

# THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

THE LIFE OF CHRIST WITH SAINT LUKE



## TRAPS ARE SET BY THE PHARISEES & SADDUCEES

Luke 20:20-40

The Pharisees and Sadducees were two groups of Jews. They had some differing beliefs, but they both agreed that Jesus needed to die. After all, they saw Him as a direct threat to the order and stability of the Temple. Additionally, there was a risk of rebellion amongst the Jews if they followed Jesus instead of their leadership. Rome would intervene if peace was not maintained amongst them and any freedom the Jewish leadership enjoyed would vanish. The



**Sadducee:**  
only used the Torah, did *not* believe in angels or demons, & did *not* believe in life after death



**Pharisee:**  
used both the Torah & oral laws, believed in angels, demons, and life after death



**Passover:**  
in Greek is "Pascha"

1

### GOAL

What were the events leading up to Jesus' arrest?

2

### AT CHURCH

Holy Week Services

3

### AT HOME

Reading the Bible to our kids: making connections between the OT & NT

Pharisees and Sadducees needed to proactively stop all of this from happening! They felt that Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead (after being in the tomb for 4 days), His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and then the audacity He displayed as He cleansed the Temple of the (scamming) money changers and merchants was just too much. It was the last straw in their eyes! Jesus had to go!



Denarius of the Emperor Tiberius shown to Jesus

**The Pharisees** sent their disciples to Jesus with detailed instructions to ask Him, “Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

When they asked, “*Is it lawful,*” they were referring to the *Law of Moses*, not the Roman law. They had reasoned that this was a “yes” or “no” answer - and either way, they had Jesus trapped! It was a no win question.

If Jesus answered, “Yes, it is lawful” then He would be a traitor to all Jews, completely discrediting Him as a religious leader because the Jews believed that God was the only rightful King.

If Jesus answered, “No, it is not lawful” then they could instantly have Him arrested by the Romans because Rome viewed failure to pay taxes as

treason and the Pharisees would willingly testify against Him.

Yet, Christ responds in the most unexpected way. First He points out their evil intentions by publicly calling them hypocrites and then reveals His divine wisdom, “‘Show Me a denarius. Whose image and inscription does it have?’ They answered and said, ‘Caesar’s.’ And He said to them, ‘**Render** therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’”

Render means, “to return.” Christ is telling them that the coins belong to Caesar and therefore they should return what belongs to him, but our far greater concern is our obligations to God.

## EXTENDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

*The Explanation of the Holy Gospel According to Luke* by Blessed Theophylact, covering chapters 20 & 22 of Luke

*The Gospel of Luke: Good News for the Poor* by Fr. Lawrence Farley, covering chapters 20 & 22 of Luke

*The Crucifixion of the King of Glory* by Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou, covering chapters 9, 10, & 28



Next, the **Sadducees** attempt to discredit Jesus. They ask Him a theoretical question concerning a married man dying before having children with his wife. *The goal of their question was not about family dynamics, but rather about the resurrection.* (The Sadducees did not believe in life after death.)

Christ is less harsh with the Sadducees because they were not being as malicious as the Pharisees. Rather, they asked out of ignorance and "only" a desire to discredit Him. Therefore, He tells them they are wrong and goes on to explain that they did not understand the Scriptures which they were reciting from memory to Him. Jesus tells them, "And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what **was said to you by God**, 'I **am** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? **He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.**" God left instruction for the Pharisees in the Scriptures because Jesus told them, "have you not read what was **said to you by God**" - **and instruction for all of us as well** in the Scriptures. Jesus points out the present tense use of "am" instead of "was" indicating that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still alive. There *is* life after death and it is stated so within the Scriptures.

## THE BETRAYAL OF JESUS BY JUDAS ISCARIOT

Luke 22:1-5

The Jewish leaders wanted Jesus gone, but they did not recruit or entice Judas. He went to them, "What will you give me if I deliver Him to you?" (Matt. 26)

"Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people. Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray

Him to them. And they were glad, and agreed to give him money."

Judas betrayed Jesus because of greed. Dr. Constantinou explains, "Judas loved money more than Christ, a naked and uncomfortable truth that should prompt us to ponder our own attachment to money and possessions." *What does greed mean? How does it affect others?*

## PREPARING FOR THE PASSOVER MEAL

Luke 22:7-13

Jesus sends Peter and John into Jerusalem to prepare for the Passover meal. They were instructed to look for the man carrying a pitcher of water. Now, this doesn't seem all that odd to us because we know they didn't have running water during this time, but...it would be very odd to see a man carrying the water because usually this was a woman's chore. This man would definitely stand out to them!

When they find this man, Peter and John are to follow him and then ask the master of the house, "Where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with My disciples?" They would be shown the upper room of the home and could begin their preparations.

For the Passover meal, there were many rules associated with its preparation. For instance, Peter and John would have to bring the sacrificial lamb back to the house from the Temple where it would be specially prepared for Jesus and His disciples. Additionally, the meal needed to be eaten within the city limits of Jerusalem, which necessitated a level of secrecy when arranging for a place for their meal. Jesus was going to be betrayed and arrested. It was just a matter of when would Jesus allow it to happen.

## THE MYSTICAL SUPPER

Luke 22:14-23

Let's learn about the icon:



- **Christ is the central figure** in the icon and He is holding a loaf of bread that He has just broken and distributed to each of the disciples. “And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me.” This is the first Holy Communion.
- **John** (the beloved disciple; the Theologian; the Evangelist) is leaning against Jesus.
- **Judas Iscariot** has his hand holding his piece of bread. “But behold, the hand of My betrayer is with Me on the table.” Luke 22:21
- You can see the **bread** broken and distributed to everyone present and the **wine** as well on the table.
- The curtain draped over the wall indicates this is an indoor event and depicts the “large, furnished **upper room**” where the meal took place.

You will sometimes hear people refer to this event as the Last Supper in reference to this being the last meal Christ had with His disciples. As

Orthodox Christians, we typically refer to this event as the Mystical Supper because of the significance of this being the first time Holy Communion is offered.

### ACTIVITIES:

*You know your class best. What holds their interest? What do they not know yet? What do you feel is most critical to cover?*

- Continue listing the events of Christ's life on the **timeline**
- **Where's Bethany on the map in relation to Jerusalem?** Christ would come into Jerusalem to teach in the Temple during the day when it was too risky for the Jewish leaders to arrest Him publicly, but would leave for Bethany in the evening as He waited for the right time to be arrested. He voluntarily was led to the Cross and voluntarily died for the salvation of each one of us. He was the sacrificial Lamb of God.
- **Visual sequencing of events for Holy Week:** (dry erase boards or paper story boards) After the lesson, ask the students to visually depict the events they learned about today. Then, from their memory of Holy Week, which events come next? They can check their drawings after future lessons.
- **Discussion on the dating of Pascha:** This year, there is 5 weeks difference between Western Easter and Pascha. Why? For our kids, we can explain to them that Pascha always occurs after Passover. Jesus had the Passover meal just before being arrested and then crucified. This year, Passover is April 22nd - 30th. Therefore, Pascha is the Sunday afterwards on May 5th.

# THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

AT HOME

FOR PARENTS

*Judas loved money more than Christ, a naked and uncomfortable truth that should prompt us to ponder our own attachment to money and possessions.*

Eugenia Scarvelis Constantinou  
*The Crucifixion of the King of Glory*

We can have some discussions with our kids about greed. What is greed? What are some examples of greed? Why is it important to think of others and not just ourselves?

Why is repentance so important and how can we prepare our children for Confession?

We can ask them some questions: What is the difference between Peter's denial of Christ and Judas' betrayal of Christ? Peter repented and Judas did not. This is why we encourage our children to seek forgiveness from those they have hurt and repent to God when we go to Confession.

## HOME ACTIVITY #19

**Learn more about the Jewish Passover:** 1) [Jewish Encyclopedia](#), 2) [Encyclopedia Britannica](#)

**Watch "The Ten Commandments" movie** with Charlton Heston as a family. (It is currently available for rent on Amazon.) Then read and discuss Luke 22 and the movie in relation to the Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Draw a connection between the Old Testament always pointing to Christ and Christ is the sacrificial Lamb of God who died for the salvation of all.



This week, we learned about the events that occurred in Luke 20 & 22. Please illustrate / sketch and then label the events you learned about in the storyboard below.

From your memory of Holy Week and reading the Bible, what events come next?

<b>Scene:</b>	<b>Scene:</b>	<b>Scene:</b>

<b>Scene:</b>	<b>Scene:</b>	<b>Scene:</b>

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