

The Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark (NRSV)

Voices: Narrator (N), Jesus (J), Women (W), Men (M)

Please join in at the appropriate times, women in the congregation reading together (W) and men reading together (M).

N: As soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate asked him,

W: Are you the King of the Jews?

N: He answered him,

J: You say so.

N: Then the chief priests accused him of many things. Pilate asked him again,

W: Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.

N: But Jesus made no further reply, so Pilate was amazed. Now at the festival Pilate used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked. Now a man called Barrabas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection. So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them,

W: Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?

N: For he realised that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barrabas for them instead. Pilate spoke to them again,

W: Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?

N: They shouted back,

M: Crucify him!

N: Pilate asked them,

W: Why, what evil has he done?

N: But they shouted all the more,

M: Crucify him!

N: So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barrabas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified. Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace and they called together the whole cohort. And they clothed him in a purple cloak; and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him. And they began saluting him,

M: Hail, King of the Jews!

N: They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him. After mocking him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him out to crucify him. They compelled a passer-by, who was coming in from the country, to carry his cross; it was Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus. Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of the skull). And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it. And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left. Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying,

M: Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!

N: In the same way the chief priests, along with the scribes, were also mocking him among themselves and saying,

M: He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Messiah, the king of Israel, come down from the cross now, so that we may see and believe.

N: Those who were crucified with him also taunted him. When it was noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice,

J: Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?

N: which means,

J: My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

N: When some of the bystanders heard it, they said,

M: Listen, he is calling for Elijah.

N: And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick and gave it to him to drink, saying,

M: Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down.

N: Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. (Pause) And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. Now when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said,

All: Truly this man was God's Son!