



The Childhood Companion of a Murderous King

Acts 12:18-Acts 13:1



In Acts 13:1 there is a list of five men who were teachers in the local church at Antioch. They laid their hands on Barnabas and Saul and sent them forth on the first missionary journey (v. 2). One of the men on this list was a man named Manaen. We know nothing about this man except for one simple fact. He “had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch” (v. 1). This was none other than Herod Antipas (*Matt. 14:1*), the son of that monster of iniquity, Herod the Great (*Matt. 2*). This vile ruler was the murderer of John the Baptist (*Matt. 14:1-12*). The Lord Jesus referred to him as “that fox” (*Luke 13:32*). He has been described as sly, ambitious, luxurious and immoral.

Manaen was **brought up** with this man. The Greek verb indicates that Manaen was a companion of Herod in childhood and youth. Herod was either his close childhood friend or, as many understand it, he was brought up in Herod’s home as a foster brother. It is fascinating that from the same home could come a godless ruler whose administration was characterized throughout with cunning and crime, and also a man who became a devoted follower of the King of Kings and a leader in the church at Antioch.

Many errant psychological theories suggest that our character is formed permanently by our upbringing and childhood circumstances. Yet, Manaen illustrates that a person does not have to be wrongly influenced by his family members or close childhood friends. He can instead choose to be different, avoid peer pressure, and embrace by faith the true and living God.

We are not slaves to early childhood circumstances which we cannot change. God in His grace can bring us into glorious liberty where we are free to serve Him and do His will (*Rom. 6:22;8:2; 2 Cor.5:17*).

~George Zeller: www.middletonbiblechurch.org



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