

## The Herodian Dynasty

Herod was the family name of several Roman rulers who served as provincial governors of Palestine and surrounding regions during New Testament times.

The first Herod, known as Herod the Great, was the Roman ruler of Palestine during the days of the Roman Emperor Caesar Augustus when Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1; Luke 3:1). All the other different Herods mentioned in the New Testament were the sons or grandsons of this Herod.

Herod the Great (ruled 37–4 B.C.), was known as a master builder, organizer, and developer, although his policies were considered cruel and ruthless by the Jewish people. His most notable achievement was the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem—a project that required almost fifty years. He also rebuilt and enlarged the city of Caesarea into a port city on the Mediterranean Sea. Caesarea served as the Roman provincial capital for Palestine during the New Testament era. The magnificent aqueducts that he built at this city are still visible today.

Herod's son Antipas succeeded him as Roman governor of Galilee and Perea (Matt. 14:1). Antipas was responsible for the imprisonment and death of John the Baptist (Luke 3:19, 20; Matt. 14:1–12).

Herod the Great's grandson Agrippa was named ruler over all of Palestine by the Roman emperor Caligula. Agrippa is known as a persecutor of early Christians. He had James put to death and had Peter arrested. Because of his cruelty and blasphemy, Agrippa was slain by an angel of the Lord (Acts 12).

In A.D. 50, Agrippa's son, known as Agrippa II, was made ruler of the king of Chalcis's territory. Later he was given Abilene, Trachonitis, Acra, and important parts of Galilee and Perea. The only reference to this Herod in the New Testament occurs in Acts 25:13–26:32, which deals with Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea. Agrippa listened to Paul's defense, but the apostle appealed to Rome. Agrippa had no power to set him free.

The other two Herods mentioned in the New Testament are Herod Archelaus (Matt. 2:22) and Herod Philip (Luke 3:1). Both of these rulers were sons of Herod the Great; they ruled parts of the territory previously administered by their father.

## Family Tree of Herod

