

Narrator: The Passion of our Lord, Jesus Christ, according to St. Matthew. When it was evening, Jesus took his place with the twelve and while they were eating He said,

Jesus: Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.

Narrator: The disciples became greatly distressed and said one after another “Surely not I Lord?”

Jesus: The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written with me but woe to the one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would have been better for that one not to have been born.

Judas: Surely not I, Rabbi.

Jesus: You have said so. Take, eat, this is My body which is given up for you whenever you eat this, do it in remembrance of me. Drink this all of you, this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of Me.

Peter: The others may leave you Lord, but I will not, even if I have to die.

Jesus: Truly I tell you, this very night before the cock crows, you will deny Me three times.

Narrator: Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and said to his disciples:

Jesus: Sit there, while I go over there and pray.

Narrator: He took with him Peter, James and John.

Jesus: I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here and stay awake with me. My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Yet not what I want but what You want. So you could not stay awake with Me, not one hour? Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it; Your will be done. Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See the hour is at hand! And the Son of Man is betrayed into the hand of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See my betrayer is at hand.

Judas: The one I kiss is the man, arrest Him. Greetings Rabbi.

Jesus: Friend, do what you are here to do. Put your sword back into its place, for all who take the sword, will die by the sword. Do you think I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will not send Me twelve legions of angels? But how then will the Scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen this way? Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as if I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the Temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled.

Narrator: Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas, the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. Now the chief priest and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus, so that they might put him to death. Though many false witnesses came forward, they at last found two who agreed.

Servant Girl: This fellow said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days."

Caiaphas: Have you no answer? I put you under oath under the living God. Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.

Jesus: You have said so. But I tell you from now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Caiaphas: He has blasphemed. Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?

*****Congregation:** He deserves death!

Narrator: They spat in his face and struck him and some slapped him saying:

Jewish man: Prophecy to us, you messiah. Who is it that struck you?

Servant Girl: You also were with Jesus the Galilean.

Peter: I do not know what you are talking about.

Servant Girl: This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.

Peter: I do not know the man.

Jewish Man: Certainly you also were one of them, for your accent betrays you.

Peter: I swear to you, I do not know the man.

Narrator: At that moment the cock crowed. When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate, the governor.

Pilate: Are you the king of the Jews?

Jesus: You say so.

Pilate: Do you hear how many accusations they make against you? As you know, it is my custom to release to you one prisoner on your Passover. Who do you want me to release for you? The criminal Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah? Which of the two do you want to release to you?

Caiaphas: Barabbas!

*****Congregation:** Barabbas!

Pilate: Then what should I do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah?

*****Congregation:** Let Him be crucified!

Pilate: Why? What evil has He done?

*****Congregation:** Let him be crucified!

Pilate: I am innocent of this man's blood. See to it yourselves.

*****Congregation:** His blood be on us and on our children.

-----**Congregation stands**-----

Narrator: So he released Barabbas for them. After flogging Jesus, he handed Him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They knelt before him and mocked Him saying:

Roman Soldier: Hail, King of the Jews!

Narrator: Then they led Him away to crucify Him. When they came to a place called Golgotha they offered Him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but He would not drink it. When they crucified Him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots. Over His head they put the charge against Him; which read, "This is Jesus, King of the Jews." Those who passed by derided Him, shaking their heads and saying,:

Jewish Man: You who would destroy the Temple, and build it in three days; save yourself. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.

Caiaphas: He saved others, but He cannot save Himself. He trusts in God, let God deliver Him now if He wants to. For He said "I am God's Son."

Narrator: From noon on darkness covered the whole land until three in the afternoon, at about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice:

Jesus: Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?

Narrator: "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?"

Servant Girl 2: This man is calling for Elijah.

Narrator: The soldiers offered Him something to drink.

Jewish Man: Wait, Let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him.

Narrator: Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed His last. (pause) At that moment the curtain of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After His resurrection, they came out of the tombs and entered the Holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those with him who were keeping watch over Jesus saw what had taken place, they were terrified and said:

*****Congregation:** Truly this Man was God's Son.