

Flavius Josephus (37/38 – 100 AD)

Jewish Antiquities, Book 15, Chapters 1-7¹

BOOK 15

CONTAINING THE INTERVAL OF EIGHTEEN YEARS

FROM THE DEATH OF ANTIGONUS TO THE FINISHING OF THE TEMPLE BY HEROD

CHAPTER 1

CONCERNING POLLIO AND SAME AS. HEROD SLAYS THE PRINCIPAL OF
ANTIGONUS'S FRIENDS, AND SPOILS THE CITY OF ITS WEALTH.
ANTONY BEHEADS ANTIGONUS

1. How Sosius and Herod took Jerusalem by force; and besides that, how they took Antigonus captive, has been related by us in the foregoing book. We will now proceed in the narration. And since Herod had now the government of all Judea put into his hands, he promoted such of the private men in the city as had been of his party, but never left off avenging and punishing every day those that had chosen to be of the party of his enemies. But Pollio the Pharisee, and Sameas, a disciple of his, were honored by him above all the rest; for when Jerusalem was besieged, they advised the citizens to receive Herod, for which advice they were well requited. But this Pollio, at the time when Herod was once upon his trial of life and death, foretold, in way of reproach, to Hyrcanus and the other judges, how this Herod, whom they suffered now to escape, would afterward inflict punishment on them all; which had its completion in time, while God fulfilled the words he had spoken.

2. At this time Herod, now he had got Jerusalem under his power, carried off all the royal ornaments, and spoiled the wealthy men of what they had gotten; and when, by these means, he had heaped together a great quantity of silver and gold, he gave it all to Antony, and his friends that were about him. He also slew forty-five of the principal men of Antigonus's party, and set guards at the gates of the city, that nothing might be carried out together with their dead bodies. They also searched the dead, and whatsoever was found, either of silver or gold, or other treasure, it was carried to the king; nor was there any end of the miseries he brought upon them; and this distress was in part occasioned by the covetousness of the prince regent, who was still in want of more, and in part by the Sabbatic year, which was still going on, and forced the country to lie still uncultivated, since we are forbidden to sow our land in that year. Now when Antony had received Antigonus as his captive, he determined to keep him against his triumph; but when he heard that the nation grew seditious, and that, out of their hatred to Herod, they continued to bear goodwill to Antigonus, he resolved to behead him at Antioch, for otherwise the Jews could no way be brought to be quiet. And Strabo of Cappadocia attests to what I have said, when he thus speaks: "Antony ordered Antigonus the Jew to be brought to Antioch, and there to be beheaded. And this Antony seems to me to have been the very first man who beheaded a king, as supposing he could no other way bend the minds of the Jews so as to receive Herod, whom he had made king in his stead; for by no

1

torments could they be forced to call him king, so great a fondness they had for their former king; so he thought that this dishonorable death would diminish the value they had for Antigonus's memory, and at the same time would diminish the hatred they bare to Herod." Thus far Strabo.

CHAPTER 2

HOW HYRCANUS WAS SET AT LIBERTY BY THE PARTHIANS, AND RETURNED TO HEROD; AND WHAT ALEXANDRA DID WHEN SHE HEARD THAT ANANELUS WAS MADE HIGH PRIEST

1. Now after Herod was in possession of the kingdom, Hyrcanus the high priest, who was then a captive among the Parthians, came to him again, and was set free from his captivity, in the manner following: Barzapharnes and Pacorus, the generals of the Parthians, took Hyrcanus, who was first made high priest and afterward king, and Herod's brother, Phasaelus captives, and were them away into Parthia. Phasaelus indeed could not bear the reproach of being in bonds; and thinking that death with glory was better than any life whatsoever, he became his own executioner, as I have formerly related.

2. But when Hyrcanus was brought into Parthia the king Phraates treated him after a very gentle manner, as having already learned of what an illustrious family he was; on which account he set him free from his bonds, and gave him a habitation at Babylon,² where there were Jews in great numbers. These Jews honored Hyrcanus as their high priest and king, as did all the Jewish nation that dwelt as far as Euphrates; which respect was very much to his satisfaction. But when he was informed that Herod had received the kingdom, new hopes came upon him, as having been himself still of a kind disposition towards him, and expecting that Herod would bear in mind what favor he had received from him; and when he was upon his trial, and when he was in danger that a capital sentence would be pronounced against him, he delivered him from that danger, and from all punishment. Accordingly, he talked of that matter with the Jews that came often to him with great affection; but they endeavored to retain him among them, and desired that he would stay with them, putting him in mind of the kind offices and honors they did him, and that those honors they paid him were not at all inferior to what they could pay to either their high priests or their kings; and what was a greater motive to determine him, they said, was this, that he could not have those dignities [in Judea] because of that maim in his body, which had been inflicted on him by Antigonus; and that kings do not use to requite men for those kindnesses which they received when they were private persons, the height of their fortune making usually no small changes in them.

3. Now although they suggested these arguments to him for his own advantage, yet did Hyrcanus still desire to depart. Herod also wrote to him, and persuaded him to desire of Phraates, and the Jews that were there, that they should not grudge him the royal authority, which he should have jointly with himself, for that now was the proper time for himself to make him amends for the favors he had received from him, as having been brought up by him, and saved by him also, as well as for Hyrcanus to receive it. And as he wrote thus to Hyrcanus, so did he send also Saramallas, his ambassador, to Phraates, and many presents with him, and desired him in the most obliging way that he would be no hindrance to his

² The city here called "Babylon" by Josephus, seems to be one which was built by some of the Seleucidae upon the Tigris, which long after the utter desolation of old Babylon was commonly so called, and I suppose not far from Seleucia; just as the latter adjoining city Bagdat has been and is often called by the same old name of Babylon till this very day.

gratitude towards his benefactor. But this zeal of Herod's did not flow from that principle, but because he had been made governor of that country without having any just claim to it, he was afraid, and that upon reasons good enough, of a change in his condition, and so made what haste he could to get Hyrcanus into his power, or indeed to put him quite out of the way; which last thing he compassed afterward.

4. Accordingly, when Hyrcanus came, full of assurance, by the permission of the king of Parthia, and at the expense of the Jews, who supplied him with money, Herod received him with all possible respect, and gave him the upper place at public meetings, and set him above all the rest at feasts, and thereby deceived him. He called him his father, and endeavored, by all the ways possible, that he might have no suspicion of any treacherous design against him. He also did other things, in order to secure his government, which yet occasioned a sedition in his own family; for being cautious how he made any illustrious person the high priest of God,³ he sent for an obscure priest out of Babylon, whose name was Ananelus, and bestowed the high priesthood upon him.

5. However, Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, and wife of Alexander, the son of Aristobulus the king, who had also brought Alexander [two] children, could not bear this indignity. Now this son was one of the greatest comeliness, and was called Aristobulus; and the daughter, Mariamne, was married to Herod, and eminent for her beauty also. This Alexandra was much disturbed, and took this indignity offered to her son exceeding ill, that while he was alive, any one else should be sent for to have the dignity of the high priesthood conferred upon him. Accordingly, she wrote to Cleopatra (a musician assisting her in taking care to have her letters carried) to desire her intercession with Antony, in order to gain the high priesthood for her son.

6. But as Antony was slow in granting this request, his friend Dellius⁴ came into Judea upon some affairs; and when he saw Aristobulus, he stood in admiration at the tallness and handsomeness of the child, and no less at Mariamne, the king's wife, and was open in his commendations of Alexandra, as the mother of most beautiful children. And when she came to discourse with him, he persuaded her to get pictures drawn of them both, and to send them to Antony, for that when he saw them, he would deny her nothing that she should ask. Accordingly, Alexandra was elevated with these words of his, and sent the pictures to Antony. Dellius also talked extravagantly, and said that these children seemed not derived from men, but from some god or other. His design in doing so was to entice Antony into lewd pleasures with them, who was ashamed to send for the damsel, as being the wife of Herod, and avoided it, because of the reproaches he should have from Cleopatra on that account; but he sent, in the most decent manner he could, for the young man; but added this withal, unless he thought it hard upon him so to do. When this letter was brought to Herod, he did not think it safe for him to send one so handsome as was Aristobulus, in the prime of his life, for he was sixteen years of age, and of so noble a family, and particularly not to Antony, the

³ Here we have an eminent example of Herod's worldly and profane politics, when by the abuse of his unlawful and usurped power, to make whom he pleased high priest, in the person of Ananelus, he occasioned such disturbances in his kingdom, and in his own family, as suffered him to enjoy no lasting peace or tranquillity ever afterward; and such is frequently the effect of profane court politics about matters of religion in other ages and nations. The Old Testament is full of the miseries of the people of the Jews derived from such court politics, especially in and after the days of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, "who made Israel to sin"; who gave the most pernicious example of it; who brought on the grossest corruption of religion by it; and the punishment of whose family for it was most remarkable. The case is too well known to stand in need of particular citations.

⁴ Of this wicked Dellius, see the note on the War, B. I. ch. 15. sect. 3.

principal man among the Romans, and one that would abuse him in his amours, and besides, one that openly indulged himself in such pleasures as his power allowed him without control. He therefore wrote back to him, that if this boy should only go out of the country, all would be in a state of war and uproar, because the Jews were in hopes of a change in the government, and to have another king over them.

7. When Herod had thus excused himself to Antony, he resolved that he would not entirely permit the child or Alexandra to be treated dishonorably; but his wife Mariamne lay vehemently at him to restore the high priesthood to her brother; and he judged it was for his advantage so to do, because if he once had that dignity, he could not go out of the country. So he called his friends together, and told them that Alexandra privately conspired against his royal authority, and endeavored, by the means of Cleopatra, so to bring it about, that he might be deprived of the government, and that by Antony's means this youth might have the management of public affairs in his stead; and that this procedure of hers was unjust, since she would at the same time deprive her daughter of the dignity she now had, and would bring disturbances upon the kingdom, for which he had taken a great deal of pains, and had gotten it with extraordinary hazards; that yet, while he well remembered her wicked practices, he would not leave off doing what was right himself, but would even now give the youth the high priesthood; and that he formerly set up Ananelus, because Aristobulus was then so very young a child. Now when he had said this, not at random, but as he thought with the best discretion he had, in order to deceive the women, and those friends whom he had taken to consult withal, Alexandra, out of the great joy she had at this unexpected promise, and out of fear from the suspicions she lay under, fell a weeping; and made the following apology for herself; and said, that as to the [high] priesthood, she was very much concerned for the disgrace her son was under, and so did her utmost endeavors to procure it for him; but that as to the kingdom, she had made no attempts, and that if it were offered her [for her son], she would not accept it; and that now she would be satisfied with her son's dignity, while he himself held the civil government, and she had thereby the security that arose from his peculiar ability in governing to all the remainder of her family; that she was now overcome by his benefits, and thankfully accepted of this honor showed by him to her son, and that she would hereafter be entirely obedient. And she desired him to excuse her, if the nobility of her family, and that freedom of acting which she thought that allowed her, had made her act too precipitately and imprudently in this matter. So when they had spoken thus to one another, they came to an agreement, and all suspicions, so far as appeared, were vanished away.

CHAPTER 3

HOW HEROD, UPON HIS MAKING ARISTOBULUS HIGH PRIEST, TOOK CARE THAT HE SHOULD BE MURDERED IN A LITTLE TIME; AND WHAT APOLOGY HE MADE TO ANTONY ABOUT ARISTOBULUS; AS ALSO CONCERNING JOSEPH AND MARIAMNE

1. So king Herod immediately took the high priesthood away from Ananelus, who, as we said before, was not of this country, but one of those Jews that had been carried captive beyond Euphrates; for there were not a few ten thousands of this people that had been carried captives, and dwelt about Babylonia, whence Ananelus came. He was one of the stock of the high priests,⁴⁵ and had been of old a particular friend of Herod; and when he was first made

⁵ When Josephus says here that this Ananelus, the new high priest, was "of the stock of the high priests," and since he had been just telling us that he was a priest of an obscure family or character, ch. 2. sect. 4, it is not at all probable that he could so soon say that he was "of the stock of the high priests." However,

king, he conferred that dignity upon him, and now put him out of it again, in order to quiet the troubles in his family, though what he did was plainly unlawful, for at no other time [of old] was any one that had once been in that dignity deprived of it. It was Antiochus Epiphanes who first brake that law, and deprived Jesus, and made his brother Onias high priest in his stead. Aristobulus was the second that did so, and took that dignity from his brother [Hyrcanus]; and this Herod was the third, who took that high office away [from Ananelus], and gave it to this young man, Aristobulus, in his stead.

2. And now Herod seemed to have healed the divisions in his family; yet was he not without suspicion, as is frequently the case, of people seeming to be reconciled to one another, but thought that, as Alexandra had already made attempts tending to innovations, so did he fear that she would go on therein, if she found a fit opportunity for so doing; so he gave a command that she should dwell in the palace, and meddle with no public affairs. Her guards also were so careful, that nothing she did in private life every day was concealed. All these hardships put her out of patience, by little and little, and she began to hate Herod; for as she had the pride of a woman to the utmost degree, she had great indignation at this suspicious guard that was about her, as desirous rather to undergo any thing that could befall her, than to be deprived of her liberty of speech, and, under the notion of an honorary guard, to live in a state of slavery and terror. She therefore sent to Cleopatra, and made a long complaint of the circumstances she was in, and entreated her to do her utmost for her assistance. Cleopatra hereupon advised her to take her son with her, and come away immediately to her into Egypt. This advice pleased her; and she had this contrivance for getting away: she got two coffins made, as if they were to carry away two dead bodies and put herself into one, and her son into the other and gave orders to such of her servants as knew of her intentions to carry them away in the night time. Now their road was to be thence to the sea-side and there was a ship ready to carry them into Egypt. Now Aesop, one of her servants, happened to fall upon Sabion, one of her friends, and spake of this matter to him, as thinking he had known of it before. When Sabion knew this, (who had formerly been an enemy of Herod, and been esteemed one of those that laid snares for and gave the poison to [his father] Antipater,) he expected that this discovery would change Herod's hatred into kindness; so he told the king of this private stratagem of Alexandra: whereupon he suffered her to proceed to the execution of her project, and caught her in the very fact; but still he passed by her offense; and though he had a great mind to do it, he durst not inflict any thing that was severe upon her, for he knew that Cleopatra would not bear that he should have her accused, on account of her hatred to him; but made a show as if it were rather the generosity of his soul, and his great moderation, that made him forgive them. However, he fully proposed to himself to put this young man out of the way, by one means or other; but he thought he might in probability be better concealed in doing it, if he did it not presently, nor immediately after what had lately happened.

3. And now, upon the approach of the feast of tabernacles, which is a festival very much observed among us, he let those days pass over, and both he and the rest of the people were therein very merry; yet did the envy which at this time arose in him cause him to make haste to do what lie was about, and provoke him to it; for when this youth Aristobulus, who was

Josephus here makes a remarkable observation, that this Ananelus was the third that was ever unjustly and wickedly turned out of the high priesthood by the civil power, no king or governor having ventured to do so, that Josephus knew of, but that heathen tyrant and persecutor Antiochus Epiphanes; that barbarous parricide Aristobulus, the first that took royal authority among the Maccabees; and this tyrant king Herod the Great, although afterward that infamous practice became frequent, till the very destruction of Jerusalem, when the office of high priesthood was at an end.

now in the seventeenth year of his age, went up to the altar, according to the law, to offer the sacrifices, and this with the ornaments of his high priesthood, and when he performed the sacred offices,⁶ he seemed to be exceedingly comely, and taller than men usually were at that age, and to exhibit in his countenance a great deal of that high family he was sprung from,—a warm zeal and affection towards him appeared among the people, and the memory of the actions of his grandfather Aristobulus was fresh in their minds; and their affections got so far the mastery of them, that they could not forbear to show their inclinations to him. They at once rejoiced and were confounded, and mingled with good wishes their joyful acclamations which they made to him, till the good-will of the multitude was made too evident; and they more rashly proclaimed the happiness they had received from his family than was fit under a monarchy to have done. Upon all this, Herod resolved to complete what he had intended against the young man. When therefore the festival was over, and he was feasting at Jericho⁷ with Alexandra, who entertained them there, he was then very pleasant with the young man, and drew him into a lonely place, and at the same time played with him in a juvenile and ludicrous manner. Now the nature of that place was hotter than ordinary; so they went out in a body, and of a sudden, and in a vein of madness; and as they stood by the fish-ponds, of which there were large ones about the house, they went to cool themselves [by bathing], because it was in the midst of a hot day. At first they were only spectators of Herod's servants and acquaintance as they were swimming; but after a while, the young man, at the instigation of Herod, went into the water among them, while such of Herod's acquaintance, as he had appointed to do it, dipped him as he was swimming, and plunged him under water, in the dark of the evening, as if it had been done in sport only; nor did they desist till he was entirely suffocated. And thus was Aristobulus murdered, having lived no more in all than eighteen years,⁸ and kept the high priesthood one year only; which high priesthood Ananelus now recovered again.

4. When this sad accident was told the women, their joy was soon changed to lamentation, at the sight of the dead body that lay before them, and their sorrow was immoderate. The city also [of Jerusalem], upon the spreading of this news, were in very great grief, every family looking on this calamity as if it had not belonged to another, but that one of themselves was slain. But Alexandra was more deeply affected, upon her knowledge that he had been destroyed [on purpose]. Her sorrow was greater than that of others, by her knowing how the murder was committed; but she was under the necessity of bearing up under it, out of her prospect of a greater mischief that might otherwise follow; and she oftentimes came to an inclination to kill herself with her own hand, but still she restrained herself, in hopes she might live long enough to revenge the unjust murder thus privately committed; nay, she further resolved to endeavor to live longer, and to give no occasion to think she suspected that her son was slain on purpose, and supposed that she might thereby be in a capacity of revenging it at a proper opportunity. Thus did she restrain herself, that she might not be noted for entertaining any such suspicion. However, Herod endeavored that none abroad should believe that the child's death was caused by any design of his; and for this purpose he did not only use the ordinary signs of sorrow, but fell into tears also, and

⁶ This entirely confutes the Talmudists, who pretend that no one under twenty years of age could officiate as high priest among the Jews.

⁷ An Hebrew chronicle, cited by Reland, says this drowning was at Jordan, not at Jericho, and this even when he quote Josephus. I suspect the transcriber of the Hebrew chronicle mistook the name, and wrote Jordan for Jericho.

⁸ The reading of one of Josephus's Greek MSS. seems here to be right, that Aristobulus was "not eighteen years old" when he was drowned, for he was not seventeen when he was made high priest, ch. 2. sect. 6, ch. 3. sect. 3, and he continued in that office but one year, as in the place before us.

exhibited a real confusion of soul; and perhaps his affections were overcome on this occasion, when he saw the child's countenance so young and so beautiful, although his death was supposed to tend to his own security. So far at least this grief served as to make some apology for him; and as for his funeral, that he took care should be very magnificent, by making great preparation for a sepulchre to lay his body in, and providing a great quantity of spices, and burying many ornaments together with him, till the very women, who were in such deep sorrow, were astonished at it, and received in this way some consolation.

5. However, no such things could overcome Alexandra's grief; but the remembrance of this miserable case made her sorrow, both deep and obstinate. Accordingly, she wrote an account of this treacherous scene to Cleopatra, and how her son was murdered; but Cleopatra, as she had formerly been desirous to give her what satisfaction she could, and commiserating Alexandra's misfortunes, made the case her own, and would not let Antony be quiet, but excited him to punish the child's murder; for that it was an unworthy thing that Herod, who had been by him made king of a kingdom that no way belonged to him, should be guilty of such horrid crimes against those that were of the royal blood in reality. Antony was persuaded by these arguments; and when he came to Laodicea, he sent and commanded Herod to come and make his defence, as to what he had done to Aristobulus, for that such a treacherous design was not well done, if he had any hand in it. Herod was now in fear, both of the accusation, and of Cleopatra's ill-will to him, which was such that she was ever endeavoring to make Antony hate him. He therefore determined to obey his summons, for he had no possible way to avoid it. So he left his uncle Joseph procurator for his government, and for the public affairs, and gave him a private charge, that if Antony should kill him, he also should kill Mariamne immediately; for that he had a tender affection for this his wife, and was afraid of the injury that should be offered him, if, after his death, she, for her beauty, should be engaged to some other man: but his intimation was nothing but this at the bottom, that Antony had fallen in love with her, when he had formerly heard somewhat of her beauty. So when Herod had given Joseph this charge, and had indeed no sure hopes of escaping with his life, he went away to Antony.

6. But as Joseph was administering the public affairs of the kingdom, and for that reason was very frequently with Mariamne, both because his business required it, and because of the respects he ought to pay to the queen, he frequently let himself into discourses about Herod's kindness, and great affection towards her; and when the women, especially Alexandra, used to turn his discourses into feminine raillery, Joseph was so over-desirous to demonstrate the king's inclinations, that he proceeded so far as to mention the charge he had received, and thence drew his demonstration, that Herod was not able to live without her; and that if he should come to any ill end, he could not endure a separation from her, even after he was dead. Thus spake Joseph. But the women, as was natural, did not take this to be an instance of Herod's strong affection for them, but of his severe usage of them, that they could not escape destruction, nor a tyrannical death, even when he was dead himself. And this saying [of Joseph] was a foundation for the women's severe suspicions about him afterwards.

7. At this time a report went about the city of Jerusalem among Herod's enemies, that Antony had tortured Herod, and put him to death. This report, as is natural, disturbed those that were about the palace, but chiefly the women; upon which Alexandra endeavored to persuade Joseph to go out of the palace, and fly away with them to the ensigns of the Roman legion, which then lay encamped about the city, as a guard to the kingdom, under the command of Julius; for that by this means, if any disturbance should happen about the palace, they should be in greater security, as having the Romans favorable to them; and that besides,

they hoped to obtain the highest authority, if Antony did but once see Mariamne, by whose means they should recover the kingdom, and want nothing which was reasonable for them to hope for, because of their royal extraction.

8. But as they were in the midst of these deliberations, letters were brought from Herod about all his affairs, and proved contrary to the report, and of what they before expected; for when he was come to Antony, he soon recovered his interest with him, by the presents he made him, which he had brought with him from Jerusalem; and he soon induced him, upon discoursing with him, to leave off his indignation at him, so that Cleopatra's persuasions had less force than the arguments and presents he brought to regain his friendship; for Antony said that it was not good to require an account of a king, as to the affairs of his government, for at this rate he could be no king at all, but that those who had given him that authority ought to permit him to make use of it. He also said the same things to Cleopatra, that it would be best for her not busily to meddle with the acts of the king's government. Herod wrote an account of these things, and enlarged upon the other honors which he had received from Antony; how he sat by him at his hearing causes, and took his diet with him every day, and that he enjoyed those favors from him, notwithstanding the reproaches that Cleopatra so severely laid against him, who having a great desire of his country, and earnestly entreating Antony that the kingdom might be given to her, labored with her utmost diligence to have him out of the way; but that he still found Antony just to him, and had no longer any apprehensions of hard treatment from him; and that he was soon upon his return, with a firmer additional assurance of his favor to him, in his reigning and managing public affairs; and that there was no longer any hope for Cleopatra's covetous temper, since Antony had given her Coelesyria instead of what she had desired; by which means he had at once pacified her, and got clear of the entreaties which she made him to have Judea bestowed upon her.

9. When these letters were brought, the women left off their attempt for flying to the Romans, which they thought of while Herod was supposed to be dead; yet was not that purpose of theirs a secret; but when the king had conducted Antony on his way against the Parthians, he returned to Judea, when both his sister Salome and his mother informed him of Alexandra's intentions. Salome also added somewhat further against Joseph, though it was no more than a calumny, that he had often had criminal conversation with Mariamne. The reason of her saying so was this, that she for a long time bare her ill-will; for when they had differences with one another, Mariamne took great freedoms, and reproached the rest for the meanness of their birth. But Herod, whose affection to Mariamne was always very warm, was presently disturbed at this, and could not bear the torments of jealousy, but was still restrained from doing any rash thing to her by the love he had for her; yet did his vehement affection and jealousy together make him ask Mariamne by herself about this matter of Joseph; but she denied it upon her oath, and said all that an innocent woman could possibly say in her own defence; so that by little and little the king was prevailed upon to drop the suspicion, and left off his anger at her; and being overcome with his passion for his wife, he made an apology to her for having seemed to believe what he had heard about her, and returned her a great many acknowledgments of her modest behavior, and professed the extraordinary affection and kindness he had for her, till at last, as is usual between lovers, they both fell into tears, and embraced one another with a most tender affection. But as the king gave more and more assurances of his belief of her fidelity, and endeavored to draw her to a like confidence in him, Mariamne said, "Yet was not that command thou gavest, that if any harm came to thee from Antony, I, who had been no occasion of it, should perish with thee, a sign of thy love to me?" When these words were fallen from her, the king was shocked at them, and presently let her go out of his arms, and cried out, and tore his hair with

his own hands, and said, that now he had an evident demonstration that Joseph had had criminal conversation with his wife; for that he would never have uttered what he had told him alone by himself, unless there had been such a great familiarity and firm confidence between them. And while he was in this passion he had liked to have killed his wife; but being still overborne by his love to her, he restrained this his passion, though not without a lasting grief and disquietness of mind. However, he gave order to slay Joseph, without permitting him to come into his sight; and as for Alexandra, he bound her, and kept her in custody, as the cause of all this mischief.

CHAPTER 4

HOW CLEOPATRA, WHEN SHE HAD GOTTEN FROM ANTONY SOME PARTS OF JUDEA AND ARABIA, CAME INTO JUDEA; AND HOW HEROD GAVE HER MANY PRESENTS, AND CONDUCTED HER ON HER WAY BACK TO EGYPT

1. Now at this time the affairs of Syria were in confusion by Cleopatra's constant persuasions to Antony to make an attempt upon every body's dominions; for she persuaded him to take those dominions away from their several princes, and bestow them upon her; and she had a mighty influence upon him, by reason of his being enslaved to her by his affections. She was also by nature very covetous, and stuck at no wickedness. She had already poisoned her brother, because she knew that he was to be king of Egypt, and this when he was but fifteen years old; and she got her sister Arsinoe to be slain, by the means of Antony, when she was a supplicant at Diana's temple at Ephesus; for if there were but any hopes of getting money, she would violate both temples and sepulchres. Nor was there any holy place that was esteemed the most inviolable, from which she would not fetch the ornaments it had in it; nor any place so profane, but was to suffer the most flagitious treatment possible from her, if it could but contribute somewhat to the covetous humor of this wicked creature: yet did not all this suffice so extravagant a woman, who was a slave to her lusts, but she still imagined that she wanted every thing she could think of, and did her utmost to gain it; for which reason she hurried Antony on perpetually to deprive others of their dominions, and give them to her. And as she went over Syria with him, she contrived to get it into her possession; so he slew Lysanias, the son of Ptolemy, accusing him of his bringing the Parthians upon those countries. She also petitioned Antony to give her Judea and Arabia; and, in order thereto, desired him to take these countries away from their present governors. As for Antony, he was so entirely overcome by this woman, that one would not think her conversation only could do it, but that he was some way or other bewitched to do whatsoever she would have him; yet did the grossest parts of her injustice make him so ashamed, that he would not always hearken to her to do those flagrant enormities she would have persuaded him to. That therefore he might not totally deny her, nor, by doing every thing which she enjoined him, appear openly to be an ill man, he took some parts of each of those countries away from their former governors, and gave them to her. Thus he gave her the cities that were within the river Eleutherus, as far as Egypt, excepting Tyre and Sidon, which he knew to have been free cities from their ancestors, although she pressed him very often to bestow those on her also.

2. When Cleopatra had obtained thus much, and had accompanied Antony in his expedition to Armenia as far as Euphrates, she returned back, and came to Apamia and Damascus, and passed on to Judea, where Herod met her, and farmed of her her parts of Arabia, and those revenues that came to her from the region about Jericho. This country bears that balsam, which is the most precious drug that is there, and grows there alone. The place bears also palm trees, both many in number, and those excellent in their kind. When she was there, and was very often with Herod, she endeavored to have criminal conversation with the

king; nor did she affect secrecy in the indulgence of such sort of pleasures; and perhaps she had in some measure a passion of love to him; or rather, what is most probable, she laid a treacherous snare for him, by aiming to obtain such adulterous conversation from him: however, upon the whole, she seemed overcome with love to him. Now Herod had a great while borne no good-will to Cleopatra, as knowing that she was a woman irksome to all; and at that time he thought her particularly worthy of his hatred, if this attempt proceeded out of lust; he had also thought of preventing her intrigues, by putting her to death, if such were her endeavors. However, he refused to comply with her proposals, and called a counsel of his friends to consult with them whether he should not kill her, now he had her in his power; for that he should thereby deliver all those from a multitude of evils to whom she was already become irksome, and was expected to be still so for the time to come; and that this very thing would be much for the advantage of Antony himself, since she would certainly not be faithful to him, in case any such season or necessity should come upon him as that he should stand in need of her fidelity. But when he thought to follow this advice, his friends would not let him; and told him that, in the first place, it was not right to attempt so great a thing, and run himself thereby into the utmost danger; and they laid hard at him, and begged of him to undertake nothing rashly, for that Antony would never bear it, no, not though any one should evidently lay before his eyes that it was for his own advantage; and that the appearance of depriving him of her conversation, by this violent and treacherous method, would probably set his affections more on a flame than before. Nor did it appear that he could offer any thing of tolerable weight in his defence, this attempt being against such a woman as was of the highest dignity of any of her sex at that time in the world; and as to any advantage to be expected from such an undertaking, if any such could be supposed in this case, it would appear to deserve condemnation, on account of the insolence he must take upon him in doing it: which considerations made it very plain that in so doing he would find his government filled with mischief, both great and lasting, both to himself and his posterity, whereas it was still in his power to reject that wickedness she would persuade him to, and to come off honorably at the same time. So by thus affrighting Herod, and representing to him the hazard he must, in all probability, run by this undertaking, they restrained him from it. So he treated Cleopatra kindly, and made her presents, and conducted her on her way to Egypt.

3. But Antony subdued Armenia, and sent Artabazes, the son of Tigranes, in bonds, with his children and procurators, to Egypt, and made a present of them, and of all the royal ornaments which he had taken out of that kingdom, to Cleopatra. And Artaxias, the eldest of his sons, who had escaped at that time, took the kingdom of Armenia; who yet was ejected by Archelaus and Nero Caesar, when they restored Tigranes, his younger brother, to that kingdom; but this happened a good while afterward.

4. But then, as to the tributes which Herod was to pay Cleopatra for that country which Antony had given her, he acted fairly with her, as deeming it not safe for him to afford any cause for Cleopatra to hate him. As for the king of Arabia, whose tribute Herod had undertaken to pay her, for some time indeed he paid him as much as came to two hundred talents; but he afterwards became very niggardly and slow in his payments, and could hardly be brought to pay some parts of it, and was not willing to pay even them without some deductions.

CHAPTER 5

HOW HEROD MADE WAR WITH THE KING OF ARABIA, AND AFTER THEY HAD FOUGHT MANY BATTLES, AT LENGTH CONQUERED HIM, AND WAS CHOSEN

BY THE ARABS TO BE GOVERNOR OF THAT NATION; AS ALSO CONCERNING A GREAT EARTHQUAKE

1. Hereupon Herod held himself ready to go against the king of Arabia, because of his ingratitude to him, and because, after all, he would do nothing that was just to him, although Herod made the Roman war an occasion of delaying his own; for the battle at Actium was now expected, which fell into the hundred eighty and seventh olympiad, where Caesar and Antony were to fight for the supreme power of the world; but Herod having enjoyed a country that was very fruitful, and that now for a long time, and having received great taxes, and raised great armies therewith, got together a body of men, and carefully furnished them with all necessaries, and designed them as auxiliaries for Antony. But Antony said he had no want of his assistance; but he commanded him to punish the king of Arabia; for he had heard both from him, and from Cleopatra, how perfidious he was; for this was what Cleopatra desired, who thought it for her own advantage that these two kings should do one another as great mischief as possible. Upon this message from Antony, Herod returned back, but kept his army with him, in order to invade Arabia immediately. So when his army of horsemen and footmen was ready, he marched to Diospolis, whither the Arabians came also to meet them, for they were not unapprised of this war that was coming upon them; and after a great battle had been fought, the Jews had the victory. But afterward there were gotten together another numerous army of the Arabians, at Cana, which is a place of Coelesyria. Herod was informed of this beforehand; so he came marching against them with the greatest part of the forces he had; and when he was come near to Cana, he resolved to encamp himself; and he cast up a bulwark, that he might take a proper season for attacking the enemy; but as he was giving those orders, the multitude of the Jews cried out that he should make no delay, but lead them against the Arabians. They went with great spirit, as believing they were in very good order; and those especially were so that had been in the former battle, and had been conquerors, and had not permitted their enemies so much as to come to a close fight with them. And when they were so tumultuous, and showed such great alacrity, the king resolved to make use of that zeal the multitude then exhibited; and when he had assured them he would not be behindhand with them in courage, he led them on, and stood before them all in his armor, all the regiments following him in their several ranks: whereupon a consternation fell upon the Arabians; for when they perceived that the Jews were not to be conquered, and were full of spirit, the greater part of them ran away, and avoided fighting; and they had been quite destroyed, had not Athenio fallen upon the Jews, and distressed them; for this man was Cleopatra's general over the soldiers she had there, and was at enmity with Herod, and very wistfully looked on to see what the event of the battle would be. He had also resolved, that in case the Arabians did any thing that was brave and successful, he would lie still; but in case they were beaten, as it really happened, he would attack the Jews with those forces he had of his own, and with those that the country had gotten together for him. So he fell upon the Jews unexpectedly, when they were fatigued, and thought they had already vanquished the enemy, and made a great slaughter of them; for as the Jews had spent their courage upon their known enemies, and were about to enjoy themselves in quietness after their victory, they were easily beaten by these that attacked them afresh, and in particular received a great loss in places where the horses could not be of service, and which were very stony, and where those that attacked them were better acquainted with the places than themselves. And when the Jews had suffered this loss, the Arabians raised their spirits after their defeat, and returning back again, slew those that were already put to flight; and indeed all sorts of slaughter were now frequent, and of those that escaped, a few only returned into the camp. So king Herod, when he despaired of the battle, rode up to them to bring them assistance; yet did he not come time enough to do them any service, though he labored hard to do it; but the Jewish camp was

taken; so that the Arabians had unexpectedly a most glorious success, having gained that victory which of themselves they were no way likely to have gained, and slaying a great part of the enemy's army: whence afterward Herod could only act like a private robber, and make excursions upon many parts of Arabia, and distress them by sudden incursions, while he encamped among the mountains, and avoided by any means to come to a pitched battle; yet did he greatly harass the enemy by his assiduity, and the hard labor he took in this matter. He also took great care of his own forces, and used all the means he could to restore his affairs to their old state.

2. At this time it was that the fight happened at Actium, between Octavius Caesar and Antony, in the seventh year of the reign of Herod,⁹ and then it was also that there was an earthquake in Judea, such a one as had not happened at any other time, and which earthquake brought a great destruction upon the cattle in that country. About ten thousand men also perished by the fall of houses; but the army, which lodged in the field, received no damage by this sad accident. When the Arabians were informed of this, and when those that hated the Jews, and pleased themselves with aggravating the reports, told them of it, they raised their spirits, as if their enemy's country was quite overthrown, and the men were utterly destroyed, and thought there now remained nothing that could oppose them. Accordingly, they took the Jewish ambassadors, who came to them after all this had happened, to make peace with them, and slew them, and came with great alacrity against their army; but the Jews durst not withstand them, and were so cast down by the calamities they were under, that they took no care of their affairs, but gave up themselves to despair; for they had no hope that they should be upon a level again with them in battles, nor obtain any assistance elsewhere, while their affairs at home were in such great distress also. When matters were in this condition, the king persuaded the commanders by his words, and tried to raise their spirits, which were quite sunk; and first he endeavored to encourage and embolden some of the better sort beforehand, and then ventured to make a speech to the multitude, which he had before avoided to do, lest he should find them uneasy thereat, because of the misfortunes which had happened; so he made a consolatory speech to the multitude, in the manner following:—

3. "You are not unacquainted, my fellow soldiers, that we have had, not long since, many accidents that have put a stop to what we are about, and it is probable that even those that are most distinguished above others for their courage can hardly keep up their spirits in such circumstances; but since we cannot avoid fighting, and nothing that hath happened is of such a nature but it may by ourselves be recovered into a good state, and this by one brave action only well performed, I have proposed to myself both to give you some encouragement, and, at the same time, some information; both which parts of my design will tend to this point; that you may still continue in your own proper fortitude. I will then, in the first place, demonstrate to you that this war is a just one on our side, and that on this account it is a war of necessity, and occasioned by the injustice of our adversaries; for if you be once satisfied of this, it will be a real cause of alacrity to you; after which I will further demonstrate, that the misfortunes we are under are of no great consequence, and that we have the greatest reason to hope for victory. I shall begin with the first, and appeal to yourselves as witnesses to what I shall say. You are not ignorant certainly of the wickedness of the Arabians, which is to that degree as to appear incredible to all other men, and to include somewhat that shows the grossest barbarity and ignorance of God. The chief things wherein they have affronted us have arisen from

⁹ The reader is here to take notice, that this seventh year of the reign of Herod, and all the other years of his reign, in Josephus, are dated from the death of Antigonus, or at the soonest from the conclusion of Antigonus, and the taking of Jerusalem a few months before, and never from his first obtaining the kingdom at Rome, above three years before, as some have very weakly and injudiciously done.

covetousness and envy; and they have attacked us in an insidious manner, and on the sudden. And what occasion is there for me to mention many instances of such their procedure? When they were in danger of losing their own government of themselves, and of being slaves to Cleopatra, what others were they that freed them from that fear? for it was the friendship I had with Antony, and the kind disposition he was in towards us, that hath been the occasion that even these Arabians have not been utterly undone, Antony being unwilling to undertake any thing which might be suspected by us of unkindness: but when he had a mind to bestow some parts of each of our dominions on Cleopatra, I also managed that matter so, that by giving him presents of my own, I might obtain a security to both nations, while I undertook myself to answer for the money, and gave him two hundred talents, and became surety for those two hundred more which were imposed upon the land that was subject to this tribute; and this they have defrauded us of, although it was not reasonable that Jews should pay tribute to any man living, or allow part of their land to be taxable; but although that was to be, yet ought we not to pay tribute for these Arabians, whom we have ourselves preserved; nor is it fit that they, who have professed (and that with great integrity and sense of our kindness) that it is by our means that they keep their principality, should injure us, and deprive us of what is our due, and this while we have been still not their enemies, but their friends. And whereas observation of covenants takes place among the bitterest enemies, but among friends is absolutely necessary, this is not observed among these men, who think gain to be the best of all things, let it be by any means whatsoever, and that injustice is no harm, if they may but get money by it: is it therefore a question with you, whether the unjust are to be punished or not? when God himself hath declared his mind that so it ought to be, and hath commanded that we ever should hate injuries and injustice, which is not only just, but necessary, in wars between several nations; for these Arabians have done what both the Greeks and barbarians own to be an instance of the grossest wickedness, with regard to our ambassadors, which they have beheaded, while the Greeks declare that such ambassadors are sacred and inviolable.¹⁰ And for ourselves, we have learned from God the most excellent of our doctrines, and the most holy part of our law, by angels or ambassadors; for this name brings God to the knowledge of mankind, and is sufficient to reconcile enemies one to another. What wickedness then can be greater than the slaughter of ambassadors, who come to treat about doing what is right? And when such have been their actions, how is it possible they can either live securely in common life, or be successful in war? In my opinion, this is impossible; but perhaps some will say, that what is holy, and what is righteous, is indeed on our side, but that the Arabians are either more courageous or more numerous than we are. Now, as to this, in the first place, it is not fit for us to say so, for with whom is what is righteous, with them is God himself; now where God is, there is both multitude and courage. But to examine our own circumstances a little, we were conquerors in the first battle; and when we fought again, they were not able to oppose us, but ran away, and could not endure our attacks or our courage; but when we had conquered them, then came Athenion, and made war against us without declaring it; and pray, is this an instance of their manhood? or is it not a second instance of their wickedness and treachery? Why are we therefore of less courage, on account of that which ought to inspire us with stronger hopes? and why are we terrified at these, who, when they fight upon the level, are continually beaten, and when they seem to be conquerors, they gain it by wickedness? and if we suppose that any one should deem them to be men of real courage, will not he be excited by that very consideration to do his utmost against them? for true valor is not shown by fighting against weak persons, but in being able to overcome the

¹⁰ Herod says here, that as ambassadors were sacred when they carried messages to others, so did the laws of the Jews derive a sacred authority by being delivered from God by angels, [or Divine ambassadors,] which is St. Paul's expression about the same laws, Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2.

most hardy. But then if the distresses we are ourselves under, and the miseries that have come by the earthquake, hath affrighted any one, let him consider, in the first place, that this very thing will deceive the Arabians, by their supposal that what hath befallen us is greater than it really is. Moreover, it is not right that the same thing that emboldens them should discourage us; for these men, you see, do not derive their alacrity from any advantageous virtue of their own, but from their hope, as to us, that we are quite cast down by our misfortunes; but when we boldly march against them, we shall soon pull down their insolent conceit of themselves, and shall gain this by attacking them, that they will not be so insolent when we come to the battle; for our distresses are not so great, nor is what hath happened all indication of the anger of God against us, as some imagine; for such things are accidental, and adversities that come in the usual course of things; and if we allow that this was done by the will of God, we must allow that it is now over by his will also, and that he is satisfied with what hath already happened; for had he been willing to afflict us still more thereby, he had not changed his mind so soon. And as for the war we are engaged in, he hath himself demonstrated that he is willing it should go on, and that he knows it to be a just war; for while some of the people in the country have perished, all you who were in arms have suffered nothing, but are all preserved alive; whereby God makes it plain to us, that if you had universally, with your children and wives, been in the army, it had come to pass that you had not undergone any thing that would have much hurt you. Consider these things, and, what is more than all the rest, that you have God at all times for your Protector; and prosecute these men with a just bravery, who, in point of friendship, are unjust, in their battles perfidious, towards ambassadors impious, and always inferior to you in valor."

4. When the Jews heard this speech, they were much raised in their minds, and more disposed to fight than before. So Herod, when he had offered the sacrifices appointed by the law,¹¹ made haste, and took them, and led them against the Arabians; and in order to that passed over Jordan, and pitched his camp near to that of the enemy. He also thought fit to seize upon a certain castle that lay in the midst of them, as hoping it would be for his advantage, and would the sooner produce a battle; and that if there were occasion for delay, he should by it have his camp fortified; and as the Arabians had the same intentions upon that place, a contest arose about it; at first they were but skirmishes, after which there came more soldiers, and it proved a sort of fight, and some fell on both sides, till those of the Arabian side were beaten and retreated. This was no small encouragement to the Jews immediately; and when Herod observed that the enemy's army was disposed to any thing rather than to come to an engagement, he ventured boldly to attempt the bulwark itself, and to pull it to pieces, and so to get nearer to their camp, in order to fight them; for when they were forced out of their trenches, they went out in disorder, and had not the least alacrity, or hope of victory; yet did they fight hand to hand, because they were more in number than the Jews, and because they were in such a disposition of war that they were under a necessity of coming on boldly; so they came to a terrible battle, while not a few fell on each side. However, at length the Arabians fled; and so great a slaughter was made upon their being routed, that they were not only killed by their enemies, but became the authors of their own

¹¹ This piece of religion, the supplicating God with sacrifices, by Herod, before he went to this fight with the Arabians, taken notice of also in the first book of the War, ch. 19. sect. 5, is worth remarking, because it is the only example of this nature, so far as I remember, that Josephus ever mentions in all his large and particular accounts of this Herod; and it was when he had been in mighty distress, and discouraged by a great defeat of his former army, and by a very great earthquake in Judea, such times of affliction making men most religious; nor was he disappointed of his hopes here, but immediately gained a most signal victory over the Arabians, while they who just before had been so great victors, and so much elevated upon the earthquake in Judea as to venture to slay the Jewish ambassadors, were now under a strange consternation, and hardly able to fight at all.

deaths also, and were trodden down by the multitude, and the great current of people in disorder, and were destroyed by their own armor; so five thousand men lay dead upon the spot, while the rest of the multitude soon ran within the bulwark for safety, but had no firm hope of safety, by reason of their want of necessaries, and especially of water. The Jews pursued them, but could not get in with them, but sat round about the bulwark, and watched any assistance that would get in to them, and prevented any there, that had a mind to it, from running away.

5. When the Arabians were in these circumstances, they sent ambassadors to Herod, in the first place, to propose terms of accommodation, and after that to offer him, so pressing was their thirst upon them, to undergo whatsoever he pleased, if he would free them from their present distress; but he would admit of no ambassadors, of no price of redemption, nor of any other moderate terms whatever, being very desirous to revenge those unjust actions which they had been guilty of towards his nation. So they were necessitated by other motives, and particularly by their thirst, to come out, and deliver themselves up to him, to be carried away captives; and in five days' time the number of four thousand were taken prisoners, while all the rest resolved to make a sally upon their enemies, and to fight it out with them, choosing rather, if so it must be, to die therein, than to perish gradually and ingloriously. When they had taken this resolution, they came out of their trenches, but could no way sustain the fight, being too much disabled, both in mind and body, and having not room to exert themselves, and thought it an advantage to be killed, and a misery to survive; so at the first onset there fell about seven thousand of them, after which stroke they let all the courage they had put on before fall, and stood amazed at Herod's warlike spirit under his own calamities; so for the future they yielded, and made him ruler of their nation; whereupon he was greatly elevated at so seasonable a success, and returned home, taking great authority upon him, on account of so bold and glorious an expedition as he had made.

CHAPTER 6

HOW HEROD SLEW HYRCANUS, AND THEN HASTED AWAY TO CAESAR, AND OBTAINED THE KINGDOM FROM HIM ALSO; AND HOW, A LITTLE TIME AFTERWARD, HE ENTERTAINED CAESAR IN A MOST HONORABLE MANNER

1. Herod's other affairs were now very prosperous, and he was not to be easily assaulted on any side. Yet did there come upon him a danger that would hazard his entire dominions, after Antony had been beaten at the battle of Actium by Caesar [Octavian]; for at that time both Herod's enemies and friends despaired of his affairs, for it was not probable that he would remain without punishment, who had showed so much friendship for Antony. So it happened that his friends despaired, and had no hopes of his escape; but for his enemies, they all outwardly appeared to be troubled at his case, but were privately very glad of it, as hoping to obtain a change for the better. As for Herod himself he saw that there was no one of royal dignity left but Hyrcanus, and therefore he thought it would be for his advantage not to suffer him to be an obstacle in his way any longer; for that in case he himself survived, and escaped the danger he was in, he thought it the safest way to put it out of the power of such a man to make any attempt against him, at such junctures of affairs, as was more worthy of the kingdom than himself; and in case he should be slain by Caesar, his envy prompted him to desire to slay him that would otherwise be king after him.

2. While Herod had these things in his mind, there was a certain occasion afforded him: for Hyrcanus was of so mild a temper, both then and at other times, that he desired not to meddle with public affairs, nor to concern himself with innovations, but left all to fortune,

and contented himself with what that afforded him: but Alexandra [his daughter] was a lover of strife, and was exceeding desirous of a change of the government, and spake to her father not to bear for ever Herod's injurious treatment of their family, but to anticipate their future hopes, as he safely might; and desired him to write about these matters to Malchus, who was then governor of Arabia, to receive them, and to secure them [from Herod], for that if they went away, and Herod's affairs proved to be as it was likely they would be, by reason of Caesar's enmity to him, they should then be the only persons that could take the government; and this, both on account of the royal family they were of, and on account of the good disposition of: the multitude to them. While she used these persuasions, Hyrcanus put off her suit; but as she showed that she was a woman, and a contentious woman too, and would not desist either night or day, but would always be speaking to him about these matters, and about Herod's treacherous designs, she at last prevailed with him to intrust Dositheus, one of his friends, with a letter, wherein his resolution was declared; and he desired the Arabian governor to send to him some horsemen, who should receive him, and conduct him to the lake Asphaltites, which is from the bounds of Jerusalem three hundred furlongs: and he did therefore trust Dositheus with this letter, because he was a careful attendant on him, and on Alexandra, and had no small occasions to bear ill-will to Herod; for he was a kinsman of one Joseph, whom he had slain, and a brother of those that were formerly slain at Tyre by Antony: yet could not these motives induce Dositheus to serve Hyrcanus in this affair; for, preferring the hopes he had from the present king to those he had from him, he gave Herod the letter. So he took his kindness in good part, and bid him besides do what he had already done, that is, go on in serving him, by rolling up the epistle and sealing it again, and delivering it to Malchus, and then to bring back his letter in answer to it; for it would be much better if he could know Malchus's intentions also. And when Dositheus was very ready to serve him in this point also, the Arabian governor returned back for answer, that he would receive Hyrcanus, and all that should come with him, and even all the Jews that were of his party; that he would, moreover, send forces sufficient to secure them in their journey; and that he should be in no want of any thing he should desire. Now as soon as Herod had received this letter, he immediately sent for Hyrcanus, and questioned him about the league he had made with Malchus; and when he denied it, he showed his letter to the Sanhedrim, and put the man to death immediately.

3. And this account we give the reader, as it is contained in the commentaries of king Herod: but other historians do not agree with them, for they suppose that Herod did not find, but rather made this an occasion for thus putting him to death, and that by treacherously laying a snare for him; for thus do they write: that Herod and he were once at a treat, and that Herod had given no occasion to suspect [that he was displeased at him], but put this question to Hyrcanus, whether he had received any letters from Malchus? and when he answered that he had received letters, but those of salutation only; and when he asked further, whether he had not received any presents from him? and when he had replied that he had received no more than four horses to ride on, which Malchus had sent him; they pretended that Herod charged these upon him as the crimes of bribery and treason, and gave order that he should be led away and slain. And in order to demonstrate that he had been guilty of no offense, when he was thus brought to his end, they alleged how mild his temper had been, and that even in his youth he had never given any demonstration of boldness or rashness, and that the case was the same when he came to be king, but that he even then committed the management of the greatest part of public affairs to Antipater; and that he was now above fourscore years old, and knew that Herod's government was in a secure state. He also came over Euphrates, and left those who greatly honored him beyond that river, though he were to be entirely under Herod's government; and that it was a most incredible thing that he should enterprise any

thing by way of innovation, and not at all agreeable to his temper, but that this was a plot of Herod's contrivance.

4. And this was the fate of Hyrcanus; and thus did he end his life, after he had endured various and manifold turns of fortune in his lifetime. For he was made high priest of the Jewish nation in the beginning of his mother Alexandra's reign, who held the government nine years; and when, after his mother's death, he took the kingdom himself, and held it three months, he lost it, by the means of his brother Aristobulus. He was then restored by Pompey, and received all sorts of honor from him, and enjoyed them forty years; but when he was again deprived by Antigonus, and was maimed in his body, he was made a captive by the Parthians, and thence returned home again after some time, on account of the hopes that Herod had given him; none of which came to pass according to his expectation, but he still conflicted with many misfortunes through the whole course of his life; and, what was the heaviest calamity of all, as we have related already, he came to an end which was undeserved by him. His character appeared to be that of a man of a mild and moderate disposition, and suffered the administration of affairs to be generally done by others under him. He was averse to much meddling with the public, nor had shrewdness enough to govern a kingdom. And both Antipater and Herod came to their greatness by reason of his mildness; and at last he met with such an end from them as was not agreeable either to justice or piety.

5. Now Herod, as soon as he had put Hyrcanus out of the way, made haste to Caesar; and because he could not have any hopes of kindness from him, on account of the friendship he had for Antony, he had a suspicion of Alexandra, lest she should take this opportunity to bring the multitude to a revolt, and introduce a sedition into the affairs of the kingdom; so he committed the care of every thing to his brother Pheroras, and placed his mother Cypros, and his sister [Salome], and the whole family at Masada, and gave him a charge, that if he should hear any sad news about him, he should take care of the government. But as to Mariamne his wife, because of the misunderstanding between her and his sister, and his sister's mother, which made it impossible for them to live together, he placed her at Alexandrium, with Alexandra her mother, and left his treasurer Joseph and Sohemus of Iturea to take care of that fortress. These two had been very faithful to him from the beginning, and were now left as a guard to the women. They also had it in charge, that if they should hear any mischief had befallen him, they should kill them both, and, as far as they were able, to preserve the kingdom for his sons, and for his brother Pheroras.

6. When he had given them this charge, he made haste to Rhodes, to meet Caesar; and when he had sailed to that city, he took off his diadem, but remitted nothing else of his usual dignity. And when, upon his meeting him, he desired that he would let him speak to him, he therein exhibited a much more noble specimen of a great soul; for he did not betake himself to supplications, as men usually do upon such occasions, nor offered him any petition, as if he were an offender; but, after an undaunted manner, gave an account of what he had done; for he spake thus to Caesar: that he had the greatest friendship for Antony, and did every thing he could that he might attain the government; that he was not indeed in the army with him, because the Arabians had diverted him; but that he had sent him both money and corn, which was but too little in comparison of what he ought to have done for him; "for if a man owns himself to be another's friend, and knows him to be a benefactor, he is obliged to hazard every thing, to use every faculty of his soul, every member of his body, and all the wealth he hath, for him, in which I confess I have been too deficient. However, I am conscious to myself, that so far I have done right, that I have not deserted him upon his defeat at Actium; nor upon the evident change of his fortune have I transferred my hopes from him to another,

but have preserved myself, though not as a valuable fellow soldier, yet certainly as a faithful counselor, to Antony, when I demonstrated to him that the only way that he had to save himself, and not to lose all his authority, was to slay Cleopatra; for when she was once dead, there would be room for him to retain his authority, and rather to bring thee to make a composition with him, than to continue at enmity any longer. None of which advises would he attend to, but preferred his own rash resolution before them, which have happened unprofitably for him, but profitably for thee. Now, therefore, in case thou determinest about me, and my alacrity in serving Antony, according to thy anger at him, I own there is no room for me to deny what I have done, nor will I be ashamed to own, and that publicly too, that I had a great kindness for him. But if thou wilt put him out of the case, and only examine how I behave myself to my benefactors in general, and what sort of friend I am, thou wilt find by experience that we shall do and be the same to thyself, for it is but changing the names, and the firmness of friendship that we shall bear to thee will not be disapproved by thee."

7. By this speech, and by his behavior, which showed Caesar the frankness of his mind, he greatly gained upon him, who was himself of a generous and magnificent temper, insomuch that those very actions, which were the foundation of the accusation against him, procured him Caesar's good-will. Accordingly, he restored him his diadem again; and encouraged him to exhibit himself as great a friend to himself as he had been to Antony, and then had him in great esteem. Moreover, he added this, that Quintus Didius had written to him that Herod had very readily assisted him in the affair of the gladiators. So when he had obtained such a kind reception, and had, beyond all his hopes, procured his crown to be more entirely and firmly settled upon him than ever by Caesar's donation, as well as by that decree of the Romans, which Caesar took care to procure for his greater security, he conducted Caesar on his way to Egypt, and made presents, even beyond his ability, to both him and his friends, and in general behaved himself with great magnanimity. He also desired that Caesar would not put to death one Alexander, who had been a companion of Antony; but Caesar had sworn to put him to death, and so he could not obtain that his petition. And now he returned to Judea again with greater honor and assurance than ever, and affrighted those that had expectations to the contrary, as still acquiring from his very dangers greater splendor than before, by the favor of God to him. So he prepared for the reception of Caesar, as he was going out of Syria to invade Egypt; and when he came, he entertained him at Ptolemais with all royal magnificence. He also bestowed presents on the army, and brought them provisions in abundance. He also proved to be one of Caesar's most cordial friends, and put the army in array, and rode along with Caesar, and had a hundred and fifty men, well appointed in all respects, after a rich and sumptuous manner, for the better reception of him and his friends. He also provided them with what they should want, as they passed over the dry desert, insomuch that they lacked neither wine nor water, which last the soldiers stood in the greatest need of; and besides, he presented Caesar with eight hundred talents, and procured to himself the good-will of them all, because he was assisting to them in a much greater and more splendid degree than the kingdom he had obtained could afford; by which means he more and more demonstrated to Caesar the firmness of his friendship, and his readiness to assist him; and what was of the greatest advantage to him was this, that his liberality came at a seasonable time also. And when they returned again out of Egypt, his assistances were no way inferior to the good offices he had formerly done them.

CHAPTER 7

HOW HEROD SLEW SOHEMUS AND MARIAMNE, AND AFTERWARDS ALEXANDRA AND COSTOBARUS, AND HIS MOST INTIMATE FRIENDS, AND, AT LAST, THE SONS OF BABBAS ALSO

1. However, when he came into his kingdom again, he found his house all in disorder, and his wife Mariamne and her mother Alexandra very uneasy; for as they supposed (what was easy to be supposed) that they were not put into that fortress [Alexandrium] for the security of their persons, but as into a garrison for their imprisonment, and that they had no power over any thing, either of others or of their own affairs, they were very uneasy; and Mariamne supposing that the king's love to her was but hypocritical, and rather pretended (as advantageous to himself) than real, she looked upon it as fallacious. She also was grieved that he would not allow her any hopes of surviving him, if he should come to any harm himself. She also recollected what commands he had formerly given to Joseph, insomuch that she endeavored to please her keepers, and especially Sohemus, as well apprised how all was in his power. And at the first Sohemus was faithful to Herod, and neglected none of the things he had given him in charge; but when the women, by kind words and liberal presents, had gained his affections over to them, he was by degrees overcome, and at length discovered to them all the king's injunctions, and this on that account principally, that he did not so much as hope he would come back with the same authority he had before; so that he thought he should both escape any danger from him, and supposed that he did hereby much gratify the women, who were likely not to be overlooked in the settling of the government; nay, that they would be able to make him abundant recompense, since they must either reign themselves, or be very near to him that should reign. He had a further ground of hope also, that though Herod should have all the success he could wish for, and should return again, he could not contradict his wife in what she desired, for he knew that the king's fondness for his wife was inexpressible. These were the motives that drew Sohemus to discover what injunctions had been given him. So Mariamne was greatly displeased to hear that there was no end of the dangers she was under from Herod, and was greatly uneasy at it, and wished that he might obtain no favors [from Caesar], and esteemed it almost an insupportable task to live with him any longer; and this she afterward openly declared, without concealing her resentment.

2. And now Herod sailed home with joy, at the unexpected good success he had had; and went first of all, as was proper, to this his wife, and told her, and her only, the good news, as preferring her before the rest, on account of his fondness for her, and the intimacy there had been between them, and saluted her; but so it happened, that as he told her of the good success he had had, she was so far from rejoicing at it, that she rather was sorry for it; nor was she able to conceal her resentments, but, depending on her dignity, and the nobility of her birth, in return for his salutations, she gave a groan, and declared evidently that she rather grieved than rejoiced at his success, and this till Herod was disturbed at her, as affording him, not only marks of her suspicion, but evident signs of her dissatisfaction. This much troubled him, to see that this surprising hatred of his wife to him was not concealed, but open; and he took this so ill, and yet was so unable to bear it, on account of the fondness he had for her, that he could not continue long in any one mind, but sometimes was angry at her, and sometimes reconciled himself to her; but by always changing one passion for another, he was still in great uncertainty, and thus was he entangled between hatred and love, and was frequently disposed to inflict punishment on her for her insolence towards him; but being deeply in love with her in his soul, he was not able to get quit of this woman. In short, as he would gladly have her punished, so was he afraid lest, ere he were aware, he should, by putting her to death, bring a heavier punishment upon himself at the same time.

3. When Herod's sister and mother perceived that he was in this temper with regard to Mariamne they thought they had now got an excellent opportunity to exercise their hatred against her and provoked Herod to wrath by telling him, such long stories and calumnies about her, as might at once excite his hatred and his jealousy. Now, though he willingly enough heard their words, yet had not he courage enough to do any thing to her as if he believed them; but still he became worse and worse disposed to her, and these ill passions were more and more inflamed on both sides, while she did not hide her disposition towards him, and he turned his love to her into wrath against her. But when he was just going to put this matter past all remedy, he heard the news that Caesar was the victor in the war, and that Antony and Cleopatra were both dead, and that he had conquered Egypt; whereupon he made haste to go to meet Caesar, and left the affairs of his family in their present state. However, Mariamne recommended Sohemus to him, as he was setting out on his journey, and professed that she owed him thanks for the care he had taken of her, and asked of the king for him a place in the government; upon which an honorable employment was bestowed upon him accordingly. Now when Herod was come into Egypt, he was introduced to Caesar with great freedom, as already a friend of his, and received very great favors from him; for he made him a present of those four hundred Galatians who had been Cleopatra's guards, and restored that country to him again, which, by her means, had been taken away from him. He also added to his kingdom Gadara, Hippos, and Samaria; and, besides those, the maritime cities, Gaza, and Anthedon, and Joppa, and Strato's Tower.

4. Upon these new acquisitions, he grew more magnificent, and conducted Caesar as far as Antioch; but upon his return, as much as his prosperity was augmented by the foreign additions that had been made him, so much the greater were the distresses that came upon him in his own family, and chiefly in the affair of his wife, wherein he formerly appeared to have been most of all fortunate; for the affection he had for Mariamne was no way inferior to the affections of such as are on that account celebrated in history, and this very justly. As for her, she was in other respects a chaste woman, and faithful to him; yet had she somewhat of a woman rough by nature, and treated her husband imperiously enough, because she saw he was so fond of her as to be enslaved to her. She did not also consider seasonably with herself that she lived under a monarchy, and that she was at another's disposal, and accordingly would behave herself after a saucy manner to him, which yet he usually put off in a jesting way, and bore with moderation and good temper. She would also expose his mother and his sister openly, on account of the meanness of their birth, and would speak unkindly of them, insomuch that there was before this a disagreement and unpardonable hatred among the women, and it was now come to greater reproaches of one another than formerly, which suspicions increased, and lasted a whole year after Herod returned from Caesar. However, these misfortunes, which had been kept under some decency for a great while, burst out all at once upon such an occasion as was now offered; for as the king was one day about noon lain down on his bed to rest him, he called for Mariamne, out of the great affection he had always for her. She came in accordingly, but would not lie down by him; and when he was very desirous of her company, she showed her contempt of him; and added, by way of reproach, that he had caused her father and her brother to be slain;¹² and when he took this injury very unkindly, and was ready to use violence to her, in a precipitate manner, the king's sister Salome, observing that he was more than ordinarily disturbed, sent in to the king his cup-

¹² Whereas Mariamne is here represented as reproaching; Herod with the murder of her father [Alexander], as well as her brother [Aristobulus], while it was her grandfather Hyrcanus, and not her father Alexander, whom he caused to be slain, (as Josephus himself informs us, ch. 6. sect. 2,) we must either take Zonara's reading, which is here grandfather, rightly, or else we must, as before, ch. 1. sect. 1, allow a slip of Josephus's pen or memory in the place before us.

bearer, who had been prepared long beforehand for such a design, and bid him tell the king how Mariamne had persuaded him to give his assistance in preparing a love potion for him; and if he appeared to be greatly concerned, and to ask what that love potion was, to tell him that she had the potion, and that he was desired only to give it him; but that in case he did not appear to be much concerned at this potion, to let the thing drop; and that if he did so, no harm should thereby come to him. When she had given him these instructions, she sent him in at this time to make such a speech. So he went in, after a composed manner, to gain credit to what he should say, and yet somewhat hastily, and said that Mariamne had given him presents, and persuaded him to give him a love potion. And when this moved the king, he said that this love potion was a composition that she had given him, whose effects he did not know, which was the reason of his resolving to give him this information, as the safest course he could take, both for himself and for the king. When Herod heard what he said, and was in an ill disposition before, his indignation grew more violent; and he ordered that eunuch of Mariamne, who was most faithful to her, to be brought to torture about this potion, as well knowing it was not possible that any thing small or great could be done without him. And when the man was under the utmost agonies, he could say nothing concerning the thing he was tortured about, but so far he knew, that Mariamne's hatred against him was occasioned by somewhat that Sohemus had said to her. Now as he was saying this, Herod cried out aloud, and said that Sohemus, who had been at all other times most faithful to him, and to his government, would not have betrayed what injunctions he had given him, unless he had had a nearer conversation than ordinary with Mariamne. So he gave order that Sohemus should be seized on and slain immediately; but he allowed his wife to take her trial; and got together those that were most faithful to him, and laid an elaborate accusation against her for this love potion and composition, which had been charged upon her by way of calumny only. However, he kept no temper in what he said, and was in too great a passion for judging well about this matter. Accordingly, when the court was at length satisfied that he was so resolved, they passed the sentence of death upon her; but when the sentence was passed upon her, this temper was suggested by himself, and by some others of the court, that she should not be thus hastily put to death, but be laid in prison in one of the fortresses belonging to the kingdom: but Salome and her party labored hard to have the woman put to death; and they prevailed with the king to do so, and advised this out of caution, lest the multitude should be tumultuous if she were suffered to live; and thus was Mariamne led to execution.

5. When Alexandra observed how things went, and that there were small hopes that she herself should escape the like treatment from Herod, she changed her behavior to quite the reverse of what might have been expected from her former boldness, and this after a very indecent manner; for out of her desire to show how entirely ignorant she was of the crimes laid against Mariamne, she leaped out of her place, and reproached her daughter in the hearing of all the people; and cried out that she had been an ill woman, and ungrateful to her husband, and that her punishment came justly upon her for such her insolent behavior, for that she had not made proper returns to him who had been their common benefactor. And when she had for some time acted after this hypocritical manner, and been so outrageous as to tear her hair, this indecent and dissembling behavior, as was to be expected, was greatly condemned by the rest of the spectators, as it was principally by the poor woman who was to suffer; for at the first she gave her not a word, nor was discomposed at her peevishness, and only looked at her, yet did she out of a greatness of soul discover her concern for her mother's offense, and especially for her exposing herself in a manner so unbecoming her; but as for herself, she went to her death with an unshaken firmness of mind, and without changing the color of her face, and thereby evidently discovered the nobility of her descent to the spectators, even in the last moments of her life.

6. And thus died Mariamne, a woman of an excellent character, both for chastity and greatness of soul; but she wanted moderation, and had too much of contention in her nature; yet had she all that can be said in the beauty of her body, and her majestic appearance in conversation; and thence arose the greatest part of the occasions why she did not prove so agreeable to the king, nor live so pleasantly with him, as she might otherwise have done; for while she was most indulgently used by the king, out of his fondness for her, and did not expect that he could do any hard thing to her, she took too unbounded a liberty. Moreover, that which most afflicted her was, what he had done to her relations, and she ventured to speak of all they had suffered by him, and at last greatly provoked both the king's mother and sister, till they became enemies to her; and even he himself also did the same, on whom alone she depended for her expectations of escaping the last of punishments.

7. But when she was once dead, the king's affections for her were kindled in a more outrageous manner than before, whose old passion for her we have already described; for his love to her was not of a calm nature, nor such as we usually meet with among other husbands; for at its commencement it was of an enthusiastic kind, nor was it by their long cohabitation and free conversation together brought under his power to manage; but at this time his love to Mariamne seemed to seize him in such a peculiar manner, as looked like Divine vengeance upon him for the taking away her life; for he would frequently call for her, and frequently lament for her in a most indecent manner. Moreover, he bethought him of every thing he could make use of to divert his mind from thinking of her, and contrived feasts and assemblies for that purpose, but nothing would suffice; he therefore laid aside the administration of public affairs, and was so far conquered by his passion, that he would order his servants to call for Mariamne, as if she were still alive, and could still hear them. And when he was in this way, there arose a pestilential disease, and carried off the greatest part of the multitude, and of his best and most esteemed friends, and made all men suspect that this was brought upon them by the anger of God, for the injustice that had been done to Mariamne. This circumstance affected the king still more, till at length he forced himself to go into desert places, and there, under pretence of going a hunting, bitterly afflicted himself; yet had he not borne his grief there many days before he fell into a most dangerous distemper himself: he had an inflammation upon him, and a pain in the hinder part of his head, joined with madness; and for the remedies that were used, they did him no good at all, but proved contrary to his case, and so at length brought him to despair. All the physicians also that were about him, partly because the medicines they brought for his recovery could not at all conquer the disease, and partly because his diet could be no other than what his disease inclined him to, desired him to eat whatever he had a mind to, and so left the small hopes they had of his recovery in the power of that diet, and committed him to fortune. And thus did his distemper go on, while he was at Samaria, now called Sebaste.

8. Now Alexandra abode at this time at Jerusalem; and being informed what condition Herod was in, she endeavored to get possession of the fortified places that were about the city, which were two, the one belonging to the city itself, the other belonging to the temple; and those that could get them into their hands had the whole nation under their power, for without the command of them it was not possible to offer their sacrifices; and to think of leaving on those sacrifices is to every Jew plainly impossible, who are still more ready to lose their lives than to leave off that Divine worship which they have been wont to pay unto God. Alexandra, therefore, discoursed with those that had the keeping of these strong holds, that it was proper for them to deliver the same to her, and to Herod's sons, lest, upon his death, any other person should seize upon the government; and that upon his recovery none could keep them more safely for him than those of his own family. These words were not by them at all

taken in good part; and as they had been in former times faithful [to Herod], they resolved to continue so more than ever, both because they hated Alexandra, and because they thought it a sort of impiety to despair of Herod's recovery while he was yet alive, for they had been his old friends; and one of them, whose name was Achiabus, was his cousin-german. They sent messengers therefore to acquaint him with Alexandra's design; so he made no longer delay, but gave orders to have her slain; yet was it still with difficulty, and after he had endured great pain, that he got clear of his distemper. He was still sorely afflicted, both in mind and body, and made very uneasy, and readier than ever upon all occasions to inflict punishment upon those that fell under his hand. He also slew the most intimate of his friends, Costobarus, and Lysimachus, and Gadias, who was also called Antipater; as also Dositheus, and that upon the following occasion.

9. Costobarus was an Idumean by birth, and one of principal dignity among them, and one whose ancestors had been priests to the Koze, whom the Idumeans had [formerly] esteemed as a god; but after Hyrcanus had made a change in their political government, and made them receive the Jewish customs and law, Herod made Costobarus governor of Idumea and Gaza, and gave him his sister Salome to wife; and this was upon the slaughter of [his uncle] Joseph, who had that government before, as we have related already. When Costobarus had gotten to be so highly advanced, it pleased him and was more than he hoped for, and he was more and more puffed up by his good success, and in a little while he exceeded all bounds, and did not think fit to obey what Herod, as their ruler, commanded him, or that the Idumeans should make use of the Jewish customs, or be subject to them. He therefore sent to Cleopatra, and informed her that the Idumeans had been always under his progenitors, and that for the same reason it was but just that she should desire that country for him of Antony, for that he was ready to transfer his friendship to her; and this he did, not because he was better pleased to be under Cleopatra's government, but because he thought that, upon the diminution of Herod's power, it would not be difficult for him to obtain himself the entire government over the Idumeans, and somewhat more also; for he raised his hopes still higher, as having no small pretences, both by his birth and by these riches which he had gotten by his constant attention to filthy lucre; and accordingly it was not a small matter that he aimed at. So Cleopatra desired this country of Antony, but failed of her purpose. An account of this was brought to Herod, who was thereupon ready to kill Costobarus; yet, upon the entreaties of his sister and mother, he forgave him, and vouchsafed to pardon him entirely; though he still had a suspicion of him afterward for this his attempt.

10. But some time afterward, when Salome happened to quarrel with Costobarus, she sent him a bill of divorce,¹³ and dissolved her marriage with him, though this was not according to the Jewish laws; for with us it is lawful for a husband to do so; but a wife if she departs from

¹³ Here is a plain example of a Jewish lady giving a bill of divorce to her husband, though in the days of Josephus it was not esteemed lawful for a woman so to do. See the like among the Parthians, *Antiq. B. XVIII. ch. 9. sect. 6.* However, the Christian law, when it allowed divorce for adultery, *Matthew 5:32*, allowed the innocent wife to divorce her guilty husband, as well as the innocent husband to divorce his guilty wife, as we learn from the shepherd of *Hermas, Mand. B. IV.*, and from the second apology of *Justin Martyr*, where a persecution was brought upon the Christians upon such a divorce; and I think the Roman laws permitted it at that time, as well as the laws of Christianity. Now this Babas, who was one of the race of the Asamoneans or Maccabees, as the latter end of this section informs us, is related by the Jews, as *Dr. Hudson* here remarks, to have been so eminently religious in the Jewish way, that, except the day following the tenth of Tisri, the great day of atonement, when he seems to have supposed all his sins entirely forgiven, he used every day of the whole year to offer a sacrifice for his sins of ignorance, or such as he supposed he had been guilty of, but did not distinctly remember. See somewhat like it of *Agrippa the Great, Antiq. B. XIX. ch. 3. sect. 3*, and *Job 1:4, 5.*

her husband, cannot of herself be married to another, unless her former husband put her away. However, Salome chose to follow not the law of her country, but the law of her authority, and so renounced her wedlock; and told her brother Herod, that she left her husband out of her good-will to him, because she perceived that he, with Antipater, and Lysimachus, and Dositheus, were raising a sedition against him; as an evidence whereof, she alleged the case of the sons of Babas, that they had been by him preserved alive already for the interval of twelve years; which proved to be true. But when Herod thus unexpectedly heard of it, he was greatly surprised at it, and was the more surprised, because the relation appeared incredible to him. As for the fact relating to these sons of Babas, Herod had formerly taken great pains to bring them to punishment, as being enemies to his government; but they were now forgotten by him, on account of the length of time [since he had ordered them to be slain]. Now the cause of his ill-will and hatred to them arose hence, that while Antigonus was king, Herod, with his army, besieged the city of Jerusalem, where the distress and miseries which the besieged endured were so pressing, that the greater number of them invited Herod into the city, and already placed their hopes on him. Now the sons of Babas were of great dignity, and had power among the multitude, and were faithful to Antigonus, and were always raising calumnies against Herod, and encouraged the people to preserve the government to that royal family which held it by inheritance. So these men acted thus politically, and, as they thought, for their own advantage; but when the city was taken, and Herod had gotten the government into his hands, and Costobarus was appointed to hinder men from passing out at the gates, and to guard the city, that those citizens that were guilty, and of the party opposite to the king, might not get out of it, Costobarus, being sensible that the sons of Babas were had in respect and honor by the whole multitude, and supposing that their preservation might be of great advantage to him in the changes of government afterward, he set them by themselves, and concealed them in his own farms; and when the thing was suspected, he assured Herod upon oath that he really knew nothing of that matter, and so overcame the suspicions that lay upon him; nay, after that, when the king had publicly proposed a reward for the discovery, and had put in practice all sorts of methods for searching out this matter, he would not confess it; but being persuaded that when he had at first denied it, if the men were found, he should not escape unpunished, he was forced to keep them secret, not only out of his good-will to them, but out of a necessary regard to his own preservation also. But when the king knew the thing, by his sister's information, he sent men to the places where he had the intimation they were concealed, and ordered both them, and those that were accused as guilty with them, to be slain, insomuch that there were now none at all left of the kindred of Hyrcanus, and the kingdom was entirely in Herod's own power, and there was nobody remaining of such dignity as could put a stop to what he did against the Jewish laws.