

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St. John

(18:33-19:37)

Narrator: So Pilate went back into the Praetorium and called Jesus to him. He 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 my 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: "What is truth?"

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

Pilate: "I find no case against him. But according to 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:

People: "Not this man, but Barabbas."

Narrator: Barabbas had taken part in a rebellion.

Narrator: 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:

People: "Hail, king of the Jews!"

Narrator: And they slapped his face. Pilate came outside again 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:

People: "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

Narrator: Pilate said:

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

Narrator: The Jews replied:

People: "We have a Law, and according to that 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:

People: "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 judgment 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:

People: "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:

People: "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 read: "Jesus of Nazareth, 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,

People: "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, "Instead of tearing it, let's throw dice to decide who is to have it." 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 fulfill the scripture perfectly he said:

Jesus: "I am thirsty."

Narrator: A jar full of vinegar stood there, so putting a sponge soaked in the 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 his spirit.

(Silence is observed: the final Tenebrae candle is extinguished.)

It was Preparation Day, and to prevent the bodies remaining on the crosses 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 the other. When they came to Jesus, they found 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 fulfill 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."