner of his eye. The king had obviously been trembling. When the others left, Herod waited and talked with John. From that time on, the two had spoken many times.

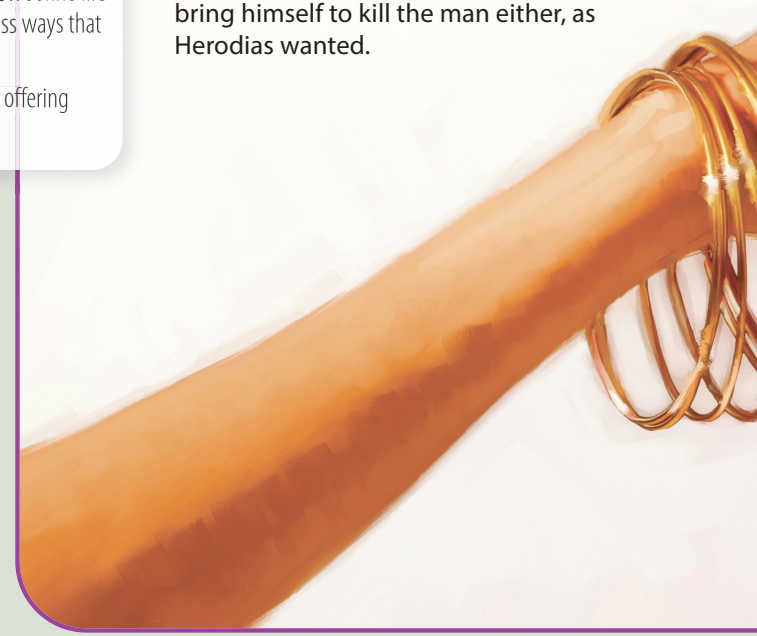
At home Herod began to act differently. Herodias, the wife he had taken from his brother, was not pleased with the changes. "You have to quit talking to that prophet," she had demanded.

"But," Herod had sighed, "what if he is right? What if you should return to your husband?"

"Quit talking like that," Herodias had snapped. "Be a man and arrest the fellow for insulting us. Throw him into the dungeon. If you don't, I won't speak to you!"

Herod did as he was told, not by John, but by Herodias, the wife of his brother.

Days passed. Herod believed John was a prophet, but he couldn't bring himself to release him. And he couldn't bring himself to kill the man either, as Herodias wanted.



Herodias continued to plot to get rid of the prophet she thought was trying to ruin her life. Finally her chance arrived. A large party was thrown for Herod's birthday. The tables were loaded with rich food and intoxicating drinks. Around the tables sat people Herod wanted to impress and who wanted to impress him.

Herodias encouraged him to eat and drink and forget his problems. "Here," she suggested soothingly, "have another drink and relax. I have a surprise for you."

Herod's conscience shut down for the night as musicians gathered off to the right. As the beat of the music throbbed and filled the room, a young woman began to weave her body as she danced closer and closer to the king.

Salome, Herodias and Philip's daughter, was the surprise entertainment. She held the complete attention of Herod and his guests. Herod felt the same way he had when he first saw Herodias. He was not thinking logically. He wasn't thinking at all.

When the dancing stopped, Herod called for Salome. He wanted to impress her, to appear powerful and generous, but his words came out a little slurred. "Delightful, delightful, your dance was delightful. Whatever you want—tell me anything you want," he grinned foolishly.

Some of the guests who could still think looked at the girl a little surprised. How would she respond to this unreasonable generosity? Would she accept it as just that, or would she take advantage of this drunken stepfather who was not thinking straight?

Salome ran to her mother for instructions. Herodias whispered in her ear, and



Wednesday

READ Read Mark 6:17-28.

LIST List the different emotions people at Herod's party may have experienced that caused them to do and say what they did.

REVISE In your Bible study journal, rewrite or retell the story with the people responding in more positive ways. How would the story have ended if the people would have made wise choices of entertainment, food, and drinks?

PRAY Ask God to give you wisdom so that you can honor Him in your choices.

Thursday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.

FIND Find as many facts as you can about keeping your body and mind clear.

CREATE Start a scrapbook that you can share with others who are interested in making choices that will honor God.

PRAY Ask God to lead you to the friends who need your advice to adopt good habits.

Friday

READ Read Romans 13:13, 14.

THINK Caffeine, tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs hinder a person's ability to choose what is right. How did King Herod's use of alcohol interfere with his ability to make wise choices?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, write a note to God. Tell Him that you choose not to use those substances that interfere with your communication with Him.

SHARE Share your commitment with someone and ask them to be accountability partners with you—someone that would encourage you to always make wise decisions.

PRAY Pray that you will make a decision daily to worship God by the choices you make about your body.

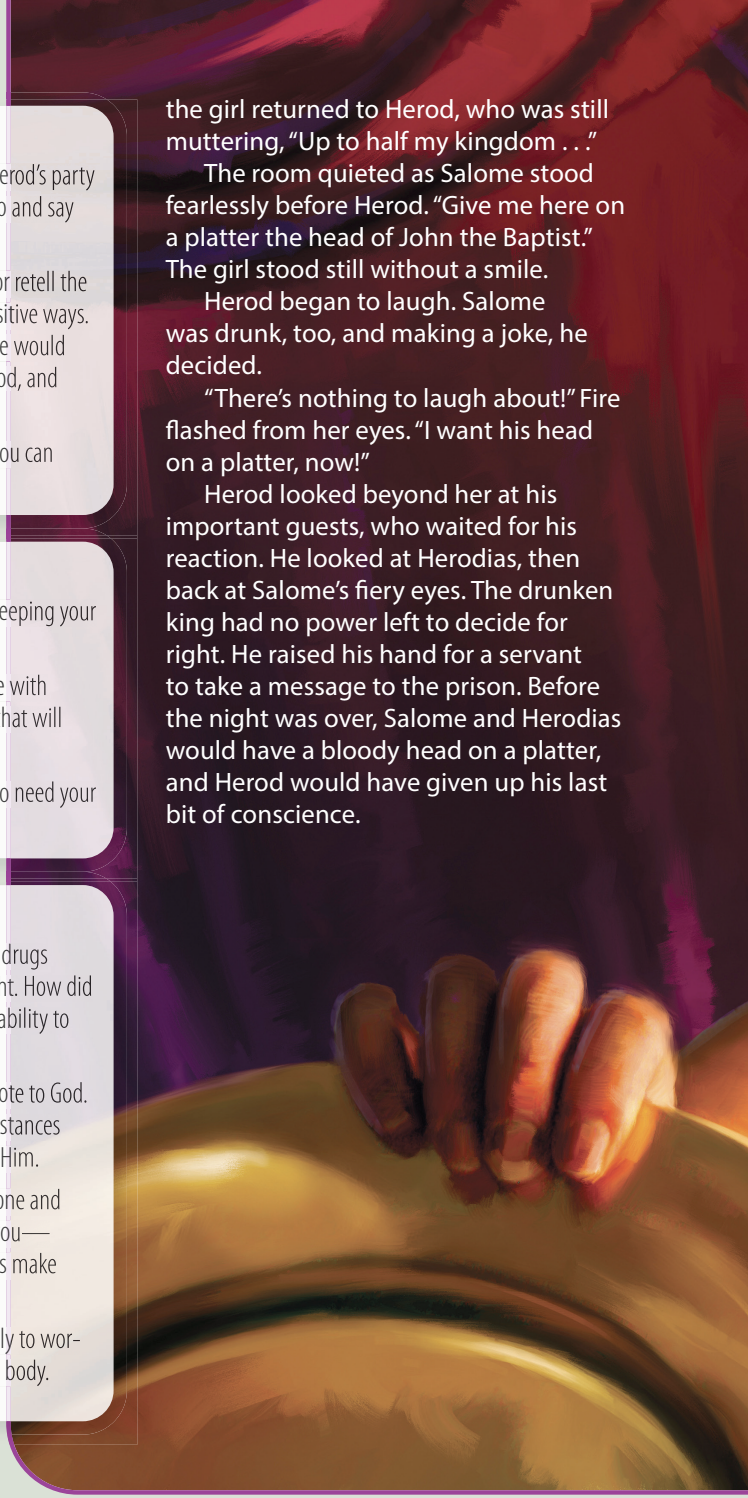
the girl returned to Herod, who was still muttering, "Up to half my kingdom . . ."

The room quieted as Salome stood fearlessly before Herod. "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." The girl stood still without a smile.

Herod began to laugh. Salome was drunk, too, and making a joke, he decided.

"There's nothing to laugh about!" Fire flashed from her eyes. "I want his head on a platter, now!"

Herod looked beyond her at his important guests, who waited for his reaction. He looked at Herodias, then back at Salome's fiery eyes. The drunken king had no power left to decide for right. He raised his hand for a servant to take a message to the prison. Before the night was over, Salome and Herodias would have a bloody head on a platter, and Herod would have given up his last bit of conscience.





PUZZLE 4

FREE FROM BONDAGE

Consider the following verses:

"Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaints? Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes? Those who linger over wine, who go to sample bowls of mixed wine. Do not gaze at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup, when it goes down smoothly! In the end it bites like a snake and poisons like a viper. Your eyes will see strange sights and your mind will imagine confusing things. You will be like one sleeping on the high seas, lying on top of the rigging. 'They hit me,' you will say, 'but I'm not hurt! They beat me, but I don't feel it! When will I wake up so I can find another drink?' " (Proverbs 23:29-35).

"For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14).

Instructions: Start at the shaded block and read clockwise every other letter to learn what taking alcohol and drugs makes us become.

