

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

- Narrator** The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kedron valley. There was a garden there, and he went into it with his disciples. Judas the traitor knew the place well, since Jesus had often met his disciples there, and he brought the cohort to this place together with a detachment of guards sent by the chief priests and the Pharisees, all with lanterns and torches and weapons. Knowing everything that was going to happen to him, Jesus then came forward and said,
- Jesus** Who are you looking for?
- Narrator** They answered,
- Crowd** Jesus the Nazarene.
- Narrator** He said,
- Jesus** I am he.
- Narrator** Now Judas the traitor was standing among them. When Jesus said, 'I am he', they moved back and fell to the ground. He asked them a second time,
- Jesus** Who are you looking for?
- Narrator** They said,
- Crowd** Jesus the Nazarene.
- Narrator** Jesus replied,
- Jesus** I have told you that I am he. If I am the one you are looking for, let these others go.
- Narrator** This was to fulfil the words he had spoken: 'Not one of those you gave me have I lost'.
Simon Peter, who carried a sword, drew it and wounded the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Jesus said to Peter,
- Jesus** Put your sword back in its scabbard; am I not to drink the cup that the Father has given me?

Narrator The cohort and its captain and the Jewish guards seized Jesus and bound him. They took him first to Annas, because Annas was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was high priest that year. It was Caiaphas who had suggested to the Jews, 'It is better for one man to die for the people'.

Simon Peter, with another disciple, followed Jesus. This disciple, who was known to the high priest, went with Jesus into the high priest's palace, but Peter stayed outside the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out, spoke to the woman who was keeping the door and brought Peter in. The maid on duty at the door said to Peter,

Maid Aren't you another of that man's disciples?

Narrator He answered,

Peter I am not.

Narrator Now it was cold, and the servants and guards had lit a charcoal fire and were standing there warming themselves; so Peter stood there too, warming himself with the others. The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered,

Jesus I have spoken openly for all the world to hear; I always taught in the synagogue and in the Temple where all the Jews meet together: I have said nothing in secret. But why ask me? Ask my hearers what I taught: they know what I said.

Narrator At these words, one of the guards standing by gave Jesus a slap in the face, saying,

Guard Is that the way to answer the high priest?

Narrator Jesus replied,

Jesus If there is something wrong in what I said, point it out; but if there is no offense in it, why do you strike me?

Narrator Then Annas sent him, still bound, to Caiaphas, the high priest.

As Simon Peter stood there warming himself, someone said to him,

Bystander Aren't you another of his disciples?

Narrator He denied it saying,

Peter I am not.

Narrator One of the high priest's servants, a relation of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, said,

Servant Didn't I see you in the garden with him?

Narrator Again Peter denied it; and at once a cock crew.

They then led Jesus from the house of Caiaphas to the Praetorium. It was now morning. They did not go into the Praetorium themselves or they would be defiled and unable to eat the Passover. So, Pilate came outside to them and said,

Pilate What charge do you bring against this man?

Narrator They replied,

Crowd If he were not a criminal, we should not be handing him over to you.

Narrator Pilate said,

Pilate Take him yourselves and try him by your own Law.

Narrator The Jews answered,

Crowd We are not allowed to put a man to death.

Narrator This was to fulfil the words Jesus had spoken indicating the way he was going to die.

So Pilate went back into the Praetorium and called Jesus to him, and asked,

Pilate Are you the king of the Jews

Narrator Jesus replied,

Jesus Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others spoken to you about me?

Narrator Pilate answered,

Pilate Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?

Narrator Jesus replied,

Jesus Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent me being surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind.

Narrator Pilate said,

Pilate So you are a king then?

Narrator Jesus answered,

Jesus It is you who say it. Yes, I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this; to bear witness to the truth, and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.

Narrator Pilate said,

Pilate Truth? What is that?

Narrator And with that he went out again to the Jews and said,

Pilate I find no case against him. But according to a custom of yours I should release one prisoner at the Passover; would you like me, then, to release the king of the Jews?

Narrator At this they shouted:

Crowd Not this man, but Barabbas.

Narrator Barabbas was a brigand.

Pilate then had Jesus taken away and scourged; and after this, the soldiers twisted some thorns into a crown and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple robe. They kept coming up to him and saying,

Crowd Hail, king of the Jews!

Narrator And they slapped him in the face.

Pilate came outside and said to them,

Pilate Look, I am going to bring him out to you to let you see that I find no case.

Narrator Jesus then came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said,

Pilate Here is the man.

Narrator When they saw him the chief priests and the guards shouted,

Crowd Crucify him! Crucify him!

Narrator Pilate said,

Pilate Take him yourselves and crucify him: I can find no case against him.

Narrator Then Jews replied,

Crowd We have a Law, and according to the Law he ought to die, because he has claimed to be the son of God.

Narrator When Pilate heard them say this his fears increased. Re-entering the Praetorium, he said to Jesus,

Pilate Where do you come from?

Narrator But Jesus made no answer. Pilate then said to him,

Pilate Are you refusing to speak to me? Surely you know I have power to release you and I have power to crucify you?

Narrator Jesus replied,

Jesus You would have no power over me if it had not been given you from above; that is why the one who handed me over to you has the greater guilt.

Narrator From that moment Pilate was anxious to set him free, but the Jews shouted,

Crowd If you set him free you are no friend of Caesar's; anyone who makes himself king is defying Caesar.

Narrator Hearing these words, Pilate had Jesus brought out, and seated himself on the chair of judgement at a place called the Pavement, in Hebrew Gabbatha. It was Passover Preparation Day, about the sixth hour. Pilate said to the Jews,

Pilate Here is your king.

Narrator They said,
Crowd Take him away, take him away. Crucify him!

Narrator Pilate said,

Pilate Do you want me to crucify your king?

Narrator The chief priests answered,

Crowd We have no king except Caesar.

Narrator So in the end Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

They then took charge of Jesus, and carrying his own cross he went out of the city to the place of the skull, or, as it was called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified him with two others, one on either side with Jesus in the middle. Pilate wrote out a notice and had it fixed to the cross; it ran: 'Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews'. This notice was read by many of the Jews, because the place where Jesus was crucified was not far from the city, and the writing was in Hebrew, Latin and Greek. So the Jewish chief priests said to Pilate,

Crowd You should not write 'King of the Jews', but 'This man said: I am King of the Jews'.

Narrator Pilate answered,

Pilate What I have written, I have written.

Narrator When the soldiers had finished crucifying Jesus they took his clothing and divided it into four shares, one for each soldier. His undergarment was seamless, woven in one piece from neck to hem; so they said to one another,

Crowd Instead of tearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it.

Narrator In this way the words of scripture were fulfilled:

They shared out my clothing among them.

They cast lots for my clothes.

This is exactly what the soldiers did.

Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Seeing his mother and the disciple he loved standing near her, Jesus said to his mother,

Jesus **Woman, this is your son.**

Narrator Then to the disciple he said,

Jesus **This is your mother.**

Narrator And from that moment the disciple made a place for her in his home.

After this, Jesus knew that everything had now been completed, and to fulfil the scripture perfectly he said:

Jesus **I am thirsty**

Narrator A jar full of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in vinegar on a hyssop stick they held it up to his mouth. After Jesus had taken the vinegar he said,

Jesus **It is accomplished;**

Narrator And bowing his head he gave up the spirit.

All kneel and pause a moment

Narrator It was Preparation Day, and to prevent the bodies remaining on the cross during the sabbath – since that sabbath was a day of special solemnity – the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken away. Consequently the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with him and then of the other. When they came to Jesus, they found that he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water. This is the evidence of one who saw it – trustworthy evidence, and he knows he speaks the truth – and he gives it so that you may believe as well. Because all this happened to fulfil the words of scripture:

Not one bone of his will be broken, and again, in another place scripture says:

They will look on the one whom they have pierced.

After this, Joseph of Arimathaea, who was a disciple of Jesus – though a secret one because he was afraid of the Jews – asked Pilate to let him remove the body of Jesus. Pilate gave permission, so they came and took it away. Nicodemus came as well the same one who had first come to Jesus at night-time and he brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, weighing about a hundred pounds. They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, following the Jewish burial custom. At the place where he had been crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been buried. Since it was the Jewish Day of Preparation and the tomb was near at hand, they laid Jesus there.