

THE PASSION HISTORY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

LESSON ONE

LEADER: The Festival of Unleavened Bread, which is called the Passover, was approaching. Jesus said to his disciples,

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

LEADER: Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas.

WOMEN: They plotted together how to arrest Jesus in some deceitful way and kill him.

CONGREGATION: But they said, “Not during the Festival, or else there might be a riot among the people.”

LEADER: Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, who was one of the Twelve. He went away and spoke with the chief priests and officers of the temple guard about how he could betray Jesus to them. They were glad and agreed to give him money. He promised to do it and was looking for an opportunity to betray Jesus to them away from the crowd.^a

WOMEN: On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, his disciples asked him,

MEN: “Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?”

LEADER: He sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the city, and there a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him. Wherever he enters, tell the owner of the house that the Teacher says, ‘Where is my guest room, where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will show you a large upper room, furnished and ready. Make preparations for us there.”

^a Matthew 26:1-5; Mark 14:1-2; Luke 22:1-6

WOMEN: They went and found things just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover.

LEADER: When the hour had come, Jesus reclined at the table with the twelve apostles.

MEN: He said to them, “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 is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.”^a

CONGREGATION: A dispute arose among the disciples about which of them was considered to be greatest.

LEADER: But he told them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who have authority over them are called Benefactors. But it is not to be that way with you. Instead, let the greatest among you become like the youngest, and the one who leads like the one who serves. For who is greater, one who reclines at the table or one who serves? Isn’t it the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have remained with me in my trials. I am going to grant a kingdom to you, just as my Father granted to me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom. And you will sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”^b

WOMEN: Before the Passover Festival, Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father.

CONGREGATION: Having loved those who were his own in the world, he loved them to the end.^c

MEN: By the time the supper took place, the Devil had already put the idea into the heart of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus.

CONGREGATION: Jesus knew that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God.

LEADER: He got up from the supper and laid aside his outer garment. He took a towel and tied it around his waist.

^a Matthew 26:17-20; Mark 14:12-17; Luke 22:7-17

^b Luke 22:24-30

^c Or *to the fullest extent*

WOMEN: Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

MEN: He came to Simon Peter, who asked him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

LEADER: Jesus answered him, "You do not understand what I am doing now, but later you will understand."

MEN: Peter told him, "You will never, ever, wash my feet!"

LEADER: Jesus replied, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with me."

MEN: "Lord, not just my feet," Simon Peter replied, "but also my hands and my head!"

CONGREGATION: Jesus told him, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet, but his body is completely clean. And you^a are clean, but not all of you." Indeed, he knew who was going to betray him. That is why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

WOMEN: After Jesus had washed their feet and put on his outer garment, he reclined at the table again.

LEADER: "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me Teacher and Lord. You are right, because I am. Now if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. Yes, I have given you an example so that you also would do just as I have done for you. Amen, Amen,^b I tell you: A servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them."^c

^a *You* is plural.

^b Usually people say *Amen* at the end of a prayer, but Jesus used this Hebrew word at the beginning of a statement, which was unique. The inspired writer simply transliterated the Hebrew word that Jesus spoke, instead of using a Greek term. This translation does the same in English. The basic meaning is *I solemnly tell you the truth*. Here it is emphasized by being used twice. See FAQ #1 at wartburgproject.org/faqs/

^c John 13:1-17

CONGREGATION: He took a cup, gave thanks, and said, “Take this and divide it among yourselves, for I tell you, from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”^a

LEADER: While they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, “Amen I tell you: One of you will betray me, one who is eating with me.”

CONGREGATION: They were very sad and began to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I, Lord?”

MEN: He said to them, “It is one of the Twelve, one who is dipping bread with me in the dish. Indeed, the Son of Man is going to go just as it has been written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born.”^b

LEADER: After saying this, Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified, “Amen, Amen, I tell you: One of you will betray me.”

WOMEN: The disciples were looking at each other, uncertain which of them he meant.

CONGREGATION: One of his disciples, the one Jesus loved, was reclining at Jesus’ side. Simon Peter motioned to him to find out which one Jesus was talking about.

MEN: So leaning back against Jesus’ side, he asked, “Lord, who is it?”

LEADER: Jesus replied, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread, after I have dipped it in the dish.”

WOMEN: Then he dipped the piece of bread and gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

MEN: So Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do more quickly.”

CONGREGATION: None of those reclining at the table understood why Jesus said this to him. Because Judas kept the money box, some

^a Luke 22:17-18

^b Matthew 26:21-25; Mark 14:18-21

thought that Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the Festival,” or to give something to the poor.

WOMEN: As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

LEADER: After Judas left, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him.^a If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify the Son in himself and will glorify him at once.”^b

^a Or *Now the Son of Man was glorified, and God was glorified in him.*

^b John 13:21-32

LESSON TWO

LEADER: While they were eating, on the night when he was betrayed, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples. He said, “Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

CONGREGATION: Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying,

LEADER: “Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the new testament,^a which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.^b”

MEN: “Dear children, I am going to 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.

CONGREGATION: “A new commandment I give you: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, so also you are to love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

WOMEN: Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?”

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

MEN: Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you!”

LEADER: Jesus replied, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Simon, Simon, pay attention: Satan has asked to have you all, so that he may sift you as wheat. But I prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have returned to me, strengthen your brothers.”

WOMEN: Peter answered him, “Even if all fall away because of you, I will never fall away.”

^a As in *last will and testament*. See Galatians 3:15.

^b Matthew 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

LEADER: Jesus said to him, “Amen I tell you: Tonight, before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times.”

MEN: Peter said to him, “Even if I have to die with you, I will never deny you.”

WOMEN: And all the disciples said the same.^a

LEADER: He said to them, “When I sent you out without money bag, traveler’s bag, and sandals, did you lack anything?”

CONGREGATION: “Nothing,” they said.

LEADER: Then he told them, “But now, let the one who has a money bag take it, and likewise a traveler’s bag. And let the one who has no sword sell his cloak and buy one. For I tell you that this Scripture must be fulfilled in me: ‘He was counted with transgressors.’^b Indeed, what is written about me is going to have its fulfillment.”

CONGREGATION: They said, “Lord, look, here are two swords.”

MEN: He said to them, “That is enough.”^c

LEADER: Then Jesus said to them, “This night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written, ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.’^d But after I have been raised, I will go ahead of you into Galilee.”^e

WOMEN: After they sang a hymn, Jesus went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, to the Mount of Olives, where there was a garden called Gethsemane. He and his disciples went into it.

MEN: Now Judas, who was betraying him, also knew the place, because Jesus often met there with his disciples.^f

^a Matthew 26:33-35; Luke 22:31-34; John 13:33-38

^b Isaiah 53:12

^c Luke 22:35-38

^d Zechariah 13:7

^e Matthew 26:31-32

^f John 18:1-2; Matthew 26:30,36

LEADER: When he reached the place, Jesus told his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray. Keep praying that you may not enter into temptation.”

WOMEN: Then he took Peter, James, and John along with him and began to be troubled and distressed.

LEADER: He said to them, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow, even to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch.”

CONGREGATION: He withdrew from them about a stone’s throw, knelt down, and prayed,

MEN: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done.”

WOMEN: When he rose from prayer, he went to the disciples and found them sleeping as a result of sorrow.

LEADER: He said to Peter, “Simon, are you sleeping? Were you not strong enough to keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

MEN: He went away a second time and prayed, “My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to pass from me unless I drink it, may your will be done.”

WOMEN: Again he returned and found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what they should answer him.

CONGREGATION: He left them again, went away, and prayed a third time. He said the same words as before.

LEADER: An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.

MEN: As he was in agony, he prayed more fervently.

WOMEN: His sweat became like great drops of blood falling to the ground.

LEADER: Then he returned to his disciples and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of

Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise. Let us go. Look, my betrayer is near!”^a

CONGREGATION: While Jesus was still speaking, suddenly Judas (one of the Twelve) arrived.

WOMEN: With him was a large crowd with lanterns, torches, swords, and clubs, who came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Judas was leading them.

MEN: Jesus, knowing everything that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who are you looking for?”

CONGREGATION: “Jesus the Nazarene,” they replied.

LEADER: “I am he,” Jesus told them.

WOMEN: Judas, the betrayer, was standing with them. When Jesus told them, “I am he,” they backed away and fell to the ground.

LEADER: Then Jesus asked them again, “Who are you looking for?”

CONGREGATION: “Jesus the Nazarene,” they said.

MEN: “I told you that I am he,” Jesus replied. “So if you are looking for me, let these men go.”

WOMEN: This was to fulfill the statement he had spoken: “I did not lose any of those you have given me.”

CONGREGATION: Now the betrayer had given them a sign: “The one I kiss is the man. Arrest him.” Immediately he went to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

LEADER: Jesus said to him, “Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

WOMEN: Then they advanced, took hold of Jesus, and arrested him. When those who were around him saw what was about to happen, they said to him, “Lord, should we strike with a sword?”

MEN: Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it, struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant’s name was Malchus.

^a Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:39-46

LEADER: But Jesus responded, “Stop! No more of this! Put your sword back into its place, because all who take the sword will die by the sword. Do you not realize that I could call on my Father, and at once he would provide me with more than twelve legions^a of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way?”

WOMEN: Then he touched the servant’s ear and healed him.

CONGREGATION: At that same time Jesus said to the crowd, “Have you come out to arrest me with swords and clubs as if I were a robber? Day after day I was sitting in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has happened so that the writings of the prophets would be fulfilled.”

MEN: Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.^b

LEADER: The company of soldiers, their commander, and the Jewish guards arrested Jesus and bound him. First they led him to Annas, because he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was the high priest that year. Now it was Caiaphas who had advised the Jews, “It is better that one man die for the people.”

^a A Roman *legion* contained as many as six thousand soldiers.

^b Matthew 26:47-56; Mark 14:43-52; Luke 22:47-54; John 18:1-14

LESSON THREE

LEADER: Simon Peter and another disciple kept following Jesus. That disciple was known to the high priest, so he went into the high priest's courtyard with Jesus.

CONGREGATION: But Peter stood outside by the door. So the other disciple, the one known to the high priest, went out and talked to the girl watching the door and brought Peter in.

WOMEN: The servants and guards were standing around a fire of coals that they had made because it was cold.

MEN: While they warmed themselves, Peter was standing with them, warming himself too.^a

LEADER: One of the servant girls of the high priest came there. When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked directly at him and said, "You were also with Jesus the Galilean."

CONGREGATION: But he denied it in front of everyone, saying, "I don't know what you are talking about. Woman, I do not know him."

WOMEN: When Peter went out to the entryway, someone else saw him and said to those who were there, "This is one of them. This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

MEN: Again Peter denied it with an oath and said, "I do not know the man."

CONGREGATION: After a little while those who stood by came and said to Peter, "Surely you are also one of them, because even your accent gives you away. You are a Galilean!"

MEN: Then he began to curse and to swear, "I do not know this man you are talking about! I do not know the man!"

LEADER: At that very moment, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. Then Peter remembered the Lord's word, how he had said to him, "Before the rooster crows today you will deny me three times." He went outside,

^a John 18:12-18

broke down, and wept bitterly.^a

WOMEN: The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

CONGREGATION: Jesus answered him, “I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in a synagogue or at the temple, where all the Jews gather. I said nothing in secret. Why are you questioning me? Ask those who heard what I told them. Look, they know what I said.”

MEN: When he said this, one of the guards standing there hit Jesus in the face. “Is that how you answer the high priest?” he demanded.

LEADER: “If I said something wrong,” Jesus answered, “testify about what was wrong. But if I was right, why did you hit me?”^b

CONGREGATION: The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they could put him to death. They found none, even though many false witnesses came forward.

MEN: Finally two came forward and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.’”

WOMEN: Yet even on this point, their testimony did not agree.

CONGREGATION: The high priest stood up and said to him, “Have you no answer? What is this that these men are testifying against you?”

LEADER: But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I place you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God!”

MEN: Jesus said to him, “It is as you have said. But I tell you, soon you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power and coming on the clouds of heaven.”

LEADER: Then the high priest tore his robes and said, “He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? See, you have just heard the blasphemy! What do you think?”

^a Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27

^b John 18:19-23

WOMEN: They answered, “He is deserving of death!”

CONGREGATION: Then some began to spit on him. They covered his face, struck him with their fists, and said, “Prophecy to us, Christ! Who hit you?”

MEN: The guards also took him and beat him. And they went on saying many other blasphemous things against him.^a

LEADER: As soon as it was day, the council of the elders of the people met together, both chief priests and experts in the law.

CONGREGATION: They brought Jesus into their Sanhedrin and said, “If you are the Christ, tell us.”

MEN: But he said to them, “If I tell you, you will not believe, and if I ask you, you will not answer me or release me. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the power of God.”^b

CONGREGATION: They all said, “Are you then the Son of God?”

LEADER: He said to them, “I am what you are saying.”

MEN: Then they said, “Why do we need any more testimony? For we ourselves have heard it from his own mouth!”

WOMEN: Then the chief priests with the elders and experts in the law, together with the whole Sanhedrin, reached a decision.

MEN: They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pontius Pilate, the governor.^c

LEADER: Then when Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he felt remorse. He brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders and said, “I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.”

CONGREGATION: But they said, “What is that to us? That’s your problem.”

WOMEN: He threw the pieces of silver into the temple and left. Then he went out and hanged himself.

^a Matthew 26:59-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:65

^b Psalm 110:1

^c Luke 22:66-23:1; Mark 15:1; Matthew 27:2

LEADER: The chief priests took the pieces of silver and said, “It is not lawful to put these into the treasury, since it is blood money.”

MEN: They reached a decision to buy the potter’s field with the money, as a burial place for foreigners.

WOMEN: So that field has been called The Field of Blood to this day. Then what was spoken through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled:

MEN: They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price the sons of Israel had set for him, and they gave them for the potter’s field, just as the Lord commanded me.^a

LEADER: Early in the morning, the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Praetorium. They did not enter the Praetorium themselves, so that they would not become ceremonially unclean. (They wanted to be able to eat the Passover meal.) So Pilate went out to them and said, “What charge do you bring against this man?”

WOMEN: They answered him, “If this man were not a criminal, we would not have handed him over to you.”

LEADER: Pilate told them, “Take him yourselves and judge him according to your law.”

CONGREGATION: The Jews said, “It’s not legal for us to put anyone to death.” This happened so that the statement Jesus had spoken indicating what kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled.^b

MEN: They began to accuse him, saying, “We found this fellow misleading our nation, forbidding the payment of taxes to Caesar, and saying that he himself is Christ, a king.”

WOMEN: Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

LEADER: “It is as you say,” Jesus replied.^c

^a Matthew 27:3-10; see Zechariah 11:12-13; Jeremiah 19:1-13; 32:6-9

^b John 18:28-32

^c Luke 23:2-3

CONGREGATION: The chief priests accused him of many things. When he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

MEN: Pilate questioned him again, “Are you not going to answer anything? See how many charges they are bringing against you!”

WOMEN: But Jesus still did not answer anything, so Pilate was amazed.

CONGREGATION: Pilate went back into the Praetorium and summoned Jesus. He asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?”

LEADER: Jesus answered, “Are you saying this on your own, or did others tell you about me?”

CONGREGATION: Pilate answered, “Am I a Jew? Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?”

LEADER: Jesus replied, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight so that I would not be handed over to the Jews. But now my kingdom is not from here.”

MEN: “You are a king then?” Pilate asked.

LEADER: Jesus answered, “I am, as you say, a king. For this reason I was born, and for this reason I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to my voice.”

MEN: “What is truth?” Pilate said to him.

CONGREGATION: After he said this, he went out again to the Jews and told them, “I find no basis for a charge against him.”^a

WOMEN: But they kept insisting, “He stirs up the people, teaching all through Judea, beginning from Galilee all the way here.”

LEADER: When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that he was under Herod’s jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem during those days.

^a Matthew 27:11-14; Mark 15:1-5; Luke 23:1-4; John 18:28-38

WOMEN: When Herod saw Jesus, he was very glad. For a long time he had wanted to see him, because he had heard many things about him.

MEN: He hoped to see some miracle performed by him. He questioned him with many words, but Jesus gave him no answer.

CONGREGATION: The chief priests and the experts in the law stood there, vehemently accusing him.

WOMEN: Herod, along with his soldiers, treated him with contempt and ridiculed him. Dressing him in bright clothing, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate.

LEADER: Herod and Pilate became friends with each other on that day. Before this they had been enemies of each other.^a

^a Luke 23:4-12

LESSON FOUR

LEADER: Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, and said to them, “You brought this man to me as one who is misleading the people. Look, I have examined him in your presence. I have found in this man no basis for the charges you are bringing against him. Herod did not either, for he sent him back to us. See, he has done nothing worthy of death. So I will have him flogged and release him.”^a

MEN: At the time of the Festival the governor had a custom to release to the crowd any one prisoner they wanted.

CONGREGATION: At that time they were holding a notorious prisoner named Barabbas, who had been thrown in prison for a rebellion in the city and for murder. The crowd came up and began to ask Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

LEADER: So when they were assembled, Pilate said to them, “Do you want me to release the King of the Jews to you? Which one do you want me to release to you? Barabbas—or Jesus, who is called Christ?” For Pilate in fact knew that they had handed Jesus over to him because of envy.

WOMEN: While he was sitting on the judgment seat, Pilate’s wife sent him a message. “Have nothing to do with that righteous man,” she said, “since I have suffered many things today in a dream because of him.”

MEN: But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus put to death.

LEADER: The governor asked them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?”

CONGREGATION: They all shouted together with one voice: “Take him away! Release Barabbas to us!”

LEADER: Pilate said to them, “Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews? What should I do with

^a Luke 23:13-16

Jesus, who is called Christ?”

CONGREGATION: They all said to him, “Crucify him!”

LEADER: But the governor said, “Why? What has he done wrong?”

CONGREGATION: But they kept shouting even louder: “Crucify him!”

MEN: Pilate addressed them again, because he wanted to release Jesus. But they kept shouting, “Crucify! Crucify him!”

LEADER: He said to them the third time, “Why? What evil has he done? I have found no grounds for sentencing him to death. So I will whip him and release him.”

WOMEN: But they kept pressuring him with loud voices, demanding that he be crucified. And their voices were overwhelming.^a

CONGREGATION: Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged.^b

LEADER: The governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole cohort^c of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him. They twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand, knelt in front of him, and mocked him by saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” They spit on him, took the staff, and hit him repeatedly on his head. They also kept hitting him in the face.^d

MEN: Pilate went outside again and said to them, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.”

LEADER: So Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!”

CONGREGATION: When the chief priests and guards saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!”

MEN: Pilate told them, “Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no basis for a charge against him.”

^a Matthew 27:15-23; Mark 15:6-14; Luke 23:17-23; John 18:39-40

^b John 19:1; Matthew 27:26; Mark 15:15

^c A Roman *cohort* was about six hundred soldiers.

^d Matthew 27:27-30; Mark 15:16-19; Luke 23:17-25; John 19:2-3

WOMEN: The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”

LEADER: When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. He went back inside the palace again and asked Jesus, “Where are you from?”

WOMEN: But Jesus gave him no answer.

MEN: So Pilate asked him, “Are you not talking to me? Don’t you know that I have the authority to release you or to crucify you?”

LEADER: Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over me at all if it had not been given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.”

CONGREGATION: From then on Pilate tried to release Jesus. But the Jews shouted, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar! Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar!”

LEADER: When Pilate heard these words, he brought Jesus outside. He sat down on the judge’s seat at a place called the Stone Pavement, or Gabbatha in Aramaic. It was about the sixth hour^a on the Preparation Day for the Passover. Pilate said to the Jews, “Here is your king!”

CONGREGATION: They shouted, “Away with him! Away with him! Crucify him!”

LEADER: Pilate said to them, “Should I crucify your king?”

MEN: “We have no king but Caesar!” the chief priests answered.^b

CONGREGATION: When Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing and that instead it was turning into a riot, he decided that what they demanded would be done.

MEN: He took water, washed his hands in front of the crowd, and

^a The word *about* indicates an approximate time reference. Likely this was in the first part of the day, between 6 AM and 9 AM, using the time system of the Roman civil day, which began at 12 midnight. Mark 15:25 states that Jesus was crucified at 9 AM. John also seems to use Roman civil time to calculate the day in John 20:19 (because the evening is considered part of the *first day of the week*. Jewish time regarded sunset as the beginning of the next day).

^b John 19:4-15

said, “I am innocent of this righteous man’s blood. It is your responsibility.”

CONGREGATION: And all the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

LEADER: Since he wanted to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them.

WOMEN: So then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.^a

LEADER: After they had mocked him, the soldiers took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him. Jesus was carrying his own cross.

MEN: As they were going out of the city, a certain man, Simon of Cyrene (the father of Alexander and Rufus), was passing by on his way in from the country. They placed the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus.

WOMEN: A large crowd of the people was following him, including women who were mourning and wailing for him.

LEADER: Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. Be sure of this: The days are coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never gave birth, and the breasts that never nursed.’ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us!’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’^b For if they do these things to the green wood, what will happen to the dry?”^c

^a Matthew 27:24-26; Mark 15:15; Luke 23:24; John 19:16

^b Hosea 10:8

^c Matthew 27:31-32; Mark 15:16-19; Luke 23:26-31; John 19:16-17

LESSON FIVE

LEADER: Two other men, who were criminals, were led away with Jesus to be executed. They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha, which means, “The place of a skull.”

CONGREGATION: They offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.

MEN: They crucified him there with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left.

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

WOMEN: Now it was the third hour^a when they crucified him.

CONGREGATION: Pilate also had a notice written and fastened on the cross. It read, “Jesus the Nazarene, the King of the Jews.”

MEN: Many of the Jews read this notice, because the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek.

LEADER: So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, “Do not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that ‘this man said, “I am the King of the Jews.”””

MEN: Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

WOMEN: When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier. They also took his tunic, which was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom.

LEADER: So they said to one another, “Let’s not tear it. Instead, let’s cast lots to see who gets it.” This was so that the Scripture might be fulfilled which says:

They divided my garments among them
and cast lots for my clothing.^b

^a 9 AM

^b Psalm 22:18

MEN: So the soldiers did these things. Then they sat down and were keeping watch over him there.

WOMEN: People who passed by kept insulting him, shaking their heads and saying, “You who were going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”

LEADER: Those who were crucified with him also insulted him. In the same way the chief priests, experts in the law, and elders kept mocking him.

CONGREGATION: They said, “He saved others, but he cannot save himself. If 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, because he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”^a

MEN: One of the criminals hanging there was blaspheming him, saying, “Aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!”

WOMEN: But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God, since you are under the same condemnation? We are punished justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for what we have done, but this man has done nothing wrong.”

MEN: Then he said, “Jesus, remember me^b when you come in^c your kingdom.”

LEADER: Jesus said to him, “Amen I tell you: Today you will be with me in paradise.”^d

WOMEN: Jesus’ mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene were standing near the cross.

LEADER: When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son!” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother!” And from that time this disciple took her into his own home.^e

^a Matthew 27:33-43; Mark 15:20-32; Luke 23:26-38; John 19:16-24

^b Some witnesses to the text read *Then he said to Jesus, “Remember me, Lord. . . .”*

^c A few witnesses to the text read *into*.

^d Luke 23:39-43

^e John 19:25-27

CONGREGATION: It was now about the sixth hour,^a and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour,^b while the sun was darkened.

LEADER: At the ninth hour Jesus shouted with a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”^c

MEN: When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah!”

LEADER: After this, knowing that everything had now been finished, and to fulfill the Scripture, Jesus said, “I thirst.”

WOMEN: A jar full of sour wine was sitting there. Immediately one of them ran, took a sponge, and soaked it with sour wine. Then he put it on a stick and gave him a drink.

LEADER: When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, “It is finished!”

Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”^d When he had said this, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

CONGREGATION: Suddenly the temple curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and rocks were split. Tombs were opened, and many bodies of saints who had fallen asleep were raised to life. Those who came out of the tombs went into the holy city after Jesus’ resurrection and appeared to many people.

LEADER: When the centurion and those who were guarding Jesus with him saw the earthquake and how he cried out with a loud voice and breathed his last, they were terrified and began to glorify God, saying, “This man really was righteous. Truly this was the Son of God.”

MEN: When all the groups of people who had gathered to see this spectacle saw what had happened, they returned home beating their

^a Jewish time began with sunrise, so the sixth hour was about noon.

^b 3 PM

^c Psalm 22:1

^d Psalm 31:5

chests.

CONGREGATION: All those who knew Jesus, and many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and who had served him, were there, watching from a distance.

WOMEN: Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, Salome, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

LEADER: Since it was the Preparation Day, the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses over the Sabbath (because that Sabbath was a particularly important day).

CONGREGATION: They asked Pilate to have the men's legs broken and the bodies taken away.

MEN: So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first man who was crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other man.

WOMEN: But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

CONGREGATION: Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear. Immediately blood and water came out.

MEN: The one who saw it has testified, and his testimony is true. He knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe.

WOMEN: Indeed, these things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled, "Not one of his bones will be broken."^a Again another Scripture says, "They will look at the one they pierced."^b

LEADER: When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathaea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews. Joseph of Arimathaea, a prominent member of the council, was a good and righteous man. He had not agreed with their plan and action. He was looking forward to the kingdom of God. He boldly went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

CONGREGATION: Pilate was surprised that Jesus was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had been

^a Exodus 12:46; Numbers 9:12

^b Matthew 27:45-56; Mark 15:33-41; Luke 23:44-49; John 19:28-37; Zechariah 12:10

dead for a long time. When he learned from the centurion that it was so, he granted the body to Joseph.

MEN: Joseph bought a linen cloth, came, and took Jesus' body away.

WOMEN: Nicodemus, who earlier had come to Jesus at night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-two pounds.^a

CONGREGATION: They took Jesus' body and bound it with linen strips along with the spices, in accord with Jewish burial customs.

LEADER: There was a garden at the place where Jesus was crucified. And in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid.

MEN: So they laid Jesus there, because it was the Jewish Preparation Day, and the tomb was near.

WOMEN: Joseph took the body and laid it in his own new tomb that he had cut in the rock. He rolled a large stone over the tomb's entrance and left.

CONGREGATION: The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed after Joseph, and they observed the tomb and how Jesus' body was laid there.

WOMEN: Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph were watching where the body was laid.⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. On the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment.^b

LEADER: On the next day, which was the day after the Preparation Day, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered in the presence of Pilate and said, "Sir, we remembered what that deceiver said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise again.' So give a command that the tomb be made secure until the third day. Otherwise his disciples might steal his body and tell the people, 'He is risen from the dead.' And this last deception will be worse than the first."

^a Literally *one hundred litras*. Greek *litra* is the Roman pound (327.45 grams or 11.55 ounces, by weight).

^b Matthew 27:57-61; Mark 14:42-47; Luke 23:50-56; John 19:38-42

MEN: Pilate said to them, “You have a guard. Go, make it as secure as you know how.”

CONGREGATION: So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and posting a guard.^a

^a Matthew 27:62-66