

The Arrest, Trial, and Crucifixion of Jesus

The Gospel According to Mark, chapters 14-15

This Gospel reading has four parts identified by formatting: Here's the key:

- **THE CONGREGATION will read bold parts like this.**
- Narrator: plain text like this.
- Jesus: underlined sections like this.
- *Other parts: italicized sections like this.*

Narrator: ¹The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were two days away. *The Jewish leaders—the chief priests and the scribes—gathered to discuss how they might secretly arrest Jesus and kill Him.*

Jewish Leaders: ²We can't do it during the festivals. It might create an uproar.

Narrator: ³While Jesus was eating dinner in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came into the house carrying an alabaster flask filled with a precious, sweet-smelling ointment made from spikenard. She came to Jesus, broke the jar, and gently poured out the perfume onto His head. ⁴Some of those around the table were troubled by this and grumbled to each other.

Dinner Guests: Why did she waste this precious ointment? ⁵We could have sold this ointment for almost a year's wages,* and the money could have gone to the poor!

Narrator: Their *private concerns* turned to public criticism against her.

Jesus: ⁶Leave her alone. Why are you attacking her? She has done a good thing. ⁷The poor will always be with you, and you can show kindness to them whenever you want. But I won't always be with you. ⁸She has done what she could for Me—she has come to anoint My body and prepare it for burial. ⁹Believe Me when I tell you that this act of hers will be told in her honor as long as there are people who tell the good news.

Narrator: ¹⁰It was after this that Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went to meet the chief priests with the intention of betraying Jesus to them. ¹¹When they heard what he proposed, they were delighted and promised him money. So from that time on, Judas thought and waited and sought an opportunity to betray Jesus. ¹²On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the customary day when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, His disciples wondered where they would celebrate the feast.

Disciples: Where do You want us to go and make preparations for You to eat the Passover meal?

Narrator: ¹³So again He sent two of His disciples ahead and told them to watch for a man carrying a jar of water.

Jesus: Follow that man; ¹⁴and wherever he goes in, say to the owner of the house, "The Teacher asks, 'Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with My disciples?' "

¹⁵He will take you upstairs and show you a large room furnished and ready. Make our preparations there.

Narrator: ¹⁶So the two left and went into the city. All was as Jesus had told them, and they prepared the meal in the upper room. ¹⁷That evening Jesus and the twelve arrived and went into the upper room; ¹⁸and each reclined around the table, leaning upon an elbow as they ate.

Jesus: I tell you in absolute sincerity, one of you eating with Me tonight is going to betray Me.

Narrator: ¹⁹The twelve were upset. They looked around at each other.

Disciples (*one by one*): Lord, it's not I, is it?

Jesus: ²⁰It is one of you, the twelve—one of you who is dipping your bread in the same dish that I am. ²¹The Messiah goes to His fate. That has already been predicted in the Scriptures. But still, it will be terrible for the one who betrays Him. It would have been better for him if he had never been born.

Narrator: ²²As they ate, Jesus took bread, offered a blessing, and broke it. He handed the pieces to His disciples.

Jesus: Take this and eat it. This is My body.

Narrator: ²³He took a cup of wine; and when He had given thanks for it, He passed it to them, and they all drank from it.

Jesus: ²⁴This is My blood, a covenant* poured out on behalf of many. ²⁵Truly I will never taste the fruit of the vine again until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.

Narrator: ²⁶After the meal, they sang a psalm and went out of the city to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus: ²⁷All of you will desert Me tonight. It was written by Zechariah, I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will scatter. ²⁸But when I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee.

Peter: ²⁹It doesn't matter who else turns their back on You. I will never desert You.

Jesus: ³⁰Peter, mark My words. This very night before the cock crows twice, you will have denied Me three times.

Peter: ³¹No, Teacher. Even if it means that I have to die with You, I'll never deny You.

Narrator: All the other disciples said similar things. ³²They came *at length* to a garden called Gethsemane.

Jesus: Stay here. I'm going a little farther to pray and to think.

Narrator: ³³He took Peter, James, and John with Him; and as they left the larger group behind, He became distressed and filled with sorrow.

Jesus: ³⁴My heart is so heavy; I feel as if I could die. Wait here for Me, and *stay awake to keep watch.*

Narrator: ³⁵He walked on a little farther. Then He threw Himself on the ground and prayed for deliverance from what was about to come.

Jesus: ³⁶Abba, I know that anything is possible for You. Please take this cup away so I don't have to drink from it. But whatever happens, let Your will be done—not Mine.

Narrator: ³⁷He got up, went back *to the three*, and found them sleeping.

Jesus: Simon, are you sleeping? Couldn't you wait with Me for just an hour? ³⁸Stay awake, and pray that you aren't led into a trial of your own. *It's true—even when the spirit is willing, the body can betray it.*

Narrator: ³⁹He went away again, and prayed again the same prayer as before—pleading with God yet surrendering to God's will. ⁴⁰He came back and found the three asleep; and when He woke them, they didn't know what to say to Him. ⁴¹After He had gone away and prayed for a third time, He returned to find them slumbering.

Jesus: Again? Still sleeping and getting a good rest? Well, that's enough sleep. The time has come; the Messiah is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴²Get up now, and let's go. The one who is going to betray Me is close by.

Narrator: ⁴³Before He had finished talking, Judas (one of the twelve) approached with a large group of people—agents of the chief priests, scribes, and elders in Jerusalem armed with swords and clubs. ⁴⁴The signal they had arranged was a kiss. "Watch to see whom I kiss; He's the One," Judas had told them. "Arrest Him, and take Him into secure custody."

Narrator: ⁴⁵As soon as they arrived, Judas stepped forward and kissed Jesus.

Judas: My Teacher.

Narrator: ⁴⁶Immediately the soldiers grabbed Jesus and took Him into custody. ⁴⁷Now one of the disciples standing close by drew his sword and swung, cutting off the ear of a slave of Caiaphas, the high priest.

Jesus: ⁴⁸Am I a thief or a bandit that you have to come armed with swords and clubs to capture Me? ⁴⁹I sat teaching in the temple every day with you. You could have taken Me at any time, but you never did. Let the Scriptures be fulfilled.

Narrator: ⁵⁰When they saw the armed crowd take Jesus into custody, the disciples fled. ⁵¹One of those following Jesus was a young man who was wearing nothing but a linen cloth. When people from the mob grabbed for him, ⁵²he wriggled out of their grasp, left them holding the cloth, and ran naked into the night.

⁵³They led Jesus off to see the high priest, who had gathered a council of religious and civic leaders, scribes, chief priests, and elders to hear the evidence and render some decision regarding Jesus. ⁵⁴Peter followed, at a safe distance, all the way into the courtyard of the high priest, and he sat down with the guards to warm himself at their fire. He hoped no one would notice.

⁵⁵The chief priests and other religious leaders called for witnesses against Jesus so they could execute Him, but things didn't turn out the way they had planned. ⁵⁶There were plenty of people willing to get up and accuse Jesus falsely, distorting what Jesus had said or done; but their testimonies disagreed with each other, and the leaders were left with nothing. ⁵⁷Some gave the following distorted testimony:

Witnesses: ⁵⁸We heard Him say, "I will destroy this temple that has been made by human hands, and in three days, I will build another that is not made by human hands."

Narrator: ⁵⁹But even here the witnesses could not agree on exactly what He had said. ⁶⁰The high priest stood up and turned to Jesus.

High Priest: Do You have anything to say in Your own defense? What do You think of what all these people have said about You?

Narrator: ⁶¹But Jesus held His peace and didn't say a word.

High Priest: Are You God's Anointed, the Liberating King, the Son of the Blessed One?

Jesus: ⁶²I am. One day you will see the Messiah "sitting at God's right hand, in the place of honor and power," and "coming in the clouds of heaven."

Narrator: ⁶³Then the high priest tore his clothes and addressed the council.

High Priest: What else do we need to hear? ⁶⁴You have heard the blasphemy from His own lips. What do you have to say about that?

Narrator: The verdict was unanimous—Jesus was guilty of a capital crime. ⁶⁵So the people began to humiliate Him. Some even spat upon Him. Then He was blindfolded, and they slapped and punched Him.

People: Come on, Prophet, prophesy for us! Tell us who just hit You.

Narrator: Then the guards took Him, beating Him as they did so. ⁶⁶⁻⁶⁷While Peter was waiting by the fire outside, one of the servant girls of the high priest saw him. She looked at Peter and said, "You were one of those men with Jesus of Nazareth."

Peter: ⁶⁸*Woman, I don't know what you're talking about.*

Narrator: He left the fire, and as he went out into the gateway, he heard a rooster crow. ⁶⁹The servant girl saw him again, and said, "Hey, this is one of them—one of those who followed Jesus."

Peter: ⁷⁰*No, I'm not one of them.*

Narrator: A little later, some of the other bystanders turned to Peter.

Bystanders: Surely you're one of them. You're a Galilean. We can tell by your accent.

Narrator: ⁷¹And then he swore an oath that if he wasn't telling the truth that he would be cursed.

Peter: Listen, I don't even know the man you're talking about.

Narrator: ⁷²And as he said this, a rooster crowed a second time; and Peter remembered what Jesus had told him: "Before the rooster crows twice, you will have denied Me three times."

He began to weep.

Narrator: ^{15:1}When morning came, the chief priests met in council with all the Jewish leaders. They bound Jesus, led Him away, and turned Him over to the Roman governor, Pilate. After hearing them, Pilate spoke to Jesus.

Pilate: ²*Are You the King of the Jews?*

Jesus: You have said so.

Narrator: ³The chief priests went on to accuse Jesus of many things, but Jesus simply stood quietly.

Pilate: ⁴Do You have anything to say? How do You respond to all these charges that have been made against You?

Narrator: ⁵But Jesus said nothing more, and Pilate was astonished. ⁶Now it was his custom at that feast that Pilate should release one prisoner from custody, whomever the people most desired. ⁷There was one rebel from those imprisoned for insurrection against the Roman occupation. He had committed murder during an uprising. His name was Barabbas. ⁸A crowd had gathered in front of Pilate's judgment seat to request that Pilate follow his usual custom. ⁹Pilate turned to them.

Pilate: Why don't I release to you the King of the Jews?

Narrator: ¹⁰He knew that the chief priests had delivered Jesus because they were threatened by Him, not because Jesus was a criminal. ¹¹But priests moved among the crowd and persuaded them to call for Barabbas instead.

Pilate: ¹²Then what do you want me to do with the King of the Jews?

Crowd: ¹³Crucify Him, crucify Him!

Narrator: ¹⁴But Pilate called to them.

Pilate: Why? What has He done to deserve such a sentence?

Crowd: Crucify Him, crucify Him!

Narrator: ¹⁵When Pilate saw that he could not persuade the crowd to change its mind, he released Barabbas to them and had Jesus publicly whipped, which was the normal prelude to crucifixion. Then he had Jesus led away to be crucified. ¹⁶The soldiers took Him into the headquarters of the governor; and the rest of the soldiers in the detachment gathered there, hundreds of them. ¹⁷They put a purple robe on Him and made a crown of thorns that they forced onto His head, ¹⁸and they began to cry out in mock salute.

Soldiers: Hail to the King of the Jews!

Narrator: ¹⁹For a long while they beat Him on the head with a reed, spat upon Him, and knelt down as if to honor Him. ²⁰When they had finished mocking Him, they stripped off His purple robe and put His own clothes back on Him. Then they took Him away to be executed.

²¹Along the way, they met a man from Cyrene, Simon (the father of Rufus and Alexander), who was coming in from the fields; and they ordered him to carry the heavy crossbar of the cross. ²²And so they came at last to the execution site, a hill called Golgotha, which means the "Place of a Skull."

²³The soldiers offered Jesus wine mixed with myrrh to dull His pain, but He refused it. ²⁴And so they crucified Him, divided up His clothes, and cast lots (an ancient equivalent of rolling dice) to see who would keep the clothes they had stripped from Him.

²⁵His crucifixion began about nine o'clock in the morning. ²⁶Over His head hung a sign that indicated the charge for which He was being crucified. It read, "THE KING OF THE JEWS."

²⁷On either side of Him were two insurgents who also had received the death penalty.

²⁸And the Hebrew Scripture was completed that said, "He was considered just another

criminal.”²⁹Those passing by on their way into or out of Jerusalem insulted and ridiculed Him.

Some in the Crowd: So You’re the One who was going to destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days? ³⁰Well, if You’re so powerful, then why don’t You rescue Yourself? Come on down from the cross!

Narrator: The chief priests and scribes also mocked Jesus.

Chief Priests and Scribes: ³¹He rescued others, but He can’t rescue Himself. ³²Let the Anointed—the King of Israel—come down from the cross now, and we will see it and believe.

Narrator: Even the insurgents who were being crucified next to Him taunted Him and reviled Him.³³At noon, the day suddenly darkened for three hours across the entire land. ³⁴Sometime around three o’clock Jesus called out in a loud voice.

Jesus: Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?

Narrator: Jesus was speaking from the psalms, “My God, My God, why have You turned Your back on Me?”³⁵Some of those standing nearby misunderstood Him.

Bystanders: Hey, He’s calling for Elijah.

Narrator: ³⁶One of them filled a sponge with wine that had turned to vinegar and lifted it to Jesus’ lips on a stick so He could drink.

Bystander: Let’s see if Elijah will come to take Him down.

Narrator: ³⁷Then Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and He took His last breath. ³⁸*At that moment,* the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

³⁹The Roman Centurion, the soldier in charge of the executions, stood in front of Jesus, heard His words, and saw the manner of His death.

Centurion: Surely this man was the Son of God!

Narrator: ⁴⁰Off in the distance, away from the crowds, stood some women who knew and had followed Jesus, including Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of the younger James, Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹These were women who used to care for Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who had followed Jesus to Jerusalem joined them.

⁴²Evening came. The crucifixion had taken place on preparation day, Friday, before the Jewish Sabbath began at sundown. ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the ruling council who was also a believer anxiously waiting for the kingdom of God, went to Pilate and boldly asked for the body of Jesus.

⁴⁴Pilate could not believe Jesus was already dead, so he sent for the Centurion, ⁴⁵who confirmed it. Then Pilate gave Joseph permission to take the body.

⁴⁶Joseph had the body wrapped in a linen burial cloth he had purchased and laid Him in a tomb that had been carved out of rock. Then he had a stone rolled over the opening to seal it. ⁴⁷Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were watching as the body was interred.