



project.org

STUDENT HANDOUT

YELLOW LEVEL
GRADE LEVEL

Who Ruled Judaea?

Grades 5–8 • Social Studies

Vasily Surikov (1848–1916)

ADMIT ONE

NAME

DATE

CLASS

In Jesus’ lifetime, no single person ruled Judaea. An emperor in Rome, kings from Herod’s family and Roman governors all held power there — and each of them made coins. Two thousand years later, those coins are evidence you can hold of who was in charge.

PART 1

01 Two coins, one land

One coin from a king, one from a Roman governor. Read them as **primary sources**.



CASE 6

Herod the Great

COIN Bronze prutah

DATE 40–4 BC

SCRIPTURE Matthew 2:13

Herod ruled Judaea as a client king of Rome from 37 BC until his death in 4 BC. His coins carry **no human image** — Jewish law forbade it — so their symbols show a constant compromise between Roman authority and Jewish practice.



CASE 7

Pontius Pilate

COIN Bronze prutah

DATE 29/30 AD

DATED BY Tiberius’ 16th year

SCRIPTURE Matthew 27:24

Pilate was the Roman prefect of Judaea from 26 to 36 AD. One side shows a simpulum, a Roman ladle for pouring offerings; the other, three bound ears of grain. Both are pagan symbols, **deliberately provocative** on Jewish coinage.

QUESTION

HEROD THE GREAT

PONTIUS PILATE

Who made it, and what was his title?

What is on it — and what is not?

Who used it, and how might they have reacted?

What can this coin *not* tell you?

O2 PART 2 Complete the ruler chart

Fill the blank boxes. Choose the level from: *emperor · Herod's family · Roman governor · neighboring king*.

RULER	TITLE	LEVEL OF POWER	YEARS	NEW TESTAMENT MOMENT
Augustus	Emperor		27 BC–14 AD	Luke 2:1 · the census
Herod the Great			37–4 BC	
Herod Antipas	Tetrarch of Galilee			Luke 23:9 · Jesus is silent
Aretas IV	King of Nabataea		coin 9 BC–40 AD	
Pontius Pilate		Roman governor		
Herod Agrippa I	King of Judaea		from 41 AD	
Claudius			41–54 AD	Acts 18:2 · Jews leave Rome
Porcius Festus			c. 59–62 AD	

O3 PART 3 Layers of power

During Jesus' trial, Pilate sent him to Herod Antipas because Jesus was from Galilee, Antipas's territory (Luke 23:6–12). Years later, Paul went over the governor Festus and appealed to the emperor (Acts 25:10–12). What do these two moments show about who answered to whom in Judaea? Use both.

O4 PART 4 Who counted the years?

Pilate dated his coin by the 16th year of the emperor Tiberius. What does that tell you about who was really in charge of Judaea?

MINI MUSEUM CONNECTION

In Case 6, Herod the Great's prutah shares a case with the coin of Augustus, the emperor of his day. In Case 7, find Pilate's coin and the Tribute Penny. Which of the four would have troubled a faithful Jew most — and why?

minimuseumproject.org/exhibitions/in-their-hands