

# St John Church of Christ

October 25, 2020

## ONLINE

Our programs are available over the internet starting Sundays at 10:30 for Adult Class and 11:00 for Worship. The programs will also be available to watch online later. Just visit

[www.StJohnChurchOfChrist.org](http://www.StJohnChurchOfChrist.org)

and select "Sermons" from the menubar at the top, or visit [YouTube.com](https://www.youtube.com).

### Adult Bible Class

James, the brother of Jesus, wrote one of the most down-to-earth letters in the New Testament. Join us online every Sunday as John McKeel shares from his recent book, *James the Brother of Jesus Speaks*.

## LIVE!

### Worship

11:00 - 11:45 A.M.

We're meeting at the building again live starting at 11:00 A.M.

# A Tale of Three Sons



*Coins of Herod Antipas – the ruler who killed John the Baptist*

Luke uses several men to date the ministry of John the Baptist (Luke 3:1 - 2).

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

Let's examine the lives of three of Herod the Great's sons. A "tetrarch" is the ruler of a fourth part. When Herod the Great died, the Romans divided his kingdom and gave parts of it to three of his sons: Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip. The Bible says this about the first brother, Archelaus:

But when [Joseph] heard that Archelaus was reigning over

Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee, Matthew 2:22.

Joseph, Jesus' stepfather, had good reason to be afraid. These were tumultuous times. When Herod the Great died, two of his sons - Archelaus and Antipas - made claims to the throne. They went to Rome and appealed to Caesar Augustus to decide the case, but before Archelaus left for Rome, a riot broke out in the Temple during Passover. Archelaus had 3,000 worshippers killed to quell the disturbance! While the two brothers were in Rome, Judah was overwhelmed in violence. (See Josephus, Wars of the Jews, 2.) Eventually Caesar divided Herod the Great's kingdom into four parts. Archelaus was giv-



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en half the kingdom (two parts), while Antipas and Philip were each given one part. Thus, the latter two brothers were correctly called “tetrarchs.”

However, Archelaus was such a brutal ruler that after nine years, the Jews and the Samaritans, who normally hated each other, sent a delegation to Caesar asking for his removal. Archelaus was banished to Vienna and his territory was ruled by Roman governors such as Pontius Pilate (Josephus, Wars of the Jews, 2, 111).

Philip the Tetrarch was given the northern most territories of his father Herod the Great. According to the Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible, “A reasonable assumption places Ituraea northeast of the Sea of Galilee and south of Mt Hermon, but its location and boundaries have been much disputed.” Trachonitis on the other hand was one of five Roman provinces on the far side of the Jordan River. Again, the encyclopedia tells us “Trachonitis was an extremely desolate region northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Its name in Aramaic was Argob, which signified that the region was a ‘heap of stones.’” That doesn’t sound very appealing does it? However, “Ituraea’s location on the lucrative, vital trade route that extended from Tyre through Damascus to the Euphrates made it crucial for the economic stability of the Roman Empire in the east” as well as providing a buffer between the Parthian and Roman Empires (The Lexham Bible Dictionary).

In the New Testament, two places in Philip’s territory play important roles. Bethsaida on the

northeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee was the home to three of Jesus’ disciples (John 1:44; 12:21). Jesus healed a blind man there (Mark 8:22-26) and, according to Luke, Bethsaida was the location for the feeding of the 5,000 (Luke 9:10-17).

Philip’s territory also included Caesarea Philippi - the headwaters of the Jordan River. It was here that Peter confessed Jesus was the Christ (Mark 8:27-33; Matthew 16:13-23).

We know little about Philip’s personal life. He was born in 26 B.C. to Herod the Great and his wife, Cleopatra of Jerusalem. Salome, the famous dancer/daughter of Herodias, Herod Antipas’ wife, married Philip, even though he was 39 years older than she!

Philip, in contrast to his brothers Herod Archelaus and Herod Antipas, seems to have been a humble man. He did not use the title Herod (although many commentators and *Easton’s Bible Encyclopedia* call him *Herod Philip*), and his territory provided Jesus a place to escape the watchful eyes of “that fox,” Herod Antipas (Luke 13:32). We’ll look at him next



## Something to Think About

With all of the concerns about our upcoming election, we can be grateful we live in America. In the Liberian election of 1927 – “the most rigged election ever” – voter turnout was 1,680% of the population, and the winning candidate won with 243,000 votes from 15,000 voters.

## News, Notes & Prayer Requests

Little two-year-old Maren’s second transplant is doing better. She has come home, but is still undergoing extensive care. In addition, her sister and her grandfather have been diagnosed with Covid-19. Please continue to pray for her and her entire family.

John’s best friend from high school, Paul, has been diagnosed with stage 4 pancreatic cancer. Please pray for Paul and his wife, Bernice.

Stan’s brother passed away last week. Let’s remember the family in prayer.

Curtis continues his battle with cancer, but is doing better this week.

Please pray for our schools: our students, teachers, and staff!

This is a challenging time for our country. Let’s remember:

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

1 Timothy 2:1 - 2

## Wise Words

“The main problem with missing church is that soon you won’t.”

“The biggest problem in the church is apathy and nobody cares.”