

The *Villains* of Christmas

The
GRINCH™



The ***Villains*** of Christmas

Herod the Great

“Giving the devil his due . . .”

- Under Herod the Great, the Jewish territory reached its zenith in antiquity – *eclipsing Solomon’s day*
- **“Now some there are who stand amazed at the diversity of Herod's nature and purpose; for when we have respect to his magnificence, and the benefits he bestowed on all men, there is no possibility for even those that had the least respect for him, to deny or not openly to confess, that he had a nature vastly magnificent; but when anyone looks upon the punishments he inflicted, and the injuries he did, not only to his subjects but to his nearest relations and takes notice of his severe end and unrelenting disposition there, he will be forced to allow that he was brutish, and a stranger to all humanity.” / Josephus, *Antiquities* 16.5.4.**

“Giving the devil his due . . .”

Herod was a shrewd politician

Roman presence in Jerusalem

- Pompey conquered Jerusalem in 63 BC / entered the Holy of Holies!
 - This went beyond the sacrilege of even Antiochus IV
 - But there was no Mattathias or Judas Maccabeus to lead a holy resistance
 - When defenders of the Temple rallied, Pompey killed 12,000 men
 - Levelled city's walls / imposed heavy taxes / told priests to keep order
 - Romans renamed the territory "Palestine"

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 - Romans renamed the territory "Palestine"
- Rome governed Palestine as client state from its base in Syria
 - Pompey installed Antipater (father of Herod) to govern Palestine
 - Roman Senate eventually installed Herod as "King of the Jews" in 40 BC
 - Ordered him to take control of Jerusalem and control it for Rome
 - With cohort of Roman soldiers, established himself as ruler in 37 BC

Herod the Great (37 – 4 BC)

- Established himself as “the Great” by taking not only Judea but Samaria, Galilee, and part of the trans-Jordan region
- Herod was hated by the Jewish people
 - He was Idumean, not Jewish
 - Tried to ingratiate himself by marrying Mariamne
 - Cruel in the extreme (“Better to be Herod’s *hys* than his *hyios!*” / Augustus)
 - “Herod attained his kingdom as a fox, ruled as a tiger and died as a dog.” (Solomon Zeitlin)
 - Courted favor with major construction projects – esp *the Temple*

Caesarea Maritima

(not Caesarea Philippi)

Phillip: Acts 8:40 (cf. v.1); 21:8

Cornelius: Acts 10:1

Herod Agrippa: Acts 12:19b-23

Paul imprisoned 2 yrs: Acts 23:33ff





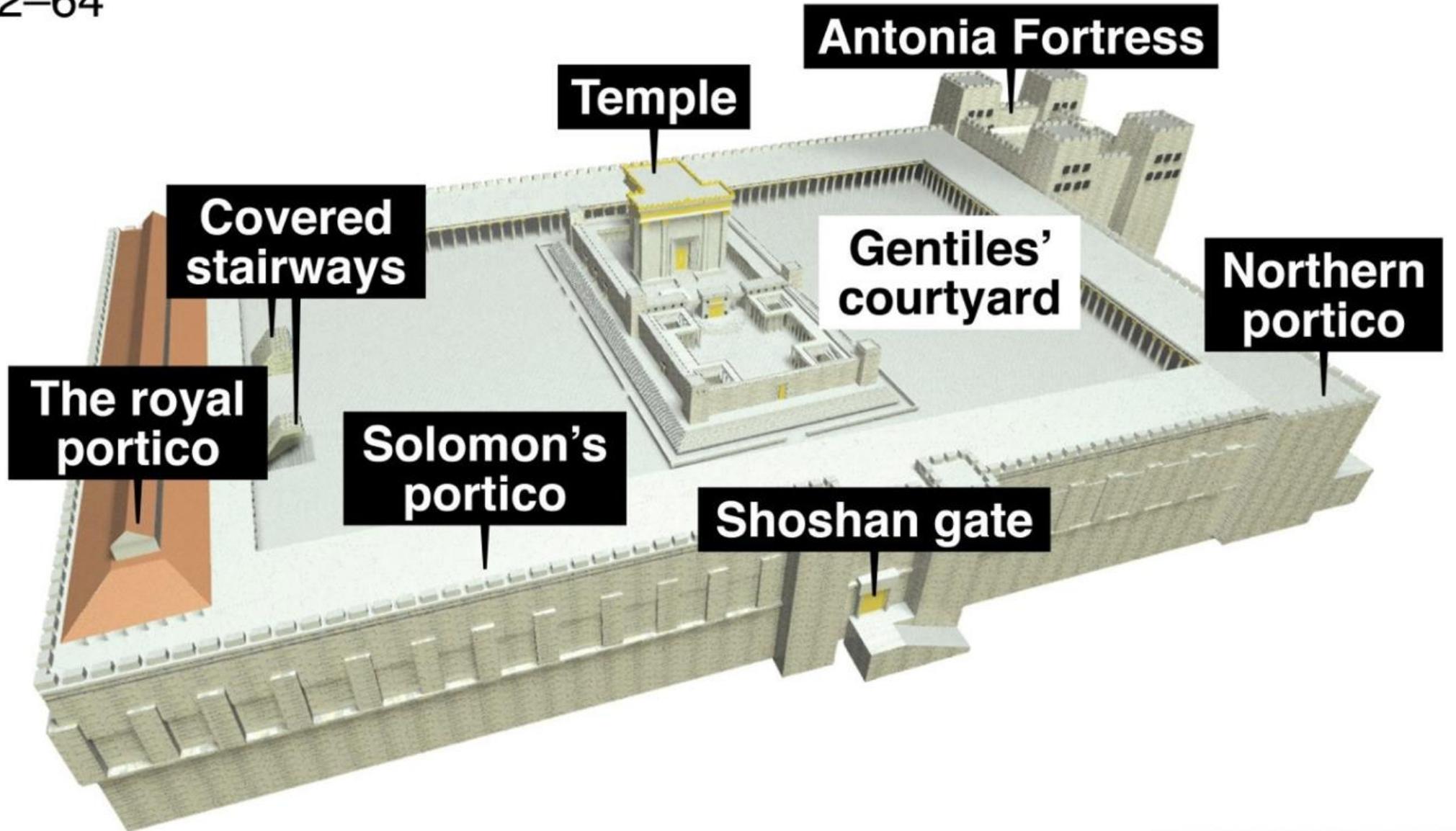
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Herod's Temple on the Temple Mount

Circa AD 62–64



Now . . . *the rest of the story!*

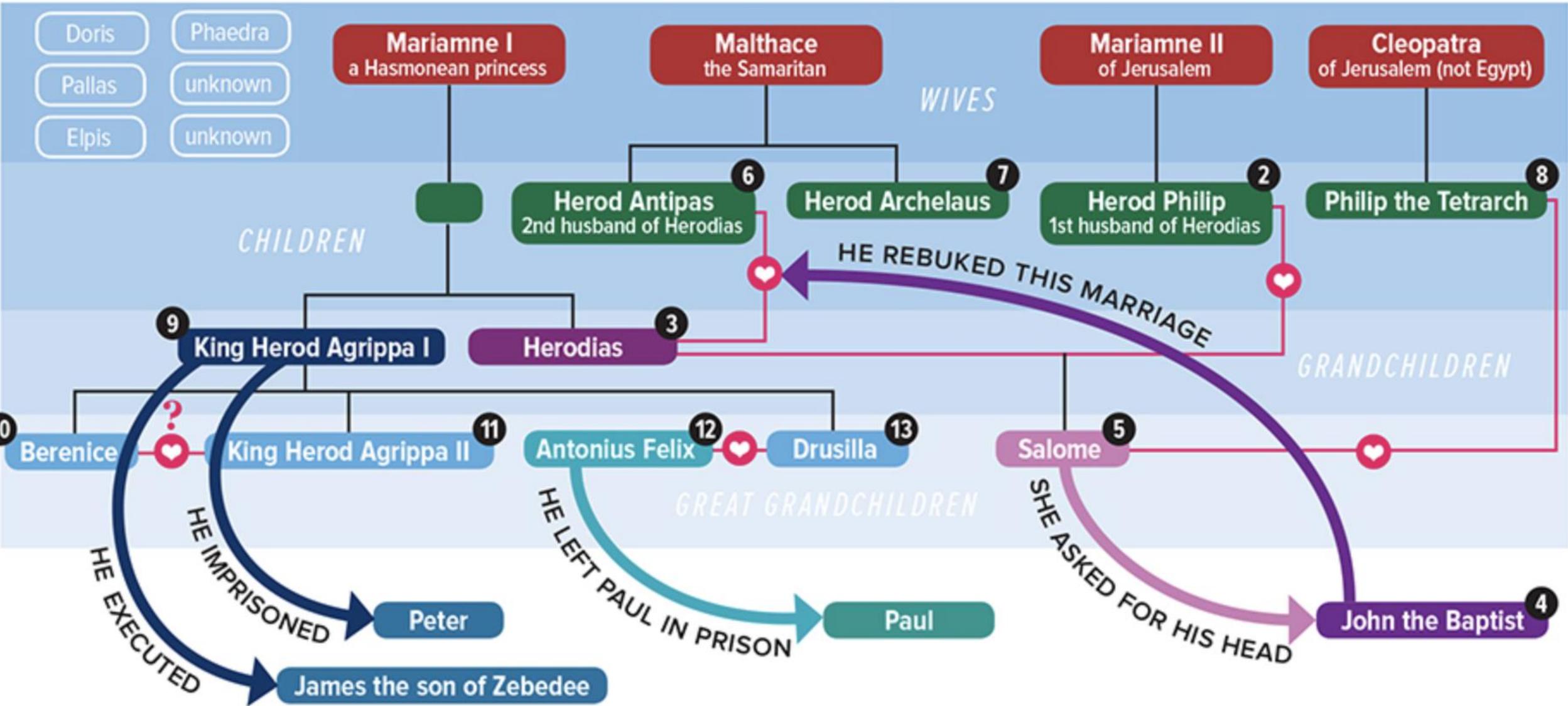
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Herod the Great
Governor of Galilee (r. 47–37 B.C.E.)
King of the Jews (r. 37–4 B.C.E.)

Jesus
HE TRIED TO KILL

OTHER WIVES

- Doris
- Phaedra
- Pallas
- unknown
- Elpis
- unknown

Herod the Great's Family Tree



the **CHRISTMAS** villain

Matthew 2: ¹ Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the reign of King Herod. About that time some wise men from eastern lands arrived in Jerusalem, asking, ² “Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him.”

³ King Herod was deeply disturbed when he heard this, as was everyone in Jerusalem. ⁴ He called a meeting of the leading priests and teachers of religious law and asked, “Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?”

⁵ “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they said, “for this is what the prophet wrote:

⁶ ‘And you, O Bethlehem in the land of Judah,
are not least among the ruling cities of Judah,
for a ruler will come from you
who will be the shepherd for my people Israel.’ ”

⁷ Then Herod called for a private meeting with the wise men, and he learned from them the time when the star first appeared. ⁸ Then he told them, “Go to Bethlehem and search carefully for the child. And when you find him, come back and tell me so that I can go and worship him, too!”

⁹ After this interview the wise men went their way. And the star they had seen in the east guided them to Bethlehem. It went ahead of them and stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were filled with joy! ¹¹ They entered the house and saw the child with his mother, Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasure chests and gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

¹² When it was time to leave, they returned to their own country by another route, for God had warned them in a dream not to return to Herod.

¹⁶ Herod was furious when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him. He sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance.¹⁷ Herod's brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ "A cry was heard in Ramah—
weeping and great mourning.
Rachel weeps for her children,
refusing to be comforted,
for they are dead."

Power

Power: *Jesus Style*

- Never manipulated or took advantage
- Didn't swagger and boast
- Refused to intimidate with titles, pomp, or display
- He loved children
- Showed compassion without patronizing
 - The woman at Jacob's well
 - Zacchaeus
- Patience with slow-to-get-it disciples
- Serving rather than being served

So . . . who is really GREAT?

²⁵ But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them.²⁶ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant,²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. ²⁸ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

- *Matthew 20:25-28*

