

## ST JOHN'S PASSION NARRATIVE

*Narrator:* Jesus went out with his disciples and crossed over to the other side of the Kidron Valley. He and his disciples entered a garden there. Judas, his betrayer, also knew the place because Jesus often gathered there with his disciples. Judas brought a company of soldiers and some guards from the chief priests and Pharisees. They came there carrying lanterns, torches, and weapons. Jesus knew everything that was to happen to him, so he went out and asked,

*Jesus:* Who are you looking for?

*N:* They answered,

***ALL:* Jesus the Nazarene.**

*N:* He said to them,

*Jesus:* I Am.

*N:* Judas, his betrayer, was standing with them. When he said, I Am, they shrank back and fell to the ground. He asked them again,

*Jesus:* Who are you looking for?

*N:* They said,

***ALL:* Jesus the Nazarene.**

*N:* Jesus answered,

*Jesus:* I told you, 'I Am.' If you are looking for me, then let these people go.

*N:* This was so that the word he had spoken might be fulfilled: I did not lose anyone of those whom you gave me. Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Jesus told Peter,

*Jesus:* Put your sword away! Am I not to drink the cup the Father has given me?

*N:* Then the company of soldiers, the commander, and the guards from the Jewish leaders took Jesus into custody. They bound him and led him first to Annas. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. Because this other disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard. However, Peter stood outside near the gate. Then the other disciple (the one known to the high priest) came out and spoke to the woman stationed at the gate, and she brought Peter in. The servant woman stationed at the gate asked Peter,

*Servant:* Are you not one of this man's disciples?

*N:* He replied,

*Peter:* I am not.

*N:* The servants and the guards had made a fire because it was cold. They were standing around it, warming themselves. Peter joined them there, standing by the fire and warming himself. Meanwhile, the chief priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus answered,

*Jesus:* I have spoken openly to the world. I have always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all the Jews gather. I have said nothing in private. Why ask me? Ask those who heard what I told them. They know what I said.

*N:* After Jesus spoke, one of the guards standing there slapped Jesus in the face. He said,

*Guard:* Is that how you would answer the high priest?

*N:* Jesus replied,

Jesus: If I speak wrongly, testify about what was wrong. But if I speak correctly, why do you strike me?

N: Then Annas sent him, bound, to Caiaphas the high priest. Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing with the guards, warming himself. One of them asked,

Guard: Are you not one of his disciples?

N: Peter denied it, saying,

Peter: I am not.

N: A servant of the high priest, a relative of the one whose ear Peter had cut off, said to him,

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

N: Peter denied it again, and immediately a rooster crowed. The Jewish leaders led Jesus from Caiaphas to the Roman governor's palace. It was early in the morning. So that they could eat the Passover, the Jewish leaders would not enter the palace; entering the palace would have made them ritually impure. So Pilate went out to them and asked,

Pilate: What charge do you bring against this man?

N: They answered,

**ALL: If he had done nothing wrong, we would not have handed him over to you.**

N: Pilate responded,

Pilate: Take him yourselves and judge him according to your Law.

N: The Jewish leaders replied,

**ALL: The Law does not allow us to kill anyone.**

N: This was so that Jesus' word might be fulfilled when he indicated how he was going to die. Pilate went back into the palace. He summoned Jesus and asked,

Pilate: Are you the king of the Jews?

N: Jesus answered,

Jesus: Do you say this on your own or have others spoken to you about me?

N: Pilate responded,

Pilate: I am not a Jew, am I? Your nation and its chief priests handed you over to me. What have you done?

N: Jesus replied,

Jesus: My kingship does not originate from this world. If it did, my guards would fight so that I would not have been arrested by the Jewish leaders. My kingship is not from here.

N: Pilate said,

Pilate: So you are a king?

N: Jesus answered,

Jesus: You say that I am a king. I was born and came into the world for this reason: to testify to the truth. Whoever accepts the truth listens to my voice.

N: Pilate asked,

Pilate: What is truth?

N: After Pilate said this, he returned to the Jewish leaders and said,

Pilate: I find no grounds for any charge against him. You have a custom that I release one prisoner for you at Passover. Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews? They shouted,

**ALL: Not this man! Give us Barabbas!**

N: Barabbas was an outlaw. Then Pilate had Jesus taken and whipped. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and dressed him in a purple robe. Over and over they went up to him and said,

Soldier: Greetings, king of the Jews!

N: And they slapped him in the face. Pilate came out of the palace again and said to the Jewish leaders

Pilate: Look! I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no grounds for a charge against him.

N: When Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them,

Pilate: Here is the man!

N: When the chief priests and their deputies saw him, they shouted out,

**ALL: Crucify, crucify!**

N: Pilate told them,

Pilate: You take him and crucify him. I do not find any grounds for a charge against him.

N: The Jewish leaders replied,

**ALL: We have a Law, and according to this Law he ought to die because he made himself out to be God's Son.**

N: When Pilate heard this word, he was even more afraid. He went back into the residence and spoke to Jesus:

Pilate: Where are you from?

N: Jesus did not answer. So Pilate said,

Pilate: You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and also to crucify you?

N: Jesus replied,

Jesus: You would have no authority over me if it had not been given to you from above. That is why the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin.

N: From that moment on, Pilate wanted to release Jesus. However, the Jewish leaders cried out, saying,

**ALL: If you release this man, you are not a friend of the emperor! Anyone who makes himself out to be a king opposes the emperor!**

N: When Pilate heard these words, he led Jesus out and seated him on the judge's bench at the place called the Stone Pavement (in Aramaic, *Gabbatha*). It was about noon on the Preparation Day for the Passover. Pilate said to the Jewish leaders,

Pilate: Here is your king.

N: The Jewish leaders cried out,

**ALL: Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!**

N: Pilate responded,

Pilate: What? Do you want me to crucify your king?

N: The chief priests answered.

**ALL: We have no king except the emperor.**

N: Then Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified. The soldiers took Jesus prisoner. Carrying his cross by himself, he went out to a place called the Skull (in Aramaic, *Golgotha*). That is where they crucified him—and two others with him, one on each side

and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a public notice written and posted on the cross. It read, Jesus the Nazarene, the king of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city and it was written in Aramaic, Latin, and Greek. Therefore, the Jewish chief priests complained to Pilate,

**ALL: Do not write, The king of the Jews, but This man said, I am the king of the Jews.**

N: Pilate answered,

Pilate: What I have written, I have written.

N: When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and his sandals, and divided them into four shares, one for each soldier. His shirt was seamless, woven as one piece from the top to the bottom. They said to each other,

Soldier: Let us not tear it. Let us cast lots to see who will get it.

N: This was to fulfil the scripture, They divided my clothes among themselves, and they cast lots for my clothing. That is what the soldiers did. Jesus' mother and his mother's sister, and Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene stood near the cross. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother,

Jesus: Woman, here is your son.

N: Then he said to the disciple,

Jesus: Here is your mother.

N: And from that time on, this disciple took her into his home. After this, knowing that everything was already completed, in order to fulfil the scripture, Jesus said,

Jesus: I am thirsty.

N: A jar full of sour wine was nearby, so the soldiers soaked a sponge in it, placed it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said,

Jesus: It is accomplished!

N: Bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. [*pause*] It was the Preparation Day and the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies to remain on the cross on the Sabbath, especially since that Sabbath was an important day. So they asked Pilate to have the legs of those crucified broken and the bodies taken down. Therefore, the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men who were crucified with Jesus. When they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead so they did not break his legs. However, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. The one who saw this has testified, and his testimony is true. He knows that he speaks the truth, and he has testified so that you also can believe. These things happened to fulfill the scripture, They will not break any of his bones. And another scripture says, They will look at him whom they have pierced. After this Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate if he could take away the body of Jesus. Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one because he feared the Jewish authorities. Pilate gave him permission, so he came and took the body away. Nicodemus, the one who at first had come to Jesus at night, was there too. He brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, nearly seventy-five pounds in all. Following Jewish burial customs, they took Jesus' body and wrapped it, with the spices, in linen cloths. There was a garden in the place where Jesus was crucified, and in the garden was a new tomb in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish Preparation Day and the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus in it.