

The symbols of the following passion narrative represent:

- N narrator;
- + Christ;
- S speakers other than Christ;
- P people (congregation).

N The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

For short form read only the part in brackets.

N One of the Twelve whose name was Judas Iscariot went off to the chief priests and said,

S "What are you willing to give me if I hand Jesus over to you?"

N They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he kept looking for an opportunity to hand him over. On the first day of the feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came up to Jesus and said,

P "Where do you wish us to prepare the Passover supper for you?"

+ "Go to this man in the city and tell him, 'The Teacher says, My appointed time draws near. I am to celebrate the Passover with my disciples in your house.' "

N The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover supper. When it grew dark he reclined at table with the Twelve. In the course of the meal he said,

+ "I give you my word one of you is about to betray me."

N Distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another,

S "Surely it is not I, Lord?"

+ "The man who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will hand me over. The Son of Man is departing, as Scripture says of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. Better for him if he had never been born."

N Then Judas, his betrayer, spoke:

S "Surely it is not I, Rabbi?"

+ "It is you who have said it."

N During the meal Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to his disciples.

+ "Take this and eat it, this is my body."

N Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them.

+ "All of you must drink from it, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, to be poured out in behalf of many for

the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink this fruit of the vine from now until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's reign."

N Then, after singing songs of praise, they walked out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus then said to them,

+ "Tonight your faith in me will be shaken, for Scripture has it:

'I will strike the shepherd  
and the sheep of the flock will be dispersed.'

But after I am raised up, I will go to Galilee ahead of you."

N Peter responded,

S "Though all may have their faith in you shaken, mine will never be shaken!"

+ "I give you my word, before the cock crows tonight you will deny me three times."

S "Even though I have to die with you, I will never disown you."

N And all the other disciples said the same. Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemani.

+ "Stay here while I go over there and pray."

N He took along Peter and Zebedee's two sons, and began to experience sorrow and distress. Then he said to them,

+ "My heart is nearly broken with sorrow. Remain here and stay awake with me."

N He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer.

+ "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Still, let it be as you would have it, not as I.

N When he returned to his disciples, he found them asleep. He said to Peter,

+ "So you could not stay awake with me for even an hour? Be on guard, and pray that you may not undergo trial. The spirit is willing but nature is weak."

N Withdrawing a second time, he began to pray:

- + "My Father, if this cannot pass me by without my drinking it, your will be done!"
- Once more, on his return, he found them asleep; they could not keep their eyes open. He left them again, withdrew somewhat, and began to pray a third time, saying the same words as before. Finally he returned to his disciples and said to them:
- + "Sleep on now. Enjoy your rest! The hour is on us when the Son of Man is to be handed over to the power of evil men. Get up! Let us be on our way! See, my betrayer is here."
- N While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived accompanied by a great crowd with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. His betrayer had arranged to give them a signal, saying,
- S "The man I shall embrace is the one; take hold of him."
- N He immediately went over to Jesus, embraced him, and said to him,
- S "Peace, Rabbi."
- + "Friend, do what you are here for!"
- N At that moment they stepped forward to lay hands on Jesus, and arrested him. Suddenly one of those who accompanied Jesus put his hand to his sword, drew it, and slashed at the high priest's servant, cutting off his ear. Jesus said to him:
- + "Put back your sword where it belongs. Those who use the sword are sooner or later destroyed by it. Do you not suppose I can call on my Father to provide at a moment's notice more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the Scriptures be fulfilled which say it must happen this way?"
- N At that very time Jesus said to the crowd:
- + "Am I a brigand, that you have come armed with swords and clubs to arrest me? From day to day I sat teaching in the temple precincts, yet you never arrested me. Nonetheless, all this has happened in fulfillment of the writings of the prophets."
- N Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. Those who had apprehended Jesus led him off to Caiaphas, the high priest, where the scribes and elders were convened. Peter kept following him at a distance as far as the high priest's residence. Going inside, he sat down with the guards to see the outcome. The chief priests, with the whole Sanhedrin, were busy trying to obtain false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death. They discovered none, despite the many false witnesses who took the stand. Finally two came forward who stated:
- P "This man has declared, 'I can destroy God's sanctuary and rebuild it in three days.' "
- N The high priest rose to his feet and addressed him:
- S "Have you no answer to the testimony leveled against you?"
- N But Jesus remained silent. The high priest then said to him:
- S "I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God."
- + "It is you who say it. But I tell you this: Soon you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven."
- N At this the high priest tore his robes:
- S "He has blasphemed! What further need have we of witnesses? Remember, you heard the blasphemy. What is your verdict?"
- P "He deserves death!"
- N Then they began to spit in his face and hit him. Others slapped him, saying:
- P "Play the prophet for us, Messiah! Who struck you?"
- N Peter was sitting in the courtyard when one of the serving girls came over to him and said,
- S "You too were with Jesus the Galilean."
- N He denied it in front of everyone:
- S "I don't know what you are talking about!"
- N When he went out to the gate another girl saw him and said to those nearby,
- S "This man was with Jesus the Nazorean."
- N Again he denied it with an oath:
- S "I don't know the man!"
- N A little while later some bystanders came over to Peter and said,
- P "You are certainly one of them! Even your accent gives you away!"
- N At that he began cursing and swore,
- S "I don't even know the man!"
- N Just then a rooster began to crow and Peter remembered the prediction Jesus had made: "Before the rooster crows you will three times disown me." He went out and began to weep bitterly.

At daybreak all the chief priests and the elders of the people took formal action against Jesus to put him to death. They bound him and led him away to be handed over to the procurator Pilate. Then Judas, who had handed him over, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, began to regret his action deeply. He took the thirty pieces of silver back to the chief priests and elders and said,

S "I did wrong to deliver up an innocent man!"

P "What is that to us? It is your affair!"

N So Judas flung the money into the temple and left. He went off and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the silver, observing,

P "It is not right to deposit this in the temple treasury since it is blood money."

N After consultation, they used it to buy the potter's field as a cemetery for foreigners. That is why that field, even today, is called Blood Field. On that occasion, what was said through Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of a man with a price on his head, a price set by the Israelites, and they paid it out for the potter's field just as the Lord had commanded me." [Jesus was arraigned before the procurator, (Pontius Pilate,) who questioned him:

S "Are you the king of the Jews?"

+ "As you say."

N Yet when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he had made no reply. Then Pilate said to him,

S "Surely you hear how many charges they bring against you?"

N He did not answer him on a single count, much to the procurator's surprise. Now on the occasion of a festival the procurator was accustomed to release one prisoner, whom the crowd would designate. They had at the time a notorious prisoner named Barabbas. Since they were already assembled, Pilate said to them,

S "Which one do you wish me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus the so-called Messiah?"

N He knew, of course, that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was still presiding on the bench, his wife sent him a message:

S "Do not interfere in the case of that

holy man. I had a dream about him today which has greatly upset me."

N Meanwhile, the chief priests and elders convinced the crowds that they should ask for Barabbas and have Jesus put to death. So when the procurator asked them,

S "Which one do you wish me to release for you?"

P "Barabbas,"

N Pilate said to them,

S "Then what am I to do with Jesus, the so-called Messiah?"

P "Crucify him!"

S "Why? What crime has he committed?"

N But they only shouted the louder,

P "Crucify him!"

N Pilate finally realized that he was making no impression and that a riot was breaking out instead. He called for water and washed his hands in front of the crowd, declaring as he did so,

S "I am innocent of the blood of this just man. The responsibility is yours."

N The whole people said in reply,

P "Let his blood be on us and on our children."

N At that, he released Barabbas to them. Jesus, however, he first had scourged; then he handed him over to be crucified. The procurator's soldiers took Jesus inside the praetorium and collected the whole cohort around him. They stripped off his clothes and wrapped him in a scarlet military cloak. Weaving a crown out of thorns they fixed it on his head, and stuck a reed in his right hand. Then they began to mock him by dropping to their knees before him, saying,

P "All hail, king of the Jews!"

N They also spat at him. Afterward they took hold of the reed and kept striking him on the head. Finally, when they had finished making a fool of him, they stripped him of the cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him off to crucifixion. On their way out they met a Cyrenian named Simon. This man they pressed into service to carry the cross. Upon arriving at a site called Golgotha (a name which means Skull Place), they gave him a drink of wine flavored with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink. When they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among them by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept

watch over him. Above his head they put the charge against him in writing: "This is Jesus, King of the Jews." Two insurgents were crucified along with him, one at his right and one at his left. People going by kept insulting him, tossing their heads and saying:

**P** "So you are the one who was going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days! Save yourself, why don't you? Come down off that cross if you are God's Son!"

**N** The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders also joined in the jeering:

**P** "He saved others but he cannot save himself! So he is the king of Israel! Let's see him come down from that cross, and then we will believe in him. He relied on God; let God rescue him now if he wants to. After all, he claimed, 'I am God's Son.' "

**N** The insurgents who had been crucified with him kept taunting him in the same way. From noon onward, there was darkness over whole land until midafternoon. Then toward midafternoon Jesus cried out in a loud tone,

+ "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?"

**N** That is,

+ "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

**N** This made some of the bystanders who heard it remark,

**P** "He is invoking Elijah!"

**N** Immediately one of them ran off and got a sponge. He soaked it in cheap wine, and sticking it on a reed, tried to make him drink. Meanwhile the rest said,

**P** "Leave him alone. Let's see whether Elijah comes to his rescue."

**N** Once again Jesus cried out in a loud voice, and then gave up his spirit. Suddenly the curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, boulders split, tombs opened. Many bodies of saints who

had fallen asleep were raised. After Jesus' resurrection they came forth from their tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. The centurion and his men who were keeping watch over Jesus were terror-stricken at seeing the earthquake and all that was happening, and said,

**P** "Clearly this was the Son of God!"]

**N** Many women were present looking on from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to attend to his needs. Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. When evening fell, a wealthy man from Arimathea arrived, Joseph by name. He was another of Jesus' disciples, and had gone to request the body of Jesus. Thereupon Pilate issued an order for its release. Taking the body, Joseph wrapped it in fresh linen and laid it in his own new tomb which had been hewn from a formation of rock. Then he rolled a huge stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. But Mary Magdalene and the other Mary remained sitting there, facing the tomb. The next day, the one following the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees called at Pilate's residence.

**P** "Sir, we have recalled that that impostor while he was still alive made the claim, 'After three days I will rise.' You should issue an order having the tomb kept under surveillance until the third day. Otherwise his disciples may go and steal him and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead!' This final imposture would be worse than the first."

**S** "You have a guard. Go and secure the tomb as best you can."

**N** So they went and kept it under surveillance of the guard, after fixing a seal to the stone.