

**THE PASSION OF OUR LORD**  
**ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 26:1-27:66**

**The Plot Against Jesus**

- Narrator: Jesus said to his disciples:
- Jesus: In two days, as you know, it will be the Feast of  
Passover, and the Son of Man will be handed over to  
be nailed to the cross.
- Narrator: Then the chief priests and the Jewish elders met  
together in the palace of Caiaphas, the High Priest,  
and made plans to arrest Jesus secretly and put him to  
death. "We must not do it during the feast," they  
said, "or the people will riot."

**Jesus Anointed at Bethany**

- Narrator: While Jesus was at the house of Simon the leper, in  
Bethany, a woman came to him with an alabaster jar  
filled with an expensive perfume, which she poured  
on Jesus' head as he was eating.
- Disciples: Why all this waste? This perfume could have been  
sold for a large amount and the money given to the  
poor!
- Narrator: Jesus was aware of what they were saying and said to  
them:
- Jesus: Why are you bothering this woman? It is a fine and  
beautiful thing that she has done for me. You will  
always have poor people with you, but I will not be  
with you always. What she did was to pour this  
perfume on my body to get me ready for burial. Now,  
remember this! Wherever this gospel is preached, all  
over the world, what she has done will be told in  
memory of her.

### Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

- Narrator: Then one of the twelve disciples – the one named Judas Iscariot – went to the chief priests and said:
- Judas: What will you give me if I hand Jesus over to you?
- Narrator: So they counted out thirty silver coins and gave them to him. From then on Judas was looking for a good chance to betray Jesus.

### Jesus Eats the Passover Meal with His Disciples

- Narrator: On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus and asked him,
- Disciples: Where do you want us to get the Passover supper ready for you?
- Jesus: Go to a certain man in the city, and tell him: “The Teacher says, ‘My hour has come; my disciples and I will celebrate the Passover at your house.’”
- Narrator: The disciples did as Jesus had told them and prepared the Passover supper. When it was evening Jesus and the twelve disciples sat down to eat. During the meal Jesus said,
- Jesus: I tell you, one of you will betray me.
- Narrator: The disciples were very upset and began to ask him, one after the other,
- Disciples: Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?
- Jesus: One who dips his bread in the dish with me will betray me. The Son of Man will die as the Scriptures say he will, but how terrible for that man who will betray the Son of Man! It would have been better for that man if he had never been born!

Judas: Surely you don't mean me, Teacher?

Jesus: So you say.

### The Lord's Supper

Narrator: While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, gave a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples.

Jesus: Take and eat it, this is my body.

Narrator: Then he took the cup, gave thanks to God, and gave it to them.

Jesus: Drink it, all of you, for this is my blood, which seals God's covenant, by blood poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink this wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in my Father's Kingdom.

Narrator: Then they sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives.

### Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

Jesus: This very night all of you will run away and leave me, for the scripture says, "God will kill the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered." But after I am raised to life I will go to Galilee ahead of you.

Peter: I will never leave you, even though all the rest do!

Jesus: Remember this! Before the rooster crows tonight you will say three times that you do not know me.

Peter: I will never say I do not know you, even if I have to die with you!

Narrator: And all the disciples said the same thing.

## Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

- Narrator: Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them,
- Jesus: Sit here while I go over there and pray.
- Narrator: He took with him Peter, and Zebedee's two sons. Grief and anguish came over him and he said to them,
- Jesus: The sorrow in my heart is so great that it almost crushes me. Stay here and watch with me.
- Narrator: He went a little farther on, threw himself face down to the ground, and prayed,
- Jesus: My Father, if it is possible, take this cup away from me! But not what I want, but what you want.
- Narrator: Then he returned to the three disciples and found them asleep; and he said to Peter:
- Jesus: How is it that you three were not able to watch with me for one hour? Keep watch, and pray you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
- Narrator: Again a second time Jesus went away and prayed,
- Jesus: My Father, if this cup cannot be taken away unless I drink it, your will be done.
- Narrator: He returned once more and found the disciples asleep; they could not keep their eyes open. Again Jesus left them, went away and prayed a third time saying the same words. Then he returned to the disciples and said:
- Jesus: Are you still sleeping and resting? Look! The hour has come for the Son of Man to be handed over to the power of sinful men. Rise, let us go. Look, here is the man who is betraying me!

## The Arrest of Jesus

- Narrator: He was still talking when Judas, one of the twelve disciples arrived. With him was a large crowd carrying swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and the Jewish elders. The traitor had given the crowd a signal:
- Judas: The man I kiss is the one you want. Arrest him!
- Narrator: When Judas arrived he went straight to Jesus and said,
- Judas: Peace be with you, Teacher, and kissed him.
- Jesus: Be quick about it friend.
- Narrator: Then they came up, arrested Jesus, and held him tight. One of those who were with Jesus drew his sword and struck at the High Priest's slave, cutting off his ear. Then Jesus said to him:
- Jesus: Put your sword back in its place, for all who take the sword will die by the sword. Don't you know that I could call on my Father for help and at once he would send me more than twelve armies of angels? But in that case, how could the Scriptures come true that say it must happen in this way? Did you have to come with swords and clubs to capture me as though I were an outlaw? Every day I sat down and taught in the Temple, and you did not arrest me. But all this has happened to make come true what the Prophets wrote in the Scriptures.
- Narrator: Then all the disciples left him and ran away.

## Jesus Before the Council

Narrator: Those who had arrested Jesus took him to the house of Caiaphas, the High Priest, where the teachers of the Law and the elders had gathered together. Peter followed him from a distance, as far as the courtyard of the High Priest's house. He went into the courtyard and sat down with the guards, to see how it would all come out. The chief priests and the whole Council tried to find some false evidence against Jesus to put him to death; but they could not find any, even though many came up and told lies about him. Finally two men stepped forward and said,

Two Men: This man said, "I am able to tear down God's Temple and three days later build it back up."

High Priest: Have you no answer to this accusation against you?

Narrator: But Jesus kept quiet.

High Priest: In the name of the living God, I now put you on oath: tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.

Jesus: So you say. But I tell all of you: from this time on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right side of the Almighty, and coming on the clouds of heaven!

Narrator: At this the High Priest tore his clothes.

High Priest: Blasphemy! We don't need any more witnesses! Right here you have heard his wicked words! What do you think?

Council: He is guilty and must die.

Narrator: Then they spat in his face and beat him; and those who slapped him said,

Council: Prophecy for us, Messiah! Tell us who hit you!



### Peter Denies Jesus

Narrator: Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard when one of the High Priest's servant girls came to him and said,

Girl: You too were with Jesus of Galilee.

Peter: I don't know what you are talking about.

Narrator: Peter went out to the entrance to the courtyard. Another servant girl saw him and said to the men there.

Girl: He was with Jesus of Nazareth.

Peter: I swear that I don't know that man!

Narrator: After a little while the men standing there came to Peter.

Men: Of course you are one of them. After all, the way you speak gives you away!

Peter: May God punish me if I am not telling the truth! I do not know that man!

Narrator: Just then a rooster crowed, and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him, "Before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you do not know me." He went out and wept bitterly.

### Jesus Taken to Pilate

Narrator: Early in the morning all the chief priests and the Jewish elders made their plan against Jesus to put him to death. They put him in chains, took him, and handed him over to Pilate, the Governor.

## The Death of Judas

- Narrator: When Judas, the traitor, saw that Jesus had been condemned, he repented and took back the thirty silver coins to the chief priests and the elders.
- Judas: I have sinned by betraying an innocent man to death.
- Chief Priests: What do we care about that? That is your business!
- Narrator: Judas threw the money into the sanctuary and left them; then he went off and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the money.
- Chief Priests: This is blood money and it is against our Law to put it in the Temple treasury.
- Narrator: After reaching an agreement about it, they used the money to buy Potter's Field as a cemetery for foreigners. That is why that field is called "Field of Blood" to this very day. Then what the prophet Jeremiah had said came true: "They took the thirty silver coins (the amount the people of Israel had agree to pay him) and used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

## Pilate Questions Jesus

- Pilate: Are you the king of the Jews?
- Jesus: So you say.
- Narrator: He said nothing, however, to the accusations of the chief priests and elders.
- Pilate: Don't you hear all these things they accuse you of?
- Narrator: But Jesus refused to answer a single word, so that the Governor was greatly surprised.



## Jesus Sentenced to Death

- Narrator: At every Passover Feast the Governor was in the habit of setting free any prisoner the crowd asked for. At that time there was a well-known prisoner named Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pilate asked them,
- Pilate: Which one do you want me to set free for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus called the Christ?
- Narrator: He knew very well that they had handed Jesus over to him because they were jealous. While Pilate was sitting in the judgment hall his wife sent him a message: "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, because in a dream last night I suffered much on account of him." The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask Pilate to set Barabbas free and have Jesus put to death.
- Pilate: Which one of these two do you want me to set free for you?
- Crowd: Barabbas!
- Pilate: What, then, shall I do with Jesus called the Christ?
- Crowd: Nail him to the cross!
- Pilate: What crime has he committed?
- Crowd: NAIL HIM TO THE CROSS!
- Narrator: When Pilate saw it was no use to go on, but that a riot might break out, he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said,
- Pilate: I am not responsible for the death of this man! This is your doing!

Crowd: Let the punishment for his death fall on us and on our children!

Narrator: Then Pilate set Barabbas free for them; he had Jesus whipped and handed him over to be nailed to the cross.

### The Soldiers Make Fun of Jesus

Narrator: Then Pilate's soldiers took Jesus into the Governor's palace and the whole company gathered around him. They stripped off his clothes and put a scarlet robe on him. Then they made a crown out of thorny branches and put it on his head and put a stick in his right hand; then they knelt before him and made fun of him.

Soldiers: Long live the King of the Jews!

Narrator: They spat on him, and took the stick and hit him over the head. When they finished making fun of him, they took the robe off and put his own clothes back on him and then led him out to nail him to the cross.

### Jesus Nailed to the Cross

Narrator: As they were going out they met a man from Cyrene named Simon and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross. They came to a place called Golgotha, which means "The Place of the Skull." There they offered him wine to drink mixed with gall; after tasting it, however, he would not drink it.

They nailed him to the cross and then divided his clothes among them by throwing dice. After that they sat there and watched him. Above his head they put the written notice of the accusation against him: "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Then they nailed two bandits to crosses with Jesus, one on his right and the other on his left.

- Crowd: You were going to tear down the Temple and build it up in three days! Save yourself, if you are God's Son! Come on down from the cross!
- Chief Priests: He saved others but he cannot save himself! Isn't he the King of Israel? If he will come down off the cross now, we will believe in him! He trusts in God and says he is God's Son. Well, then, let us see if God wants to save him now!
- Narrator: Even the bandits who had been crucified with him insulted him in the same way.

### The Death of Jesus

- Narrator: At noon the whole country was covered with darkness which lasted for three hours. At about three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud shout,
- Jesus: My God, my God, why did you abandon me?
- Crowd: He is calling for Elijah!
- Narrator: One of the people ran up at once, took a sponge, soaked it in wine, put it on the end of a stick and tried to make him drink it.
- Crowd: Wait, let us see if Elijah is coming to save him!
- Narrator: Jesus again gave a loud cry, and breathed his last. Then the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split apart, the graves broke open and many of God's people who had died were raised to life. They left the graves; and after Jesus rose from the dead they went into the Holy City where many people saw them. When the army officer and the soldiers with him who were watching Jesus saw the earthquake and everything else that happened, they were terrified and said,

Army Officer: He really was the Son of God.

Narrator: There were many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee and helped him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

### The Burial of Jesus

Narrator: When it was evening, a rich man from Arimathea arrived; his name was Joseph, and he also was a disciple of Jesus. He went into the presence of Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate gave orders for the body to be given to Joseph. So Joseph took it, wrapped it in a new linen sheet, and placed it in his own grave, which he had just recently dug out of the rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the grave and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there, facing the grave.

### The Guard at the Grave

Narrator: On the next day – that is, the day following Friday – the chief priests and the Pharisees met with Pilate and said:

Chief Priests: Sir, we remember that while that liar was still alive he said, "I will be raised to life after three days." Give orders, then, for the grave to be safely guarded until the third day, so that his disciples will not be able to go and steal him, and then tell the people, "He was raised from death." This last lie would be even worse than the first one.

Pilate: Take a guard, go and guard the grave as best you can.

Narrator: So they left, and made the grave secure by putting a seal on the stone and leaving the guard on watch.

**PLEASE RETURN THIS FOLDER TO THE USHER'S TABLE**