

Special Note:

It is my intent each week to preach God's Word in a completely accurate manner. I want the people listening to be able to take what they hear as trustworthy. Unfortunately, I make errors. When I do make errors, I want people to know it so they are not believing something that is not accurate. There are three errors in the sermon "How Do We Know the Gospels Can Be Trusted?" from Luke 1:1-4:

The first error occurs in the sermon at 18:18-18:23:

...Jesus is on the road to Jericho whenever he heals the **deaf** man.

...Jesus is on the road to Jericho whenever he heals the **blind** man.

*(Bartimaeus was blind, not deaf, Lk. 18:35-43)

The second error occurs in the sermon at 18:29-18:47:

"...you get this account when Jesus comes down **out of the Mount of Transfiguration** and there's this leper..."

It should be "...Jesus comes down **from giving the Sermon on the Mount** and there's this leper..."

The third error occurs in the sermon at 45:40-45:48:

"He talks about the same thing Matthew, in chapter 14 of his gospel and, not just Matthew, but also **John** as well..."

"He talks about the same thing Matthew, in chapter 14 of his gospel and, not just Matthew, but also **Luke and Mark** as well..."

*(Matthew 14:1-12, Luke 9:7-9, and Mark 6:14-29 are the two passages that speak of Herod beheading John the Baptist. John is the only writer who does not mention this event.)

Sermon Notes

First Baptist Church
October 15, 2017 (Morning)

"How Do We Know the Gospels Can Be Trusted?"
Luke 1:1-4

I. Luke acknowledged that there had been others who wrote about the events that took place concerning Jesus (v. 1).

- A. There were many who wrote.
- B. They wrote about the things accomplished.

II. Luke stated the events that took place were handed down by those who were witnesses (v. 2).

- A. The things that took place were substantiated by eyewitnesses.
- B. The eyewitnesses were servants of the word.

(John 20:30-31; 2 Peter 1:16-19)

III. Luke explained why he wrote (vs. 3-4).

- A. He had investigated everything carefully.
- B. He wrote so that the exact truth would be known.

Scripture References and Notes

2 Corinthians 8:18

We have sent along with him the brother whose fame in *the things of the gospel has spread* through all the churches;

Acts 16:6-10

⁶They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; ⁷and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; ⁸and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

¹⁰When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Colossians 4:10-14

¹⁰Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and *also* Barnabas's cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him); ¹¹and *also* Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me. ¹²Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and *also* Demas.

Romans 16:22

I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

Acts 1:1-5

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when He was taken up *to heaven*, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. ³To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a *period of forty days* and speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. ⁴Gathering them together, He

commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” *He said*, “you heard of from Me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

2 Timothy 4:10-11

¹⁰ for Demas, having loved this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens *has gone* to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. ¹¹ **Only Luke is with me.** Pick up Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for service.

Acts 28:30-31

³⁰ And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, ³¹ preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

πολυς (polus)

- pert. to being a large number, many, a great number of
- pert. to being relatively large in quantity or measure, much, extensive
- many (high in number); multitudinous, plenteous, "much"; "great" in amount (extent).
- ("much in number") emphasizes the quantity involved.
- "signifies 'many, numerous'; . . . with the article it is said of a multitude as being numerous" (Vine, Unger, White, NT, 113,114) – i.e. great in amount.
- 361 Occurrences

Luke 1:1 (KJV): Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are **most surely believed** among us...

πληροφορέω (plérophoreó)

- properly, carry out fully; fully carry-through
- fill (completely), fulfill

2 Timothy 4:17

But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation **might be fully accomplished**, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion’s mouth.

- convince fully

Colossians 4:12

Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and **fully assured** in all the will of God.

2 Peter 1:16-18

¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. ¹⁷ For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, “This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased”— ¹⁸ and we ourselves heard this utterance made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

John 20:30-31

³⁰ Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

1 Corinthians 15:6

After that He appeared to more than five hundred brethren at one time, most of whom remain until now, but some have fallen asleep...

καθεξῆς (kathexés)

- pert. to being in sequence in time, space, or logic, *in order, one after the other*

Matthew 4:1-11

¹ Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² And after He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He then became hungry. ³ And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." ⁴ But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" ⁵ Then the devil took Him into the holy city and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶ and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down; for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU'; and 'ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" ⁷ Jesus said to him, On the other hand, it is written, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" ⁸ Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; ⁹ and he said to Him, "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." ¹⁰ Then Jesus said to him, "Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and *began* to minister to Him.

Luke 4:1-13

¹ Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness ² for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And He ate nothing during those days, and when they had ended, He became hungry. ³ And the devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." ⁴ And Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE.'" ⁵ And he led Him up and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. ⁶ And the devil said to Him, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. ⁷ Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be Yours." ⁸ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" ⁹ And he led Him to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here; ¹⁰ for it is written, 'HE WILL COMMAND HIS ANGELS CONCERNING YOU TO GUARD YOU,' ¹¹ and, 'ON *their* HANDS THEY WILL BEAR YOU UP, SO THAT YOU WILL NOT STRIKE YOUR FOOT AGAINST A STONE.'" ¹² And Jesus answered and said to him, "It is said, 'YOU SHALL NOT PUT THE LORD YOUR GOD TO THE TEST.'" ¹³ When the devil had finished every temptation, he left Him until an opportune time.

Josephus' Word about John the Baptist Herod's Adulterous Relationship with his brother's wife

1. THOSE who undertake to write histories, do not, I perceive, take that trouble on one and the same account, but for many reasons, and those such as are very different one from another. For some of them apply themselves to this part of learning to show their skill in composition, and that they may therein acquire a reputation for speaking finely: others of them there are, who write histories in order to gratify those that happen to be concerned in them, and on that account have spared no pains, but rather gone beyond their own abilities in the performance: but others there are, who, of necessity and by force, are driven to write history, because they are concerned in the facts, and so cannot excuse themselves from committing them to writing, for the advantage of posterity; nay, there are not a few who are induced to draw their historical facts out of darkness into light, and to produce them for the benefit of the public, on account of the great importance of the facts themselves with which they have been concerned. Now of these several reasons for writing history, I must profess the two last were my own reasons also; for since I was myself interested in that war which we Jews had with the Romans, and knew myself its particular actions, and what conclusion it had, I was forced to give the history of it, because I saw that others perverted the truth of those actions in their writings.

2. Now I have undertaken the present work, as thinking it will appear to all the Greeks worthy of their study; for it will contain all our antiquities, and the constitution of our government, as interpreted out of the Hebrew Scriptures. And indeed I did formerly intend, when I wrote of the war, to explain who the Jews originally were, - what fortunes they had been subject to, - and by what legislature they had been instructed in piety, and the exercise of other virtues, - what wars also they had made in remote ages, till they were unwillingly engaged in this last with the Romans:

Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Preface, Articles 1 and 2.

On John the Baptist

1. ABOUT this time Aretas (the king of Arabia Petres) and Herod had a quarrel on the account following: Herod the tetrarch had, married the daughter of Aretas, and had lived with her a great while; but when he was once at Rome, he lodged with Herod, who was his brother indeed, but not by the same mother; for this Herod was the son of the high priest Sireoh's daughter. However, he fell in love with Herodias, this last Herod's wife, who was the daughter of Aristobulus their brother, and the sister of Agrippa the Great. This man ventured to talk to her about a marriage between them; which address, when she admitted, an agreement was made for her to change her habitation, and come to him as soon as he should return from Rome...

2. Now some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, that was called the Baptist: for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when [many] others came in crowds about him, for they were very greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion, (for they seemed ready to do any thing he should advise,) thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties, by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it would be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure to him.

Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, Volume 18, Chapter 5, Articles 1 and 2.

Matthew 14:1-12

¹ At that time Herod the tetrarch heard the news about Jesus, ² and said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him."

³ For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip. ⁴ For John had been saying to him, "It is not lawful for you to have her."

⁵ Although Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded John as a prophet.

⁶ But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before them and pleased Herod, ⁷ so much that he promised with an oath to give her whatever she asked. ⁸ Having been prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the head of John the Baptist." ⁹ Although he was grieved, the king commanded it to be given because of his oaths, and because of his dinner guests. ¹⁰ He sent and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹ And his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother. ¹² His disciples came and took away the body and buried it; and they went and reported to Jesus.

Luke 9:7-9

⁷ Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was happening; and he was greatly perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, ⁸ and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the

prophets of old had risen again. ⁹ Herod said, "I myself had John beheaded; but who is this man about whom I hear such things?" And he kept trying to see Him.

Mark 6:14-29

¹⁴ **And King Herod heard of it, for His name had become well known; and *people* were saying, "John the Baptist has risen from the dead, and that is why these miraculous powers are at work in Him."**

¹⁵ **But others were saying, "He is Elijah." And others were saying, "*He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.*"** ¹⁶ **But when Herod heard of it, he kept saying, "John, whom I beheaded, has risen!"**

¹⁷ **For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her.** ¹⁸ **For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."** ¹⁹ Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death and could not *do so*; ²⁰ for Herod was afraid of John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he kept him safe. And when he heard him, he was very perplexed; but he used to enjoy listening to him. ²¹ A strategic day came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his lords and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee; ²² and when the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests; and the king said to the girl, "Ask me for whatever you want and I will give it to you." ²³ And he swore to her, "Whatever you ask of me, I will give it to you; up to half of my kingdom." ²⁴ And she went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." ²⁵ Immediately she came in a hurry to the king and asked, saying, "I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter." ²⁶ And although the king was very sorry, *yet* because of his oaths and because of his dinner guests, he was unwilling to refuse her. ²⁷ Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded *him* to bring *back* his head. And he went and had him beheaded in the prison, ²⁸ and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. ²⁹ When his disciples heard *about this*, they came and took away his body and laid it in a tomb.

Julius Africanus

"Circa AD 52, Thallus wrote a history of the Eastern Mediterranean world from the Trojan War to his own time. This work itself has been lost and only fragments of it exist in the citations of others. One such scholar who knew and spoke of it was Julius Africanus, who wrote about AD 221. In speaking of Jesus' crucifixion and the darkness that covered the land during this event, Africanus found a reference in the writings of Thallus that dealt with this cosmic report. Africanus asserts: 'On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls, as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun.'"

One might wonder why other historians of the time did not also mention the darkness. First of all, the darkness was localized, so it would not be a widespread phenomena that other historians would naturally record. Second, other historians like Pliny, Tacitus, and Josephus generally were focusing on events that could be verified and were not based in the miraculous. **The fact that Thallus mentions the darkness tells us that something did happen, and that there is extrabiblical citation for the event.**

<https://carm.org/there-non-biblical-evidence-day-darkness-christs-death>

*****This following part was cut out of the sermon*****

Luke makes it clear that he wrote his Gospel as a history. He expected it to be treated as a historical volume, just as one would have treated the works of Josephus in his day, or a textbook on American history in our day. Notice the similarities between the introduction to Luke's Gospel and Josephus' introduction in his work *Against Apion*, Volumes I and II. Josephus' two introductions are given:

In my history of our Antiquities, most excellent Epaphroditus, I have, I believe, made sufficiently clear to any who may peruse that work that antiquity of our Jewish race... However, since I notice that a considerable number of persons, influenced by the malicious slanders of certain individuals, discredit the statements in my history... I deem it my duty to devote a brief treatise to all these points; in order at once to convict our detractors... to correct the ignorance of others, and to instruct all who desire to know the truth concerning the antiquity of our race.

In the first volume of this work, most esteemed Epaphroditus, I demonstrated the antiquity of our race...

Josephus, *Against Apion*, Vol. I and II

Θεόφιλος (Theophilus)

- a Christian of prominence, to whom Luke and Acts are dedicated.
- Θεόφιλος comes from θεός (theos) meaning God and φίλος meaning friend. Properly then, Θεόφιλος means “friend of God” or even “lover of God” (someone who loves God).