

Annas in the Bible was a powerful high priest who played key roles in the execution of Jesus Christ. He was appointed high priest around AD 6 by Quirinius, the Roman governor of Syria. He officially served as high priest until AD 15, when he was removed from office by Valerius Gratus, Prefect of Judea. However, Annas continued to exercise considerable power over the high priestly family for years after that: "During the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness" (Luke 3:2). Five of Annas's sons, the most notable being Eleazar, and his son-in-law, Joseph Caiaphas, succeeded Annas in the office of high priest. Caiaphas was, in fact, the official Roman-appointed high priest at the time of Jesus Christ's arrest, trial, and execution: "Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas" (Matthew 26:3).

**OSSUARY OF CAIAPHAS:** A dump truck accidentally smashed through the roof of a tomb in November, 1990, during some work in the Jerusalem Peace Forest, leading to the discovery of the ossuary which contained the bones of the High Priest in the time of Jesus. The Jerusalem Peace Forest is located on the southwest side of old Jerusalem, across the Hinnom Valley from Mt. Zion.

An ossuary is a stone bone box, used for secondary burials. Initially the body is laid to rest in a burial niche. After decomposition, the bones were collected and placed in an ossuary. The most intricately carved ossuary, of this site, was decorated with two circles each containing five rosettes, and carved into an undecorated side appears the name, "*Yehosef bar Qafa*" (Joseph son of Caiaphas). The ossuary contained the remains of six people: two infants, a child aged two to five, a boy aged 13 to 18, an adult female and a man about 60 years old. The latter are believed to be the bones of Caiaphas, before whom Jesus was brought for questioning (Matt 26:3, 57; Luke 3:2; John 11:49, 18:13, 14, 24, 28; Acts 4:6) [14]

In June 2011, archaeologists from Bar-Ilan University and Tel Aviv University announced the recovery of a stolen ossuary, plundered from a tomb in the Valley of Elah. The Israel Antiquities Authority declared it authentic, and expressed regret that it could not be studied *in situ*. It is inscribed with the text: "*Miriam, daughter of Yeshua, son of Caiaphas, Priest of Ma'aziah from Beth 'Imri*". Based on it, Caiaphas can be assigned to the priestly course of Ma'aziah, instituted by king David.

#### High Priests: from the five sons of Ananus (Annas)

- ▣ Ananus ben Seth, 6-15
- ▣ Eleazar ben Ananus, 16-17
- ▣ Joseph ben Caiaphas, 18-36 (son-in-law of the high priest Ananus ben Seth)
- ▣ Jonathan ben Ananus, 36-37
- ▣ Theophilus ben Ananus
- ▣ Matthias ben Ananus, 43
- ▣ Jonathan ben Ananus, 44 (restored)
- ▣ Ananias son of Nedebeus, 46-58<sup>[14]</sup>
- ▣ Ananus ben Ananus, 63

The involvement of the family of Annas may be implied in the plot to kill Lazarus of Bethany in John 12:10. Although Annas is not mentioned by name in the plot to kill Lazarus, several 19th-century writers such as Johann Nepomuk Sepp and the Abbé Drioux, considered that there may be a concealed reference to Annas in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus which points at a "rich man" with five brothers (Luke:16:28). If it is considered that the rich man dressed in purple and fine linen (cf. Exodus 28:8) represents Caiaphas, as figurehead of the Sadducees, then Annas is intended by the "father" in Luke 16:27, and the "five brothers" Luke 16:28 are Annas' five sons. In support of this is the coincidence that the father and five brothers who will not be convinced even if the parable Lazarus is raised from the dead (Luke 16:31) predict that Caiaphas, Annas, and the five sons of Annas would not believe and plotted to have the real Lazarus killed when he was raised (John 12:10).