

Luke 3:18-20

Introduction:

John proclaims the gospel by proclaiming repentance—3:18

- 1) ¹⁸ *And, on the one hand, with many other exhortations* [παρακαλέω] *he* (John) *was announcing good news* [εὐαγγελίζω] *to the people* (of Israel).
 - a) This was the good news concerning the coming Messiah and His kingdom.
 - b) Cf. Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14

Herod responds sinfully to John's preaching—3:19-20

- This event takes place sometime later than this context, most likely just **after** John 4 (Jesus at Jacob's well in Samaria) and **before** Luke 4:14.
- 1) Who is this Herod? ¹⁹ *But on the other hand, Herod* (Antipas; cf. 3:1) *the tetrarch*,
 - a) The youngest son of Herod the Great
 - b) Ruled in Galilee and Perea, to the north and east of Jerusalem (cf. 3:1)
 - c) Ruled from 4 BC – AD 39
 - d) Ruled as a loyal puppet of Rome
 - 2) What has Herod Antipas been told by John? *while being reprimanded/exposed* [pres. pass. ptc. ἐλέγχω] *by him* (i.e. John)
 - a) *concerning* [περί] *Herodias, his brother's* (Herod Philip) *wife*,
 - i) The situation
 - (1) Adultery—carelessness regarding the sanctity of marriage: Herod Antipas and Herodias (his sister-in-law) both left their marriages to be involved with one another.
 - (2) Incest—carelessness regarding the sanctity of family relationships: Herodias was Herod the Great's granddaughter, and thus Herod Antipas's niece.
 - i) The principles
 - (1) Regarding **sexual holiness**—it was against God's Law to be sexually involved with your brother's wife—Leviticus 18:16
 - (2) Regarding **sexual purity**—it was against God's Law to be sexually involved with your brother's wife—Leviticus 20:21
 - b) *and concerning* [περί] *all the evils* [πονηρός] *which Herod had done*,
 - 3) What worse sin does Herod Antipas commit?—3:20 ²⁰ *also added* [aor. act. ind. προστίημι] *this to* [ἐπί] *them all: he locked up* [κατακλείω] *John in prison* [φυλακή].
 - a) This prison was in a fortress called Machaerus, located on the east side of the Dead Sea.
 - b) Josephus reminds us that Herod Antipas was afraid that John's influence might be used politically against him for rebellion. (*Antiquities*, 18:116-119)
 - c) This is strikingly similar to Elijah's prophetic ministry against Ahab and Jezebel. Rebuking the powerful for their sin normally has deadly consequences for a prophet. (Garland, 160)
 - d) Thus John's ministry lasted about 3 years: 1 year of preaching, and 2 years sitting in prison.

- 4) Principles:
- a) Faithfulness to God sometimes leads to unpleasant circumstances.
 - b) God's moral standards should not be left behind for the sake of our personal comfort.
 - c) A government that attempts to silence those who speak for God regarding righteousness demonstrates an utter rejection of God's standard of righteousness.
 - d) John's ministry was not successful by external standards. His arrest is not a sign of failure, but rather of faithfulness of God's Word.
 - e) Sin is ugly and some cannot stand to be exposed, even when forgiveness is offered at the same time. This is the tragedy of Herod's response to John.
(Bock, 330)