

The Passion Gospel is announced in the following manner:

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN:

EVANGELIST: After these words, Jesus went out with his disciples, and crossed the Kedron ravine. There was a garden there, and he and his disciples went into it. The place was known to Judas, his betrayer, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas took a detachment of soldiers, and police provided by the chief priests and the Pharisees, equipped with lanterns, torches, and weapons, and made his way to the garden. Jesus, knowing all that was coming upon him, went out to them and asked,

JESUS: Who is it you want?

CONGREGATION: Jesus of Nazareth.

JESUS: I am he.

EVANGELIST: And there stood Judas the traitor with them. When he said, "I am he", they drew back and fell to the ground. Again Jesus asked,

JESUS: Who is it you want?

CONGREGATION: Jesus of Nazareth.

JESUS: I have told you that I am he. If am the man you want, let these others go.

EVANGELIST: (This was to make good his words; "I have not lost one of those whom thou gavest me.") Thereupon Simon Peter drew the sword he was wearing and struck at the High Priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) Jesus said to Peter,

JESUS: Sheathe your sword. This is the cup the Father has given me; shall I not drink it?

EVANGELIST: The troops with their commander, and the Jewish police, now arrested Jesus and secured him. They took him first to Annas. Annas was father-in-law of Caiaphas, the High Priest for that year -- the same Caiaphas who had advised the Jews that it would be to their interest if one man died for the whole people.

So Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas the High Priest, Jesus was followed by Simon Peter and another disciple. This disciple, who was acquainted with the High Priest, went with Jesus into the High Priest's courtyard, but Peter halted at the door outside. So the other disciple, the High Priest's acquaintance, went out again and spoke to the woman at the door, and brought Peter in. The maid on duty at the door said to Peter,

MAID: Are you another of this man's disciples?

PETER: I am not.

EVANGELIST: The servants and the police had made a charcoal fire, because it was cold, and were standing round it warming themselves. And Peter too was standing with them, sharing the warmth. The High Priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and about what he taught. Jesus replied,

JESUS: I have spoken openly to all the world; I have always taught in synagogue and in the temple, where all Jews congregate; I have said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask my hearers what I told them; they know what I said.

EVANGELIST: When he said this, one of the police who was standing next to him struck him on the face, exclaiming,

ONE OF THE POLICE: Is that the way to answer the High Priest?

JESUS: If I spoke amiss, state it in evidence; if I spoke well, why strike me?

EVANGELIST: Meanwhile Simon Peter stood warming himself. The others asked,

CONGREGATION: Are you another of his disciples?

EVANGELIST: But he denied it, saying,

PETER: I am not.

EVANGELIST: One of the High Priest's servants, a relation of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, insisted,

SERVANT: Did I not see you with him in the garden?

EVANGELIST: Peter denied again; and just then a cock crew.

From Caiaphas Jesus was led into the Governor's headquarters. It was now early morning, and the Jews themselves stayed outside the headquarters to avoid defilement, so that they could eat the Passover meal. So Pilate went out to them and asked,

PILATE: What charge do you bring against this man?

CONGREGATION: If he were not a criminal, we should not have brought him before you.

PILATE: Take him away and try him by your own law.

CONGREGATION: We are not allowed to put any man to death.

EVANGELIST: Thus they ensured the fulfillment of the words by which Jesus had indicated the manner of his death.

Pilate then went back into his headquarters, summoned Jesus, and asked him,

PILATE: Are you the king of the Jews?

JESUS: Is that your own idea, or have others suggested it to you?

PILATE: What! Am I a Jew? Your own nation and their chief priests have brought you before me. What have you done?

JESUS: My kingdom does not belong to this world. If it did, my followers would be fighting to save me from arrest by the Jews. My kingly authority comes from elsewhere.

PILATE: You are a king, then?

JESUS: "King" is your word, My task is to bear witness to the truth. For this was I born; for this I came into the world, and all who are not deaf to truth listen to my voice.

PILATE: What is truth?

EVANGELIST: And with those words Pilate went out again to the Jews, saying,

PILATE: For my part, I find no case against him. But you have a custom that I release one prisoner for you at Passover. Would you like me to release the king of the Jews?

EVANGELIST: Again the clamour rose:

CONGREGATION: Not him; we want Barabbas!

EVANGELIST: (Barabbas was a bandit.)

EVANGELIST: Pilate now took Jesus and had him flogged; and the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns and placed it on his head, and robed him in a purple cloak. Then time after time they came up to him, crying,

CONGREGATION: Hail, King of the Jews!

EVANGELIST: And they struck him on the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews,

PILATE: Here he is; I am bringing him out to let you know that I find no case against him.

EVANGELIST: And Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple cloak. Pilate said,

PILATE: Behold the Man!

EVANGELIST: The chief priests and their henchmen saw him and shouted,

CONGREGATION: Crucify! Crucify!

PILATE: Take him and crucify him yourselves; for my part I find no case against him.

CONGREGATION: We have a law; and by that law he ought to die, because he has claimed to be Son of God.

EVANGELIST: When Pilate heard that, he was more afraid than ever, and going back into his headquarters he asked Jesus,

PILATE: Where have you come from?

EVANGELIST: But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate asked,

PILATE: Do you refuse to speak to me? Surely you know that I have authority to release you, and I have authority to crucify you?

JESUS: You would have no authority at all over me if it had not been granted you from above; and therefore the deeper guilt lies with the man who handed me over to you.

EVANGELIST: From that moment Pilate tried hard to release him; but the Jews kept shouting,

CONGREGATION: If you let this man go, you are no friend to Caesar; any man who claims to be a king is defying Caesar.

EVANGELIST: When Pilate heard what they were saying, he brought Jesus out and took his seat on the tribunal at the place known as "The Pavement" ("Gabbatha" in the language of the Jews). It was the eve of Passover, about noon. Pilate said to the Jews,

PILATE: Here is your king.

CONGREGATION: Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!

PILATE: Crucify your king?

CONGREGATION: We have no king but Caesar.

EVANGELIST: Then at last, to satisfy them, he handed Jesus over to be crucified.

*(Here, if they are not doing so already, all stand,)*

EVANGELIST: Jesus was now taken in charge and, carrying his own cross, went out to the Place of the Skull, as it is called (or, in the Jews' language, "Golgotha"), where they crucified him, and with him two others, one on the right, one on the left, and Jesus between them.

And Pilate wrote an inscription to be fastened to the cross; it read, "Jesus of Nazareth King of the Jews." This inscription was read by many Jews, because the place where Jesus was crucified was not far from the city, and the inscription was in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Then the Jewish chief priests said to Pilate,

CONGREGATION: You should not write "King of the Jews"; write, "He claimed to be king of the Jews. "

PILATE: What I have written, I have written.

EVANGELIST: The soldiers, having crucified Jesus, took possession of his clothes, and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier, leaving out the tunic. The tunic was seamless, woven in one piece throughout; so they said to one another,

CONGREGATION: we must not tear this; let us toss for it.

EVANGELIST: And thus the text of Scripture came true: "They shared my garments among them, and cast lots for my clothing. "

That is what the soldiers did. But meanwhile near the cross where Jesus hung stood his mother, with her sister, Mary wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. Jesus saw his mother, with the disciple whom he loved standing beside her. He said to her,

JESUS: Mother, there is your son.

EVANGELIST: And to the disciple, he said,

JESUS: There is your mother.

EVANGELIST: And from that moment the disciple took her into his home. After that, Jesus, aware that all had now come to its appointed end. said in fulfilment of Scripture,

JESUS: I thirst.

EVANGELIST: A jar stood there full of sour wine; so they soaked a sponge with the wine, fixed it on a javelin, and held it up to his lips. Having received the wine, he said,

JESUS: It is accomplished!

EVANGELIST: He bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

*(Silence is kept for a few moments, during which some may wish to kneel.)*

EVANGELIST: Because it was the eve of Passover, the Jews were anxious that the bodies should not remain on the cross for the coming Sabbath, since that Sabbath was a day of great solemnity; so they requested Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers accordingly came to the first of his fellow victims and to the second, and broke their legs; but when they came to Jesus, they found that he was already dead, so they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers stabbed his side with a lance, and at once there was a flow of blood and water. This is vouched for by an eyewitness, whose evidence is to be trusted. He knows that he speaks the truth, so that you too may believe; for this happened in fulfilment of the text of Scripture: "No bone of his shall be broken." And another text says, "They shall look on him whom they pierced. "