

Shame On Herodias' Daughter

Matthew 14:6-7 says, "But when Herod's birthday was celebrated, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod. Therefore he promised with an oath to give her whatever she might ask."

John the Baptist was killed due in great part to Herod's lust. And Herod's lust was enflamed in great part by the dancing of the daughter of Herodias. It's difficult to see this story otherwise.

Yet more and more I see followers of Jesus involved in such activities, or allowing — and even encouraging or facilitating — such in their children. The physical body is attractive to the opposite sex. Movement in the physical body can and often does enhance said attraction. There is absolutely no denying such. And you would think in a culture that's so obsessed with nudity and sex that Christians would be especially conscious of any appearance or behavior that encourages lasciviousness.

But it's commonplace to see young men and women who profess godliness wearing very revealing clothing; i.e. short shorts and skirts; cropped tops; low cut blouses; clingy, sheer, or tight shirts, dresses, and athletic gear. And wearing such shamelessly — almost defiantly — with the idea that anyone who might object is an archaic prude. Then taking their flaunted sexuality to the dance floor so that they might display themselves in the most sensual of ways. It happens regularly. It happens extensively. And we're often scared to address it because of the brazen ridicule that's directed at anyone who would decry such carnality.

I'm saying it. Think what you will. Shame on Herodias' daughter. Shame on Herod. Shame on us. Holiness demands more than such animal behavior.

- by Russ Bowman

Can We See The Bible Alike?

- Moses said we could (Deut. 29:29).
- David said we could (Ps. 119:104).
- John said we could (Jn. 20:30,31).
- Jesus prayed that we might (Jn. 17:20).

All of these spokesmen for God have declared that through study of the Scriptures we are enabled to see them alike.

There are some things that HINDER a clear understanding of the Bible:

- Relatives (Matt. 19:29; 10:34-37)
- Pride (Prov 14:12; 16:18; Rev. 3:17-18)
- Majority opinion (Ex. 23:2; Matt. 7:13-14,21)
- False doctrines (Matt. 13:14-15; 2 Thess. 2:9-12)
- Satan (2 Cor. 4:3-4)

If we will accept only the word of God (1 Pet. 4:11), we would not only see the Bible alike, but understand and practice it alike (1 Cor. 1:10).

- by Johnny Polk

Moral Relativity vs. Moral Clarity

Our society is infected with moral relativity, that is, nothing is definitely right or wrong; it all depends on your perspective. Moral relativity has been responsible for a wide acceptance of abortion, adultery, fornication, drunkenness, lying, etc.

The Bible says there is right and wrong, good and evil (Lk. 6:45). The Bible provides us with moral clarity! It states that abortion (murder), adultery, fornication, drunkenness, lying, etc. are evil (Mk. 7:21-23; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8).

As the people of God, we are to have moral clarity, discerning between good and evil (Heb. 5:14). The way we distinguish between right and wrong is by having a reliable standard. Men are not that standard, as their opinions and ideas change from one generation to the next. Men are responsible for blurring the line between right and wrong. The only reliable standard of

determining good and evil is the Word of God! "Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way" (Psalm 119:104). We know good and evil only by knowing God's will (cf. Rom. 7:7).

The hosts of sin assail moral clarity by pushing moral relativity. When the lines are blurred, any sin can be justified. Therefore, we need to maintain moral clarity, knowing right from wrong by knowing God's word.

- by **Steven F. Deaton**

Correct Application of Matthew 18

It happens again and again. Some brother or sister becomes involved in a sinful activity and it quickly reaches the level of "common knowledge." Many people know about it, and some that lack a conscience about gossiping begin to have a "hay day" with this information. Finally, one or more concerned brethren learn of it and take steps toward correcting the sinful situation. For their efforts they are criticized and blamed for not following proper "procedure." Specifically, they are charged with having not followed the steps set forth in Matthew 18. Here is the text at issue: *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican"* (Matt. 18:15-17).

Please observe that the situation Jesus describes here involves a private matter — known only by the brother who had been wronged and the one who had committed the wrong. Clearly, it was not a sin against a group of people, and it was not a sin that was publicly known. The scenario our Lord sets forth was very specific. In cases where these specifics are met, this method must be followed.

But, what about situations where a Christian sins a sin which is not directed towards any certain individual, and the sin immediately becomes publicly known? In such instances, Matthew 18 does not apply. Instead, we would be correct in following the pattern set by the apostle Paul in Galatians 2. When Peter was guilty of open hypocrisy, Paul said, "I withstood him to the face . . . I said unto Peter before them all . . ." (vv. 11-14). Public sins are a different matter — Matthew 18 does not 'fit'.

Unfortunately appealing to Matthew 18 is often used to deflect criticism away from the true offender and towards the concerned brethren who are trying to do the right thing. Think!

- by **Greg Gwin**