Luke 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

> Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

Analysis

Luke's detailed chronology—'in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea'—grounds John's ministry in verifiable history. The listing of multiple rulers (Tiberius, Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias) demonstrates historical precision, allowing readers to date events. This emphasizes that Christian faith rests on historical facts occurring in real time and place, not mythological timelessness. Luke's careful dating continues his pattern (2:1-2) of anchoring redemptive events in human history. The multiplicity of political authorities highlights the fragmentation and oppression Israel experienced, setting context for Messiah's coming. God's redemptive work unfolds within, not apart from, human history.

Historical Context

Tiberius's fifteenth year corresponds to approximately AD 28-29. Luke's mention of six political rulers demonstrates the political complexity of first-century Judea—Roman occupation, Herodian client kings, and local governance. This detail allows historical verification and shows God working through complicated political situations.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why is the historical precision of Scripture important for Christian faith?
2. How does God work His purposes through complicated political situations?
3. What does anchoring biblical events in history teach about faith's nature?

Interlinear Text

Ἐν	ἔτει	δὲ	πεντεκαιδεκάτῳ	τῆς	ἡγεμονίας	Τιβερίου
in	year	Now	the fifteenth	G3588	of the reign	of Tiberius
G1722	G2094	G1161	G4003		G2231	G5086

Καίσαρος	ἡγεμονεύοντος	Ποντίου	Πιλάτου	τῆς	Ἰουδαίας
Caesar	being governor	Pontius	Pilate	G3588	of Judaea
G2541	G2230	G4194	G4091		G2449

καὶ	τετραρχοῦντος	τῆς	Γαλιλαίας	Ἡρώδου	Φιλίππου	δὲ
and	being tetrarch	G3588	of Galilee	Herod	Philip	Now
G2532	G5075		G1056	G2264	G5376	G1161

τοῦ	ἀδελφοῦ	αὐτοῦ	τετραρχοῦντος	τῆς	Ἰτουραίας	καὶ
G3588	brother	his	being tetrarch	G3588	of Ituraea	and
	G80	G846	G5075		G2484	G2532

Τραχωνίτιδος	χώρας	καὶ	Λυσανίου	τῆς	Ἀβιληνῆς
of Trachonitis	of the region	and	Lysanias	G3588	of Abilene
G5139	G5561	G2532	G3078		G9

τετραρχοῦντος
being tetrarch
G5075

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 27:2 (Parallel theme): And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

Luke 2:1 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.

Acts 23:26 (Parallel theme): Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix sendeth greeting.

Acts 24:27 (Parallel theme): But after two years Porcius Festus came into Felix' room: and Felix, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

Acts 26:30 (Kingdom): And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

Acts 4:27 (Parallel theme): For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together,

Mark 6:17 (Parallel theme): For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her.

Matthew 14:3 (Parallel theme): For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife.

Matthew 14:1 (Parallel theme): At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

Genesis 49:10 (Parallel theme): The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.