

JESUS' CHILDHOOD

THE LIFE OF CHRIST WITH SAINT LUKE



HEROD THE GREAT & HIS SONS

Read Matthew 2:1-23 & Luke 2:39-40

The evangelists share little about Jesus' childhood in comparison to His ministry, teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection. Many of us would enjoy knowing more about Jesus, but the gospels focus on the good news of Christ saving each and every one of us through His resurrection. This is the most important part and as St. John shares with us, "And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even

1

GOAL

Learn about Jesus' childhood & the roles of the local rulers during His lifetime

2

AT CHURCH

Nicene Creed:
"He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate..."

3

AT HOME

Learn about the First Ecumenical Council & practice the Nicene Creed with our parents



Herod the Great:
The local ruler when Jesus is born; He orders the death of the Holy Innocents



Herod Antipas:
Son of Herod the Great; Orders St. John the Baptist's death; local ruler of Galilee & Perea



Herod Archelaus:
Son of Herod the Great; Removed by the Roman Emperor & later replaced with Pontius Pilate; local ruler of Idumea, Judea & Samaria

the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.” (John 21:25)

In our previous lesson, we learned about the birth of Jesus and all of the events depicted on the icon of the Nativity of Christ. These events did not all happen simultaneously. Instead, the icon tells a collection of events in one “story.”

Today, we are continuing the story of Christ’s childhood as we learn about the Flight into Egypt, the Slaying of the Innocents, His Return, and Jesus Teaching in the Temple at Age 12. But before we go on, let’s learn a little bit about the local ruler at the time of Jesus’ birth. His name was Herod the Great and he was well known for killing anyone he thought *might* be trying to take away his position - including three of his own sons. He was obsessed with not losing his authority.

During this time, Rome was the ruling authority over Jerusalem and all of the surrounding areas. They appointed local rulers who were ultimately in submission to them. These rulers made sure rebellion against Rome did not occur and collected taxes, goods, etc to be sent to support the empire. Rome ruled with a strict hand, however, they allowed the Jews to have their own rules in regard



to the Temple. But there is an important point to remember for our lessons later this year: the Jews were not allowed to execute anyone without Rome’s permission, with one exception - if a Gentile crossed through a certain point on the Temple grounds, the Jews were allowed to kill the person immediately. This rule would be problematic for the Sanhedrin (council of Jewish leaders) later when they seek to crucify Jesus.

Herod the Great was given his title because of the structures he built during his lifetime - one of them was the renovation and expansion of the second Temple. Overall though, he was a ruthless man.

When the magi came to Herod seeking the child who was “born King of the Jews,” he immediately became paranoid that his rule over the area was in

EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The Crucifixion of the King of Glory by Eugenia Constantinou, Chapters 17 & 18

The Gospel of Matthew: Torah for the Church by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pages 36-42

The Gospel of Luke: Good News for the Poor by Fr. Lawrence Farley, pages 71-77

The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Luke by Blessed Theophylact, pages 37-39

[Search and Scriptures Podcast: The Massacre of the Innocents & Flight to Egypt](#) with Dr. Jeannie Constantinou



danger. Herod told the magi to tell him where to find the child after they locate Him, so he could come and worship the child as well. They, however, are warned in a dream not to return to Herod and this absolutely infuriates him when the magi do not come back! He is so angry and paranoid that he orders the death of every male child under the age of two in and around Bethlehem. We remember this event each year on December 29th (the Slaying of the Holy Innocents).

Before Herod carries out this order, Joseph is warned in a dream to leave immediately for Egypt with Mary and Jesus. They stay in Egypt until Herod the Great's death.

Upon their return, Joseph learned that Herod's territory has been split between his sons. Herod the Great's son, Archelaus, was now ruling over Idumea, Judea, and Samaria. He was equally as vicious as his father and not long after this Rome evicts him from his position. (Pontius Pilate will be governor of this area when Jesus is an adult.) Again, Joseph was instructed in a dream not to stay in the region of Judea. So, they kept going and settled in the region of Galilee in the city of Nazareth. Herod Antipas is another son of Herod the Great and is ruling over Galilee now. We will hear more about him as we continue reading the Gospel of Luke.

JESUS TEACHES IN THE TEMPLE AT AGE 12

Read Luke 2:41-52

We get one more glimpse of Jesus' life as a child when he was twelve years old. His family had traveled to Jerusalem from Nazareth for the Passover. This was a yearly feast celebrating their exodus out of Egypt when Moses had liberated the Hebrews and led them out of slavery. It was a

requirement for adult, Jewish men to participate in the feast by traveling to the Temple in Jerusalem each year.

Now remember, they don't have cars, trains, or planes during this time. The journey would have taken about 3 - 4 days to walk from Nazareth to Jerusalem. Family and friends would travel together in one big group. There could easily be dozens of people camping together each night on the way there and back.

After Passover, everyone packed up and got ready for their journey back home. Oftentimes, the women and children would start walking at a slower pace before the men and the men would catch up with them later. Mary and Joseph had both assumed Jesus was with the other person as they walked back to Nazareth. The group had walked the entire day and as they camped for the night, both of them began looking all over for Jesus after they realized He wasn't with the other person, but they couldn't find Him. They now had to wait until morning to go looking for Him, walk an entire day back to Jerusalem, and then had to wait until the following morning before they could go looking for Him in the bustling, big city. Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus in the Temple! He was listening to the teachers and teaching them as well. Everyone was astounded with Jesus' wisdom and knowledge!

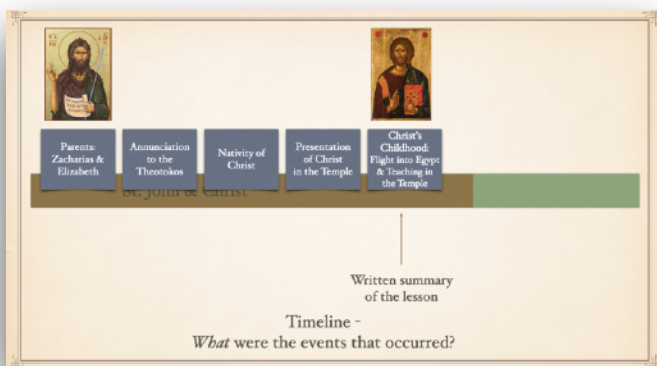
You can imagine how worried Mary would be as she frantically searched for her Son for days. When she found Him, she asked, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

Jesus responds to His mom, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?"

What did Jesus mean by this? Fr. Lawrence Farley explains, “The young Jesus does not answer disrespectfully, but He asks in return how it could be that they would not know where they could find Him. Where else could He be, but in the place where the Law of His Father was being taught? Did they not know that it was necessary for Him, as the designated Messiah, to be in the things of His Father?” (Page 75, *The Gospel of Luke: Good News for the Poor*)

ACTIVITIES

TIMELINE



Write a summary or bullet points on a post-it note about today's lesson. Place the post-it note on your timeline. These summaries can be used for periodic review, especially at the end of the year, as we go over *what events did we study about Christ's life.*

MAPS

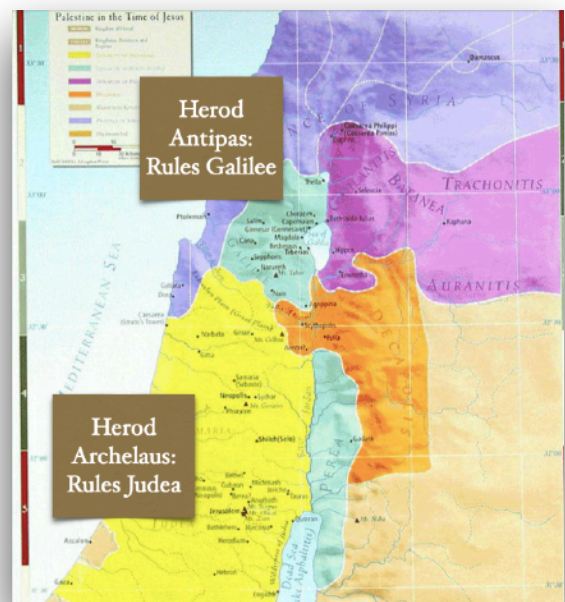
Let's take a look at our world map: Where is Israel located? Where is Egypt located?

Now, let's take a look at our map of Israel: Where are the regions of Judea and Galilee? At the time of Jesus' birth, who was ruling? (Herod the Great) After Herod the Great's death, Joseph was warned in a dream not to stay in Judea because it was still too dangerous. Who was ruling

Judea now? (Herod's son: Archelaus) They continued traveling and settled in the region of Galilee in the city of Nazareth. Who was ruling Galilee now? (Herod's son: Herod Antipas)

Who are the rulers in the area when Joseph, Mary, and Jesus returned from Egypt? **Mark the map of Israel with a post-it note** as we go over *where these events occurred*:

- Ruler of Idumea, Judea, and Samaria: Herod Archelaus (Later it will be Pontius Pilate)
- Ruler of Galilee and Perea: Herod Antipas



SING: MORE HONORABLE THAN THE CHERUBIM / SAVE O LORD YOUR PEOPLE

Middle School: Save O Lord Your People...

High School: More Honorable Than the Cherubim...

JESUS' CHILDHOOD

AT HOME

FOR PARENTS

It is necessary that in the gaze of the parents there should be not only love, which is so natural, but also the faith that in their arms there is something more than a simple child. The parents must have the hope that He Who gave them this treasure under their watch as a vessel of grace might furnish them also with sufficient means to preserve him. Finally, there should be a ceaseless prayer performed in the spirit, aroused by hope according to faith.

St. Theophan the Recluse

Raising Them Right: A Saint's Advice on Raising Children



Photo credit: Jjensen

HOME ACTIVITY #6

Watch and discuss with your child(ren):

- YouTube: [Saint Spyridon the Wonderworker](#) - He attended and spoke at the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea.
- YouTube: [Icons Explained - First Ecumenical Council](#)





