

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew Script

Matthew 26:1—27:2; 27:11–66

Eight Voices: Narrator, Jesus, Judas, Peter, Caiaphas, Pilate, Voice 1, Voice 2

NARRATOR: Now when Jesus had finished all these words, he said to his disciples,

JESUS: “You know that after two days Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

NARRATOR: Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered together in the courtyard of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas. And they took counsel that they might arrest Jesus by deceit and kill him. But they said,

VOICE 1: “Not at the feast, lest there be a riot among the people.”

NARRATOR: Now when Jesus was in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment. And she poured it on his head as he reclined at table. But when his disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying,

VOICE 2: “Why this waste? For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum and given to the poor.”

NARRATOR: When Jesus perceived it, he said to them,

JESUS: “Why do you trouble the woman? She has done a good work for me. For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. When she poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Amen, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be spoken of, in memory of her.”

NARRATOR: Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said,

JUDAS: “What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?”

NARRATOR: And they agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver. And from that time, he sought an opportunity to betray him. Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying,

VOICE 2: “Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?”

NARRATOR: And he said,

JESUS: “Go into the city to a certain person and say to him, ‘The Teacher says, My time is at hand. I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.’”

NARRATOR: And the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover. Now when it was evening, he reclined at table with the twelve. And while they were eating, he said,

JESUS: “Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me.”

NARRATOR: And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each one of them began to say to him,

VOICE 2: “Surely not I, Lord?”

NARRATOR: And he answered and said,

JESUS: “The one who dips his hand in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born.”

NARRATOR: Then Judas, his betrayer, answered and said,

JUDAS: “Surely not I, Rabbi?”

NARRATOR: He said to him,

JESUS: “You have said it.”

NARRATOR: And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, and said,

JESUS: “Take, eat; this is my body.”

NARRATOR: And he took a cup, and giving thanks, he gave it to them, saying,

JESUS: “Drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. But I say to you, from now on, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father.”

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NARRATOR: And after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them,

JESUS: “This very night you will all fall away because of me. For it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you into Galilee.”

NARRATOR: But Peter answered and said to him,

PETER: “If all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.”

NARRATOR: Jesus said to him,

JESUS: “Amen, I say to you, on this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.”

NARRATOR: Peter said to him,

PETER: “Even if I must die with you, I will never deny you.”

NARRATOR: And all the disciples said likewise. Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane and said to the disciples,

JESUS: “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.”

NARRATOR: And he took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him, and he began to be sorrowful and distressed. Then he said to them,

JESUS: “My soul is very sorrowful, even unto death. Remain here, and keep watch with me.”

NARRATOR: And going a short distance away, he fell on his face and prayed, saying,

JESUS: “My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, not as I will, but as you will.”

NARRATOR: And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter,

JESUS: “So you could not keep watch with me one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

NARRATOR: He went away again a second time and prayed, saying,

JESUS: My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to pass from me unless I drink it, your will be done.”

NARRATOR: And he came and found them sleeping again, for their eyelids were heavy. And he left them and went away once more and prayed a third time, saying the same words. Then he came to the disciples and said to them,

JESUS: “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Behold, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

NARRATOR: While he was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, came with a great crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now his betrayer gave them a sign, saying,

JUDAS: “Whoever I kiss is the one; arrest him.”

NARRATOR: And immediately he came to Jesus, and said,

JUDAS: “Hail, Rabbi!”

NARRATOR: And he kissed him. And Jesus said to him,

JESUS: “Friend, why are you here?”

NARRATOR: Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. And behold, one of those with Jesus stretched out his hand, drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Then Jesus said to him,

JESUS: “Put your sword back in its place! For all who take up the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think I am not able to call upon my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say that it must happen this way?”

NARRATOR: In that hour Jesus said to the crowds,

JESUS: “Have you come out with swords and clubs to seize me, as though I were a robber? Day after day I sat teaching in the temple, and you did not arrest me. But all this has taken place so that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled.”

NARRATOR: Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. Then those who arrested Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were gathered. But Peter followed him from a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest, and he went inside and sat with the servants, to see the end. Now the chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were seeking false testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. Finally, two came forward and said,

VOICE 1: “This man said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’”

NARRATOR: And the high priest rose up and said to him,

CAIAPHAS: “Have you no answer to what these men testify against you?”

NARRATOR: But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him,

CAIAPHAS: “I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.”

NARRATOR: Jesus said to him,

JESUS: “You have said it. But I say to 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.”

NARRATOR: Then the high priest tore his garments, saying,

CAIAPHAS: “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? See now, you have heard his blasphemy. What is your verdict?”

NARRATOR: They answered and said,

VOICE 1, VOICE 2: “He deserves death.”

NARRATOR: Then they spat in his face, and beat him, and struck him, saying,

VOICE 1, VOICE 2: “Prophecy to us, you Christ! Who is it that struck you?”

NARRATOR: Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying,

VOICE 1: “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.”

NARRATOR: But he denied it before them all, saying,

PETER: “I do not know what you are talking about.”

NARRATOR: And when he went out to the gateway, another servant girl saw him and said to those who were there,

VOICE 2: “This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.”

NARRATOR: And again he denied it with an oath,

PETER: “I do not know the man!”

NARRATOR: After a little while, those who were standing by came and said to Peter,

VOICE 1: “Truly you also are one of them, for your accent gives you away!”

NARRATOR: Then he began to curse and to swear,

PETER: “I do not know the man!”

NARRATOR: And immediately the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly. When it was morning, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And when they had bound him, they led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

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NARRATOR: Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, saying,

PILATE: “Are you indeed the King of the Jews?”

NARRATOR: And Jesus said to him,

JESUS: “You say so.”

NARRATOR: And when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him,

PILATE: “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?”

NARRATOR: But he gave no answer to him, not even to one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release one prisoner for the crowd, whomever they wanted. And they had at that time a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they were gathered together, Pilate said to them,

PILATE: “Whom do you want me to release for you? Barabbas? Or Jesus, who is called Christ?”

NARRATOR: For he knew they had handed him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, saying,

VOICE 1: “Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him.”

NARRATOR: But the chief priests and elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them,

PILATE: “Which of the two do you want me to release for you?”

NARRATOR: They said,

VOICE 1, VOICE 2: “Barabbas!”

NARRATOR: Pilate said to them,

PILATE: “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?”

NARRATOR: They all said,

VOICE 1, VOICE 2: “Let him be crucified!”

NARRATOR: But the governor said,

PILATE: “Why, what evil has he done?”

NARRATOR: But they shouted all the louder, saying,

VOICE 1, VOICE 2: “Let him be crucified!”

NARRATOR: When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing, but rather that a riot was breaking out, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, saying,

PILATE: “I am innocent of this man’s blood. See to it yourselves!”

NARRATOR: Then all the people answered and said,

VOICE 1, VOICE 2: “His blood be upon us and upon our children.”

NARRATOR: Then he released Barabbas to them. And after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the praetorium and gathered the whole cohort to him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe around him. And weaving a crown of thorns, they placed it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And they knelt before him and mocked him, saying,

VOICE 1, VOICE 2: “Hail, King of the Jews!”

NARRATOR: And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And after they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe, put his own garments on him, and led him away to crucify him. As they came out, they found a man of Cyrene named Simon. This man they forced to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means “the Place of the Skull,” they gave him wine mixed with gall to drink. But when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments by casting lots. And they sat down and kept watch over him there. And they placed over his head the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on his right hand and one on his left. And those who passed by blasphemed him, wagging their heads and saying,

VOICE 1: “You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, then come down from the cross!”

NARRATOR: In the same way, the chief priests also mocked him along with the scribes and elders, saying,

VOICE 2: “He saved others; he cannot save himself! If he is the King of Israel, let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he wants him! For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

NARRATOR: The robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. Now from the sixth hour, there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying,

JESUS: “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*”

NARRATOR: that is,

JESUS: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

NARRATOR: When some of those standing there heard it, they said,

VOICE 2: “This man is calling for Elijah.”

NARRATOR: And immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink. But the rest said,

VOICE 1: “Wait! Let us see if Elijah will come to save him.”

NARRATOR: And when Jesus had cried out again with a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

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NARRATOR: And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs were also opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And after his resurrection, they came out of the tombs and went into the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said,

VOICE 1: “Truly this was the Son of God!”

NARRATOR: And many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and ministered to him were there, looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathea named Joseph, who was himself a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked him for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded it to be given. And taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in a clean linen shroud and placed it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. On the next day, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate, saying,

VOICE 1: “We remember, lord, how that deceiver said while he was still living, ‘After three days I will rise.’ Therefore command that the grave be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples come and steal the body and say to the people, ‘He is risen from the dead.’ Then the last deception will be worse than the first.”

NARRATOR: Pilate said to them,

PILATE: “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, and make it as secure as you can.”

NARRATOR: So they went with the guard and secured the tomb, putting a seal on the stone.