

26-0524p Transcript

26-0524p - *Who Are These People?*, John Nousek

Bible Reader: John Nousek

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Who Are These People?

Scripture Reading

Scripture Reading (0:04 - 1:34): John Nousek

Luke 3:1-4: (0:04) Good evening, and this evening I have a sermon prepared named: Who are these people, and (0:16) that comes to us from Luke chapter 3, verses 1-4, and I will flip over a bit and read the (0:26) following directly from the mind of God. (0:29) Now, in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor (0:37) of Judea, Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip, tetrarch of Aetoria and (0:47) the region of Draconatus, and

continued

Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene, while Annas and Caiaphas were (0:57) high priests, the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias in the wilderness, and (1:08) he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the (1:16) remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying, (1:25) the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths (1:33) straight. (1:34)

Transcript (0:04 - 31:54), Preacher: John Nousek

(1:39) Wow, isn't that a whole bunch of folks in that passage? (1:45) So I'm an accountant, any of you know? (1:49) Well, I counted, including the river Jordan, there's ten proper names there, no, eleven, (1:57) including the river.

(1:59) So, I want to tell you what prompted this particular sermon, in part, I had a conversation (2:10) as we do often with people within our sphere of influence, and this person, a non-Christian, (2:21) they said something to me that was very interesting and in the moment, as I often will as much (2:30) as I can, within the limits of whatever those relationships will permit, I'll speak about (2:41) the word of God, because I know the word of God is the truth, and I know that we can rely (2:47) on it, and I know that this is the one thing that we can stand on and feel confident in. (2:56) So, this person said to me, as best as I can quote, I just can't see how one person wrote (3:05) all that, and now we're expected to just accept it and live by it? (3:14) Well, gee, that's, in that one question, there's a lot there, but just those few words, there (3:21) would be a lot to explain. (3:24) You know, I've been studying for quite a long time now, say about 25 years or more, (3:34) and when I heard that, one of the first things I thought was, well, first of all, it's just (3:40) not one person, not one human being.

(3:44) So, over many, many, many years, many years, many different people, yes, it's true that (3:51) Paul wrote quite a bit of the New Testament, but the Old Testament was written by many, (3:58) and I praise God that I kind of have this in my back pocket, sort of body of knowledge (4:03) that, okay, wait a minute, let's slow down, let's answer this one by one, because you've (4:08) asked, yes, one question, but there's a whole lot there. (4:14) And I will tell you that I've stood right here on

different occasions, and I've explained (4:20) that we can rely on God's Word through many different aspects. (4:26) There's manuscript evidence, mountains of it.

(4:29) There's archaeology, and I'll touch on that in a moment with something else. (4:36) There's prophetic writing, type and anti-type. (4:42) There's scientific foreknowledge.

(4:45) There's things written in the Bible that man could not possibly have known at the time (4:49) it was written, the water cycle, how the oceans move, how the earth hangs on nothing, things (4:58) like that. (5:00) But there's another aspect, and that's what I want to talk about tonight, when I say or (5:07) ask, who are these people? (5:10) Well, among other things, the Bible is a record of historical events, places, people, things (5:20) that happened in real life. (5:27) Now, I'm not saying that all historical records are found in this book.

(5:33) The book would be bigger than the earth. (5:37) And I'm not saying that everything that you find in the Scriptures is supported by some (5:45) extra-biblical source. (5:48) But when we do check credible outside biblical sources, credible, we find that the Scriptures (6:01) are supported by what really happened.

(6:05) Or said differently, the Bible supports reality. (6:12) And so it can be found to be both reliable and credible. (6:18) Let's think about this.

(6:25) We're in Proverbs chapter 18, single verse, verse 17 reads, in a lawsuit, the first to (6:35) speak seems right until someone comes forward and cross-examines. (6:45) See, that's what we should do, cross-examine things. (6:52) And we can do that from different aspects.

(6:56) You know, one of my favorite apologists, Christian apologists, his name is Lee Strobel. (7:04) He was an investigative reporter working for the Chicago Tribune. (7:09) He was an atheist at the time.

(7:14) And I recall him making this statement while working for the Chicago Tribune. (7:20) He said, gee, in the place where I worked, up on the wall, working for the newspaper, (7:28) he said, must have at least two sources. (7:33) If you're going to put something in print, you better have two sources at least.

(7:39) And the quote on the wall said, if your mother says she loves you, how do you really know? (7:51) Check it out. (7:54) You better have two sources at least. (7:59) Well, in a passage that was just read, Luke chapter 3, this is an example of historical (8:07) facts that can be checked out and can be examined.

(8:12) And it checks out to be precise, credible, and reliable. (8:16) See, it starts out with the phrase, in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius. (8:25) This is referring to a specific historical period that marks the beginning of John the (8:33) Baptist's ministry.

(8:38) And that's around A.D. 29. (8:45) And we know that from a handful of sources, but one extra biblical source, and I brought (8:53) that with me tonight, is this I have in my hand, what's labeled the complete works of (9:01) Josephus. (9:03) Josephus was a Jewish general in the army.

(9:13) And he became a historian for the Romans. (9:18) And he wrote a lot. (9:22) This book's pretty hefty.

(9:25) It's not infallible, but it supports much of what is a significant number of things (9:36) that we find in the Bible. (9:38) I know it's not infallible, I know it's infallible because right here on the dust (9:44) cover it says, the complete works of Josephus, Flavius Josephus, in large type. (9:55) That's not large type.

(9:58) Every year it seems to get smaller. (10:03) Maybe that has something to do with my eyes. (10:08) However, we have extra biblical support for the things that we read in the Bible.

(10:17) So, let's consider those people mentioned in that passage. (10:24) Of course, the Jordan River. (10:28) Jordan River is a specific river, still flows to this day, goes from the Sea of Galilee, (10:35) almost due south, into the Dead Sea.

(10:40) One river in, no rivers out. (10:44) The sea is dead. (10:46) Massively salty.

(10:48) So much so, I haven't done it, but I understand you could actually float on the top of the (10:55) water without even a big hefty breath. (10:58) It's so salty and dense. (11:03) But let's look at the names that are listed.

(11:07) Okay. (11:08) Ask for slide one if you don't mind. (11:14) So, I have on screen the family of Caesar.

(11:24) These are real people in history. (11:28) Starts at the top with the guy by the name of Julius Caesar. (11:33) Then there's all these different Caesars throughout history, and all these different family members (11:38) and intermarriages.

(11:40) And what I like a lot about this particular slide is that those people that are mentioned (11:47) in the Bible, they have a square around their name. (11:53) So you can see those folks that you can also find in the pages of God's Word. (12:00) And right in the middle of that page is the name Tiberius.

(12:05) Tiberius. (12:08) Above that, Augustus. (12:12) And above that, Julius Caesar.

(12:17) See, Tiberius says in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius, that's when John the Baptist (12:23) ministry was started, according to Luke chapter 3, Tiberius had the actual proper name of (12:32) Tiberius, Julius Caesar, Augustus. (12:36) See how that works? (12:40) So, he was the second emperor of the Roman Empire. (12:45) His father, actually his stepfather was Augustus, and so Tiberius was the second emperor.

(12:55) And we know the date that Tiberius reigned, because we know the date that his father died. (13:06) The Roman calendar, different than Roman reckoning, call it, of time, how we have the Gregorian calendar. (13:18) Augustus died on what we call August 19th, AD 14.

(13:25) So, I told you, I'm an accountant, right? (13:27) So I can do this. (13:28) Gee, AD 14, that's when he started. (13:33) The 15th year, 14 plus 15 is 29.

(13:40) Won't everyone shout it once? (13:45) Okay. (13:46) 14 plus 15, okay. (13:49) AD 29, so that's when Tiberius started.

(13:53) And these are folks in actual real life, in time, in history. (13:59) And if I can ask to slide to, we have a image, artists, image of what Tiberius looked like. (14:14) A real guy.

(14:17) See, Tiberius was, I told you, the second emperor. (14:28) But he's, in this account, followed by the next person on the list, or slide three, if I may ask to switch to that, which is Pontius Pilate. (14:40) And you know that name, Pontius Pilate.

(14:43) As he overseer during the trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. (14:49) One who washed his hands in front of everyone to say, I'm innocent of this man's blood. (14:59) He was the governor of Judea from AD 26 to AD 36.

(15:05) So he was there 10 years. (15:08) And the next person to be mentioned in this account is Herod Antipas, which I do not have a slide of. (15:22) However, I do have a lot of information about Herod Antipas.

(15:27) He was the son of Herod the Great. (15:31) Herod the Great was the same Herod, and there are many Herods. (15:36) Herod the Great was the one that was responsible for killing all the children two years and younger.

(15:47) Because he said he wanted, at first, to go and worship the Christ child also, which was a complete hoax. (15:56) And when the Magi went another way and did not return to Herod to disclose where the Christ child was, (16:04) but he knew he was to be born in Bethlehem, he had all those children killed to try to get whoever it was who the Christ child really was. (16:18) But by then, Joseph had taken his family out of the area and kept them safe.

(16:26) So Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great. (16:37) He was one of the three Herods that followed Herod the Great when he died. (16:45) And as it is, Herod Antipas ruled over Galilee and Perea from 4 B.C. until A.D. 39.

(17:01) See, Herod the Great, when he died, he had his kingdom distributed and split up. (17:07) He had plenty of sons. (17:09) There were only three that survived him.

(17:12) And two of them were called a Tetrarch. (17:18) So we read Herod being Tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip, the second of three, Tetrarch of Aitoria. (17:38) But what is a Tetrarch? (17:40) Another historical word.

(17:43) A Tetrarch is someone who has been given or takes the control of a region, Petra, from the Greek meaning four. (17:56) But essentially, Antipas took essentially a fourth of the region. (18:04) His brother Philip, the same.

(18:07) The other Herod, Archelaus, was the Tetrarch. (18:13) Because he was over an ethnic region, including Judea. (18:22) So who were these people? (18:24) That's the title of the sermon.

(18:27) There's a lot going on there. (18:29) But we're not there yet. (18:34) So Antipas, Herod Antipas, is perhaps best known for his role in the beheading of John the Baptist.

(18:48) So I'd like to read from Mark 6 a number of verses. (18:54) It's verses 17 through 29. (18:58) It reads, (18:59) For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife.

(19:08) For he had married her because John had said to Herod, (19:12) It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. (19:15) Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him. (19:21) But she could not.

(19:23) For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man and he protected him. (19:30) When he heard him, he did many things and heard him gladly. (19:38) Then an opportune day came when Herod, on his birthday, gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee.

(19:46) And when Herodias' daughter herself came in and danced and pleased Herod. (19:54) And those who sat with him and the king said to the girl, (19:57) Ask me whatever you want and I will give it to you. (20:01) He also swore to her, whatever you ask me, I will give you up to half my kingdom.

(20:09) I find that interesting, that phrase, up to half my kingdom. (20:13) I work in the corporate world. (20:16) There's corporate structure.

(20:20) And one man owns 49% and the other owns 51%. (20:25) And the 51%, he's in charge. (20:28) When push comes to shove, he's in charge.

(20:31) Notice the phrase, whatever you ask, I will give you up to half my kingdom. (20:40) He's still going to be in charge. (20:43) He'll give away everything.

(20:45) Just about. (20:48) Verse 24. (20:49) So she went out and said to her mother, what shall I ask? (20:53) And she said, the head of John the Baptist.

(20:58) Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, (21:03) I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter. (21:09) And the king was exceedingly sorry. (21:13) Yet because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her.

(21:20) Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. (21:27) And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. (21:32) And the girl gave it to her mother.

(21:35) And when the disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb. (21:44) How disturbing is that? (21:49) Let me point you back to this, the complete works of Josephus. (21:54) I'm going to refer to this one, a couple of sentences that I read from Josephus.

(22:05) And I want to see if this sounds familiar. (22:10) This is in what's referred to in his works as the Antiquities of the Jews. (22:17) It's in what's also called Book 18, Chapter 4, sub-chapter, I suppose, 4, halfway through it.

(22:27) And it reads like this. (22:31) But Herodias, their sister, was married to Herod, Philip. (22:37) That's one of the three brothers I told you about.

(22:41) The son of Herod the Great, who was born of Marian, the daughter of Simon, the high priest, who had a daughter, Salome. (22:53) Salome is the dancer. (22:56) We just read about.

(22:58) After whose birth, Herodias took upon her to confound the laws of our country and divorce herself from her husband while he was alive. (23:10) And was married to Herod Antipas, her husband's brother, by the father's side. (23:19) He was Tetrarch of Galilee.

(23:22) But her daughter, Salome, was married to Philip, the son of Herod, the Tetrarch of Draconitus. (23:33) And as he died childless. (23:42) There are extra-biblical sources that attest to

the things that we read in the pages of Scripture.

(23:51) Historical events. (23:53) Things that actually happen. (23:55) We don't just rely on this book and circular reasoning.

(23:59) It says this, therefore we believe it, we believe it, therefore it's true. (24:03) No, there's other support for it as well. (24:06) I told you, manuscripts, archaeology, prophecy, scientific foreknowledge, and also now historical facts supported by third-party recorders, historians.

(24:20) Who are these people? (24:22) Who else is in this account? (24:24) Well, am I up to verse 3? (24:29) So now, Luke chapter 3, verse 3 says, (24:35) While Annas and Caiaphas were high priests. (24:39) Who are they? (24:42) Let me refer you to John chapter 18. (24:46) Now, flip over there.

(24:51) John chapter 18, verses 12 through 14. (24:56) This is the betrayal of Jesus. (25:01) He's now been arrested.

(25:05) Peter has cut off the right ear of the servant named Malchus. (25:10) Jesus has healed the right ear of Malchus. (25:15) And in John 18, verses 12 through 14, it says, (25:22) God's Word says, (25:24) Then the detachment of troops and the captain and the officers of the Jews arrested Jesus and bound him.

(25:31) They led him away to Annas first. (25:36) For he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. (25:44) Now, it was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

(25:53) Those are the two, Annas and Caiaphas. (25:58) See, Annas was the previous Jewish high priest. (26:02) He was the father-in-law to Caiaphas.

(26:06) And Caiaphas was the current high priest. (26:09) And so, it was during the trial, (26:13) it was Caiaphas that would press the case against Jesus Christ, (26:17) bringing in the false testimony against him and wanting to see this man put to death, ultimately. (26:26) So let me read to you a segment out of that trial, (26:32) from Luke 23, verses 3 through 11.

(26:37) So Pilate asked Jesus, (26:39) Are you the king of the Jews? (26:42) You have said so, Jesus replied. (26:46) Luke 23. (26:48) Then Pilate announced to the chief priests in the crowd, (26:51) I find no basis for a charge against this man.

(26:54) But they insisted. (26:55) He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. (27:00) He started in Galilee and he has come all the way here.

(27:03) On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. (27:09) When he heard that Jesus was under Herod's jurisdiction, that's Herod Antipas, (27:17) he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. (27:23) When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased.

(27:28) Because for a long time, he had been wanting to see him. (27:32) From what he had heard about him, (27:35) he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. (27:40) He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer.

(27:47) Can you picture this? (27:50) Can you picture Jesus Christ standing there? (27:54) What's not quite said here, but you've got to dig for it and realize, (27:59) this is the Herod Antipas who put Jesus' second cousin to death (28:06) by cutting his head off and putting it on a platter for this girl.

(28:11) And now he wants Jesus to perform? (28:14) Just from a human perspective, I just don't. (28:21) I want to say, are you out of your mind? (28:25) Let me continue reading.

(28:27) Verse 10. (28:30) The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there vehemently accusing him. (28:35) Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him.

(28:38) Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. (28:44) See, Herod Antipas was known for his ambitious building projects, (28:53) including the construction of the city of Tiberias (28:57) on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, named in his honor. (29:01) And later, the city became the capital of his tetrarchy (29:07) and a center of political and economic activity.

(29:11) His personal life was a wreck. (29:15) I read to you how he wound up marrying his brother's wife. (29:23) So, who's Philip? (29:25) Well, Philip was also a tetrarch, the brother.

(29:29) He was the ruler, it says, of the region of Aitoria and Traconitus, (29:35) the northern part, which is northern Israel and Syria. (29:43) That's the fourth person mentioned. (29:46) The fifth is Licinius, not a brother, but also a tetrarch, (29:52) a tetrarch of Abilene, another region.

(29:56) And, of course, I told you about Annas and Caiaphas. (30:02) God's Word says the Word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. (30:08) So we have John the Baptizer.

(30:11) We have, of course, his father, who was married to Elizabeth, (30:16) who gave birth to John the Baptist. (30:24) And it says, in the book of the words of Isaiah, the prophet. (30:31) Another very specific person in history.

(30:36) And the River Jordan. (30:41) See, each and every one of these things are very specific people in time (30:47) that you can trace back, if I can ask you to pull up one more time the first slide. (30:55) This is an example of a family tree, (31:00) a very twisted family tree where they intermarried, cousins, (31:07) and all kinds of things like that.

(31:10) Decided to marry their brothers, wives, (31:16) regardless of what we may say or not about intermarriages (31:22) or what we may say or not about who's who. (31:25) These were specific people. (31:28) And we have third-party sources attesting to these people (31:35) that we can rely on.

(31:40) And it's part of the cumulative case (31:43) of the reliability and veracity of God's Word, (31:48) which we also can rely on. (31:51) I praise God that we have it. (31:53) Amen. (31:54)