

Are the Spirits of Pharaoh and Herod Alive and Well in America in 2022?

If you're like me, you love ushering in a new year and getting another fresh start. It's kind like turning over and shaking the Etch A Sketch to begin with a clean slate. Unfortunately, much of the dark side of the spirit world tends to carry over year after year and generation after generation.

About 2,000 years ago, there was a horrific massacre of young children in Bethlehem by King Herod in his attempt to kill Jesus. That was a rehash of a near identical rampage by Pharaoh in Egypt almost 1,600 years prior. And that common thread seems to have continued on through today. Why is that?

Knowing that the readership of *Charisma* encompasses churches of all stripes (or maybe no church at all), the last thing I want to do is open up a can of worms on demonology. So, let's begin at square one, acknowledging that there is both good and evil in this world. We can all agree on that, right? This was instilled in each of us even as kids, playing cops and robbers (long before the cops got defunded) and watching westerns with the good guys in the white hats versus the bad guys in the black hats. It's been that way ever since the Garden of Eden; remember "the tree of the knowledge of *good and evil*" (Gen. 3)?

For those not comfortable talking about demons, if you agree with what I have said so far, you're halfway there. It's a matter of accepting (through Scripture) that the evil we observe is only the tip of the iceberg and can be greatly influenced by an unseen realm.

"For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world" (Eph.

6:12a, NLT). But the good news is, in this same unseen realm, forces for good—angels and the Holy Spirit—are at work on our behalf.

Speak of the Devil

Many Christians don't want to even mention evil spirits (or demons). It's always been a little "creepy" for some, even in New Testament times. One of the most astonishing stories in the gospels to me is the one about the demon-possessed man in the Gadarenes (Mark 5). They apparently didn't think anything about it when the guy was living in the tombs, breaking the chains when they tried to bind him, and cutting himself with stones. But it was when they saw him "sitting and clothed and in his right mind" (v. 15b) that *they were afraid*. So, the demons were fine as long as they were still in the guy and nobody was talking about them?

But can you imagine during the Super Bowl last February the Buccaneers and the Chiefs not uttering a word about their opponents during the half-time pep talk? Only eleven circles on the whiteboard for their offensive players but no circles for their opponents on defense? Right before being taken up to heaven to sit down at the right hand of God, Jesus didn't leave that side of the whiteboard blank when giving His disciples a pep talk. He told them that "those who believe" would drive out demons in His name (Mark 16:17).

All that said, these evil forces seem to repeat themselves throughout history. "There is nothing new under the sun" (Eccl. 1:9b, MEV). The devil has no creativity, so he runs the same schemes on a loop—generation after generation. But we can keep him from outsmarting us by being familiar with his evil schemes (2 Cor. 2:11).

Pharaoh

In Exodus 1:22b (NLT), we read about this edict of Pharaoh: "Throw every newborn Hebrew boy into the Nile River" (the

original Planned Parenthood in action). Uncoincidentally, this was right at the time Moses was born. Although the devil most likely didn't have the whole picture, he apparently tried to kill Moses to stop God's law from coming to fruition. You know the story: Moses' mother laid him in a basket and put him in the Nile (Ex. 2:3), and Pharaoh's daughter found the baby and rescued him.

Herod

Fast forward to the New Testament, and we find the same evil spirit manifesting through Herod. Matthew 2:16b tells us, "He [Herod] sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under, based on the wise men's report of the star's first appearance." Again, Herod may not have known exactly what was going on. But he knew there was something special about the child born in Bethlehem based on the wise men's account of the star that appeared.

This means these were two instances in Scripture in which there were evil forces working through individuals to murder babies. And they reared their ugly heads at two of the most significant junctures in the history of the world: the births of Moses, through whom God gave us the written law of the Old Covenant, and Jesus Christ, who ushered in the New Covenant, which writes the Law on our hearts (Rom. 2:15).

Don't Mess With Texas

Back in October, U.S. District Court Judge Robert Pitman blocked SB 8, the Texas "Heartbeat Bill," which was signed into law by Gov. Greg Abbott on May 19 of this year. Fortunately, two days later, the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals granted the state's request to override the lower court's decision while the case is reviewed. On Nov. 1, the Supreme Court heard arguments in *United States v. Texas*, brought by the Biden Justice Department.

It's one thing to be so callous that you look the other way

and allow something evil to continue by your inaction (which is egregious enough in itself). But can you imagine suing for the right to murder babies? Spending many hundreds of thousands of dollars in court to block a law that would allow a baby's heartbeat—that would beat approximately 2.5 billion times in an average lifetime—to keep beating? By the way, if we pronounce a person dead when their heart *stops* beating, why wouldn't we consider it a life when it *starts* beating? Folks, this is not normal, naturally speaking. Could this be that same murderous "spirit" that operated in Pharaoh and Herod, trying to destroy another written law that would give life to precious babies?

Polluting Our Land

We read in Psalm 106:35-38 about the children of Israel in the wilderness: "They worshiped their idols, which led to their downfall. They even sacrificed their sons and their daughters to the demons. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters. By sacrificing them to the idols of Canaan, they polluted the land with murder" (-38).

I believe we have polluted our land—the United States of America—with murder by shedding the innocent blood of our sons and daughters. We have sacrificed them to the idols of career, reputation and convenience. Thank God for Texas and Mississippi, which are leading the way to abolish this barbaric practice. As we roll in the new year, let's make it a priority to pray for our Supreme Court justices to do the right thing and stop the murderous spirits of Pharaoh and Herod in our generation. {eoa}

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