

PASSION WEEK READING

(A Readers' Theatre adaptation of a harmony of the Gospels. Prepared by E. Potter)

Production notes

This is a Reader's Theater adaptation of a harmony of the four Gospel accounts of Passion Week from Palm Sunday through the burial of Christ. It is designed to be read in Churches and other types of meetings and is suitable for filming. No words have been added to the Scripture text but some repetitions have been left out. The narrators' roles are substantial but several instances of "he said", "they replied" etc. have been removed. The NIV translation has been used. The reading will work with other translations and in other languages.

No costumes, lighting, makeup, music or movement are required for the reading, although these things can be added if desired. The idea is to have a drama that is doable and effective with a minimum of time and effort. Normally one full rehearsal is enough. The readers can be on a stage, around the edge of the room or sitting in the audience, whichever seems more effective. Readers need their own full script, which they can highlight and underline. The Scripture references should not be read aloud.

The reading has 40 characters. These can be combined to reduce the number of readers required to 12-15. One reader can read the parts of Judas and Pilate or be Peter and one of the priests or part of the crowd. Groups of people, priests, disciples, the crowd, etc. should be at least three readers. A separate Narrator has been provided for each of the four Gospel. These can be combined into one.

An "Easter Reading" has been prepared as a companion piece.

NARRATOR 4: When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple courts they asked one another,

CROWD: "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the festival at all?"

NARRATOR 4: But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him. Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

(John 11:55 – 12:1, 9-11)

NARRATOR 1: As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethpage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them:

JESUS: “Go to the village ahead of you, and at once you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt by her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord needs them, and he will send them right away.”

NARRATOR 1: This took place to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet:

“Say to the Daughter of Zion,
‘See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.’ ” (Isiah 62:11)

(Matthew 21:1-5)

NARRATOR 4: At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

(John 12:16)

NARRATOR 1: The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. They brought the donkey and the colt and placed their cloaks on them for Jesus to sit on. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, while others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted,

CROWD: “Hosanna to the Son of David!”
“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”
“Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

(Matthew 21:6-11)

NARRATOR 3: Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus,

PHARISEES: “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

JESUS: “I tell you, if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

(Luke 19:39-40)

NARRATOR 4: So the Pharisees said to one another,

PHARISEES: “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”

(John 12:19)

NARRATOR 3: As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said,

JESUS: “If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God’s coming to you.”

(Luke 19:41-44)

NARRATOR 1: When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred and asked,

CROWD: “Who is this?”

NARRATOR 1: The crowds answered,

CROWD: “This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.”

(Matthew 21:10-11)

NARRATOR 2: Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the Twelve.

The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. Then he said to the tree,

JESUS: “May no one ever eat fruit from you again.”

NARRATOR 2: And his disciples heard him say it.

On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. And as he taught them, he said,

JESUS: “Is it not written: ‘My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it ‘a den of robbers.’”

NARRATOR 2: The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.

(Mark 11:11 – 18)

NARRATOR 4: Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request.

GREEKS: “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.”

NARRATOR 4: Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

JESUS: “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

“Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!”

NARRATOR 4: Then a voice came from heaven,

THE FATHER: “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

NARRATOR 4: The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

JESUS: “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.”

NARRATOR 4: He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

CROWD: “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

JESUS: “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.”

NARRATOR 4: When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them. Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:

“Lord, who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”
For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere:

“He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their hearts,
so they can neither see with their eyes,
nor understand with their hearts,
nor turn—and I would heal them.” (Isaiah 6:10)

Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him. Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human praise more than praise from God. Then Jesus cried out,

JESUS: “Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

“If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

(John 12:20 – 50)

NARRATOR 2: When evening came, Jesus and his disciples went out of the city. In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus,

PETER: “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

JESUS: “Have faith in God”. “Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

(Mark 11:19 – 26)

NARRATOR 1: Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him.

PRIESTS AND ELDERS: “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?”

JESUS: “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?”

NARRATOR 1: They discussed it among themselves and said,

PRIESTS AND ELDERS: “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ But if we say, ‘Of human origin’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.”

NARRATOR 1: So they answered Jesus,

PRIESTS AND ELDERS: “We don’t know.”

JESUS: “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

“‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went.

“Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.

“Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

PRIESTS AND ELDERS: “The first,”

JESUS: “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

JESUS: “Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

“The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. Last of all, he sent his son to them. ‘They will respect my son,’ he said.

“But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him and take his inheritance.’ So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

PRIESTS AND ELDERS: “He will bring those wretches to a wretched end, and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

JESUS: “Have you never read in the Scriptures:

“‘The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes’?

“Therefore, I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed.”

NARRATOR 1: When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew he was talking about them.

They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

NARRATOR 1: Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying:

JESUS: “The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

“Then he sent some more servants and said, ‘Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.’

“But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.’ So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

“But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. He asked, ‘How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?’ The man was speechless.

“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

“For many are invited, but few are chosen.”

NARRATOR 1: Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians.

PHARISEES' DISCIPLES AND HERODIANS: “Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren’t swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?”

NARRATOR 1: But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said,

JESUS: “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax. ”

NARRATOR 1: They brought him a denarius, and he asked them,

JESUS: “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”

PHARISEES' DISCIPLES AND HERODIANS: “Caesar’s,”

NARRATOR 1: Then he said to them,

JESUS: “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”

NARRATOR 1: When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question.

SADDUCEES: “Teacher, Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. Finally, the woman died. Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?”

JESUS: “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

NARRATOR 1: When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching. Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question:

PHARISEE: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

JESUS: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”
(Matthew 21:23 – 22:40)

PHARISEE: “Well said, teacher, You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

NARRATOR 2: When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him,

JESUS: “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”
(Mark 12:32 – 34)

NARRATOR 1: While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

JESUS: “What do you think about the Messiah? Whose son is he?”

PHARISEES: “The son of David,”

JESUS: “How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him ‘Lord’? For he says,
“ ‘The Lord said to my Lord:
“Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet.” ’ (Psalm 110:1)
If then David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?”

NARRATOR 1: No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions.

NARRATOR 1: Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples:

JESUS: “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.
“Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by others.
“But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth ‘father,’ for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor are you

to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

JESUS: “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

“Woe to you, blind guides! You say, ‘If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.’ You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? You also say, ‘If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.’ You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God’s throne and by the one who sits on it.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. And you say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started!

“You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? Therefore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Truly I tell you, all this will come on this generation.

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. (Psalm 118:26)

(Matthew 22:41 – 23:39)

NARRATOR 2: Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said,

JESUS: “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on.”

(Mark 12:41 – 44)

NARRATOR 1: Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to him to call his attention to its buildings.

“Do you see all these things?” “Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

NARRATOR 1: As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately.

DISCIPLES: “Tell us, when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?”

JESUS: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Messiah,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

“Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

“So when you see standing in the holy place ‘the abomination that causes desolation,’ spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand— then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go down to take anything out of the house. Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! Pray that your flight will not take place in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.

“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened. At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Messiah!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you ahead of time.

“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the wilderness,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it. For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Wherever there is a carcass, there the vultures will gather.

“Immediately after the distress of those days

“ ‘the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ (Ezekiel 32:7)

“Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up

to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise. The foolish ones took their lamps but did not take any oil with them. The wise ones, however, took oil in jars along with their lamps. The bridegroom was a long time in coming, and they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

“At midnight the cry rang out: ‘Here’s the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!’

“Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.’

“‘No,’ they replied, ‘there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.’

“But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding banquet. And the door was shut.

“Later the others also came. ‘Lord, Lord,’ they said, ‘open the door for us!’

“But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I don’t know you.’

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

“Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more.¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.

“After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“The man with two bags of gold also came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.’

“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

“Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

“His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.’

“‘So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they

have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

“Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’

“Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’

“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.’

“They also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?’

“He will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.’

“Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

NARRATOR 1: When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples,

JESUS: “As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”

Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. “But not during the festival,” they said, “or there may be a riot among the people.”

(Matthew 24:1 – 26:5)

NARRATOR 4: Here a dinner was given in Jesus’ honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus’ feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected,

JUDAS: “Why wasn’t this perfume sold and the money given to the poor?”

NARRATOR 4: It was worth a year’s wages. He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

JESUS: “Leave her alone, It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

(John 12:2 – 8)

JESUS: Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

(Matthew 26:13)

NARRATOR 3: Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus.

(Luke 22: 3 - 4)

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

NARRATOR 1: So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

(Matthew 26:15 – 16)

NARRATOR 2: On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when it was customary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus’ disciples asked him,

DISCIPLES: “Where do you want us to go and make preparations for you to eat the Passover?”

NARRATOR 2: So he sent two of his disciples, telling them,

JESUS: “Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Say to the owner of the house he enters, ‘The Teacher asks: Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large room upstairs, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.”

NARRATOR 2: The disciples left, went into the city and found things just as Jesus had told them. So they prepared the Passover.

(Mark 14:12 – 16)

NARRATOR 3: When the hour came, Jesus and his apostles reclined at the table. And he said to them,

JESUS: “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.”

NARRATOR 3: A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them,

JESUS: “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

(Luke 22:14 – 30)

NARRATOR 4: The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him,

PETER: “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”

JESUS: “You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”

PETER: “No, you shall never wash my feet.”

JESUS: “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”

PETER: “Then, Lord, not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”

JESUS: “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”

NARRATOR 4: For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place.

JESUS: “Do you understand what I have done for you? You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

“I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: ‘He who shared my bread has turned against me.’ “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.”

(John 13:2 – 20)

NARRATOR 1: And while they were eating, he said,

JESUS: “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.”

NARRATOR 1: They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?”

JESUS: “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”

(Matthew 26:21 – 24)

NARRATOR 4: One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said,

PETER: “Ask him which one he means.”

NARRATOR 4: Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him,

DISCIPLE: “Lord, who is it?”

JESUS: “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.”

NARRATOR 4: Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.
(John 13:23 – 26)

NARRATOR 1: Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said,

JUDAS: “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?”
(Matthew 26:25)

NARRATOR 4: As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him,

JESUS: “What you are about to do, do quickly.”

NARRATOR 4: But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night. When he was gone, Jesus said,

JESUS: “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

NARRATOR 4: Simon Peter asked him,

PETER: “Lord, where are you going?”

JESUS: “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.”

PETER: “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.”

JESUS: “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!
(John 13:27 – 38)

NARRATOR 1: But Peter declared,

PETER: “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.”

NARRATOR 1: And all the other disciples said the same.
(Matthew 26:35)

NARRATOR 3: Then Jesus asked them,

JESUS: “When I sent you without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack anything?”

DISCIPLES: “Nothing,”

JESUS: “But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors’ and I

tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfillment.”

DISCIPLES: “See, Lord, here are two swords.”

JESUS: “That’s enough!”

(Luke 22:35 – 38)

NARRATOR 1: While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying,

JESUS: “Take and eat; this is my body.”

NARRATOR 1: Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying,

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

(Matthew 26:26 – 29)

JESUS: “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

THOMAS: “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

JESUS: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

PHILIP: “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

JESUS: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. “If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

NARRATOR 4: Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said

JUDAS (NOT JUDAS ISCARIOT): “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

JESUS: “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. “All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me. “Come now; let us leave.

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

“All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not

tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’⁶ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

NARRATOR 4: At this, some of his disciples said to one another,

DISCIPLES: “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me, ‘and ‘Because I am going to the Father’?” “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

NARRATOR 4: Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them,

JESUS: “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’? Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

DISCIPLES: “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.”

JESUS: “Do you now believe? A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

“I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

NARRATOR 4: After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

JESUS: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom

you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

“I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

“Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

(John 14:1 – 17:26)

NARRATOR 1: When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 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 1: He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Then he said to them,

JESUS: “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.”

NARRATOR 1: Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed,

JESUS: “My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.”

NARRATOR 1: Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping.

JESUS: “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

NARRATOR 1: He went away a second time and prayed,

JESUS: “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

NARRATOR 1: When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing. Then he returned to the disciples and said to them,

JESUS: “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!”

NARRATOR 1: While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: “The one I kiss is the man; arrest him.” Going at once to Jesus,

JUDAS: “Greetings, Rabbi!”

NARRATOR 1: and kissed him.

(Matthew 26:30, 36 – 49)

JESUS: “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

(Luke 22:48)

NARRATOR 4: Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them,

JESUS: “Who is it you want?”

CROWD: “Jesus of Nazareth,”

JESUS: “I am he”.

NARRATOR 4: (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

JESUS: “Who is it you want?”

CROWD: “Jesus of Nazareth,”

JESUS: “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.”

NARRATOR 4: This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.

(John 18:4 – 9)

NARRATOR 3: When Jesus’ followers saw what was going to happen, they said,

FOLLOWERS: “Lord, should we strike with our swords?”

NARRATOR 3: And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

(Luke 22:49 – 50)

NARRATOR 4: The servant’s name was Malchus.

(John 18:10)

JESUS: “No more of this!”

(Luke 22:51)

“Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”

(John 18:11)

Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”

(Matthew 26:53 – 54)

NARRATOR 3: And he touched the man’s ear and healed him.

Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him,

JESUS: “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.”

(Luke 22:51 – 53)

NARRATOR 1: Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

(Matthew 26:56)

NARRATOR 4: Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

JESUS: “I have spoken openly to the world, I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.”

NARRATOR 4: When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face.

OFFICIAL: “Is this the way you answer the high priest?”

JESUS: “If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?”

(John 18:12 – 14, 19 - 23)

NARRATOR 1: Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome. The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. But they did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward and declared,

FALSE WITNESSES: “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’”

NARRATOR 1: Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus,

HIGH PRIEST: “Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?”

NARRATOR 1: But Jesus remained silent.

HIGH PRIEST: “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.”

JESUS: “You have said so, But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

NARRATOR 1: Then the high priest tore his clothes and said,

HIGH PRIEST: “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?”

SANHEDRIN: “He is worthy of death”.

NARRATOR 1: Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him and said,

PRIESTS: “Prophecy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?”

(Matthew 26:57, 59 – 68)

NARRATOR 4: Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

SERVANT GIRL: “You aren’t one of this man’s disciples too, are you?”

PETER: “I am not.”

NARRATOR 4: It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself. Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him,

SERVANTS AND OFFICIALS: “You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?”

PETER: “I am not.”

(John 18:15 – 18)

NARRATOR 2: After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, “Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean.” He began to call down curses, and he swore to them,

PETER: “I don’t know this man you’re talking about.”

Immediately the rooster crowed the second time. Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows twice you will disown me three times.” And he broke down and wept.

(Mark 14:70 – 72)

NARRATOR 3: At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them.

COUNCIL: “If you are the Messiah, tell us.”

JESUS: “If I tell you, you will not believe me, and if I asked you, you would not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God.”

COUNCIL: “Are you then the Son of God?”

JESUS: “You say that I am.”

COUNCIL: “Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips.”
(Luke 22:66 – 71)

NARRATOR 1: When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders.

JUDAS: “I have sinned, for I have betrayed innocent blood.”

CHIEF PRIESTS AND ELDERS: “What is that to us?” “That’s your responsibility.”

NARRATOR 1: So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

The chief priests picked up the coins and said,

CHIEF PRIESTS: “It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money.”

NARRATOR 1: So they decided to use the money to buy the potter’s field as a burial place for foreigners. That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: “They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, and they used them to buy the potter’s field, as the Lord commanded me.

(Matthew 27:3 – 10)

NARRATOR 4: Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked,

PILATE: “What charges are you bringing against this man?”

JEWISH LEADERS: “If he were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.”

PILATE: “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”

JEWISH LEADERS: “But we have no right to execute anyone”.

NARRATOR 4: This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him,

PILATE: “Are you the king of the Jews?”

JESUS: “Is that your own idea, or did others talk to you about me?”

PILATE: “Am I a Jew? Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

JESUS: “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

PILATE: “You are a king, then!”

JESUS: “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

PILATE: “What is truth?”

NARRATOR 4: With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said,

PILATE: “I find no basis for a charge against him.

(John 18:28 – 38)

NARRATOR 3: But they insisted,

JEWS: “He stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here.”

NARRATOR 3: On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had been wanting to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign of some sort. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer. The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate. That day Herod and Pilate became friends—before this they had been enemies. (Luke 23:5 – 12)

NARRATOR 1: Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them,

PILATE: “Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?”

NARRATOR 1: For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him. While Pilate was sitting on the judge’s seat, his wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.”

But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

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

CROWD: “Barabbas”.

PILATE: “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?”

CROWD: “Crucify him!”

PILATE: “Why? What crime has he committed?”

NARRATOR 1: But they shouted all the louder,

CROWD: “Crucify him!”

(Matthew 27:15 – 26)

NARRATOR 4: Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying,

SOLDIERS: “Hail, king of the Jews!”

NARRATOR 4: And they slapped him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there,

PILATE: “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.”

NARRATOR 4: When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them,

PILATE: “Here is the man!”

NARRATOR 4: As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted,

CHIEF PRIESTS: “Crucify! Crucify!”

PILATE: “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.”

JEWISH LEADERS: “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

NARRATOR 4: When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace.

PILATE: “Where do you come from?”

NARRATOR 4: but Jesus gave him no answer.

JESUS: “Do you refuse to speak to me?” “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?”

JESUS: “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.”

NARRATOR 4: From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting,

JEWISH LEADERS: “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.”

NARRATOR 4: When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon.

PILATE: “Here is your king,”

CROWD: “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!”

PILATE: “Shall I crucify your king?”

CHIEF PRIESTS: “We have no king but Caesar,”

NARRATOR 4: Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

(John 19:1 – 16)

NARRATOR 2: The soldiers led Jesus away into the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and called together the whole company of soldiers. They put a purple robe on him, then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on him. And they began to call out to him, “Hail, king of the Jews!” Again and again they struck him on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling on their knees, they paid homage to him. And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him.

A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross.

(Mark 15:16 – 21)

NARRATOR 3: A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and weiled for him. Jesus turned and said to them,

JESUS: “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. For the time will come when you will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then “ ‘they will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” and to the hills, “Cover us!” For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?”

NARRATOR 3: Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left.

JESUS: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

(Luke 23:27 – 34)

NARRATOR 4: When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

SOLDIERS: “Let’s not tear it, Let’s decide by lot who will get it.”

NARRATOR 4: This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, “They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.”
So this is what the soldiers did.

NARRATOR 4: Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate,

CHIEF PRIESTS: “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.”

PILATE: “What I have written, I have written.”

(John 19:23 – 24, 19 – 22)

NARRATOR 1: Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying,

PASSERSBY: “You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!”

NARRATOR 1: In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him.

CHIEF PRIESTS: “He saved others, but he can’t save himself! He’s the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

(Matthew 27:35 – 43)

NARRATOR 3: One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him:

CRIMINAL: “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!”

NARRATOR 3: But the other criminal rebuked him.

CRIMINAL 2: “Don’t you fear God, since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”
“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

JESUS: “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

(Luke 23:39 - 43)

NARRATOR 4: Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her,

JESUS: “Woman, here is your son. “Here is your mother.”

NARRATOR 4: From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

(John 19:25 – 27)

NARRATOR 2: At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

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

NARRATOR 2: which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
When some of those standing near heard this, they said,

BYSTANDERS: “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.”

(Mark 15:33 – 35)

NARRATOR 4: Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said,

JESUS: “I am thirsty.”

NARRATOR 4: A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said,

JESUS: "It is finished."

NARRATOR 4: With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

(John 19:28 – 30)

NARRATOR 1: At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed,

CENTURION: "Surely he was the Son of God!"

NARRATOR 1: Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

(Matthew 27: 51 – 56)

NARRATOR 4: Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken, and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced.

Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

(John 19: 31 – 42)

NARRATOR 1: Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb. The next day, the one after Preparation Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went to Pilate.

CHIEF PRIESTS AND PHARISEES: "Sir, we remember that while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' So give the order for the tomb to be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and steal the body and tell the people that he has been raised from the dead. This last deception will be worse than the first."

PILATE: "Take a guard, Go, make the tomb as secure as you know how."

NARRATOR 1: So they went and made the tomb secure by putting a seal on the stone and posting the guard.

(Matthew 27:61 – 66)

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