THE PASSION
OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

PALM SUNDAY

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew **26:14-27:66**

N One of the Twelve, the man called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said,
O What are you prepared to give me if I hand him over to you?
N They paid him thirty silver pieces, and from that moment he looked for an opportunity to betray him.

Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus to say,
C 'Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the passover?.
N He replied:
J Go to so-and-so in the city and say to him, "The Master says: My time is near. It is at your house that I am keeping Passover with my disciples."
N The disciples did what Jesus told them and prepared the Passover. When evening came he was at table with the twelve disciples. And while they were eating he said:
J I tell you solemnly, one of you is about to betray me.
N They were greatly distressed and started asking him in turn,
C Not I, Lord, surely?'
N He answered:
J Someone who has dipped his hand into the dish with me, will betray me.
The Son of Man is going to his fate, as the scriptures say he will, but alas for that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! Better for that man if he had never been born!
N Judas, who was to betray him; asked in his turn,
O Not I, Rabbi, surely?
N Jesus answered:
J They are your own words.

N Now as they were eating, Jesus took some bread, and when he had said the blessing he broke it and gave it to the disciples and said:
J Take it and eat; this is my body.
N Then he took a cup, and when he had returned thanks he gave it to them saying:
J Drink all of you from this, for this is my blood, the blood of the covenant, which is to be poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. From now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the day I drink the new wine with you in the kingdom of my Father.
N After psalms had been sung they left for the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them,
J You will all lose faith in me this night, for the scripture says: I shall strike the shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. But after my resurrection I shall go before you to Galilee.
N At this, Peter said,
O Though all lose faith in you, I wilt never lose faith.
N Jesus answered him,
J I tell you solemnly, this very night, before the cock crows, you will have disowned me three times
N Peter said to him,
O Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.
N And all the disciples said the same.

Then Jesus came With them to a small estate called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples,
J Stay there while I go over there to pray.
N He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with him. And sadness came over him, and great distress. Then he said to them,
J My soul is sorrowful to the point of death. Wait here and keep awake with me.

N And going on a little further he fell on his face and prayed:
J My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Nevertheless, let it be as you, not I, would have it.
N He came back to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter:
J So you had not the strength to keep awake with me one flour? You should be awake, and praying not to be put to the test. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.
N Again, a second time, he went away and prayed:
J My Father, if this cup cannot pass by without my drinking it, your will be done!
N And he came back again and found them sleeping, their eyes were so heavy. leaving them there, he went away again and prayed for the third time, repeating the same words. Then he came back to the disciples and said to them,
J You can sleep on now and take your rest. Now the hour has come when the Son of Man is to be betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let us go! My betrayer is already close at hand.
N He was still speaking when Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared, and with him a large number of men armed with swords and clubs, sent by the chief priests and elders of the people. Now the traitor had arranged a sign with them. He had said:
O The one I kiss, he is the man. Take him in charge.
N So he went straight up to Jesus and said,
O Greetings, Rabbi,
N and kissed him. Jesus said to him,
J My friend, do what you are here for.
N Then they came forward, seized Jesus and took him in charge. At that, one of the followers of Jesus grasped his sword and drew it; he struck out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. Jesus then said:

J Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father who would promptly send more than twelve legions of angels to my defence? But then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that say this is the way it must be?
N It was at this time that Jesus said to the crowds:
J Am I a brigand, that you had to set out to capture me with swords and clubs? I sat teaching in the Temple day after day and you never laid hands on me.
N Now all this happened to fulfil the prophecies in scripture. Then all the disciples deserted him and ran away.

The men who had arrested Jesus led him off to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter followed him at a distance, and when he reached the high priest's palace, he went in and sat down with the attendants to see what the end would be.

The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, however false, on which they might pass the death-sentence.
But they could not find any, though several lying witnesses came forward. Eventually two stepped forward and made a statement,
C This man said, 'I have power to destroy the Temple of God and in three days build it up'.
N The high priest then stood up and said to him:
O Have you no answer to that? What is this evidence these men are bringing against you?
N But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to him:
O I put you on oath by the living God to tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God.
N Jesus answered:

J The words are your own. Moreover, I tell you that from this time onward 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 clothes and said:
O He has blasphemed. What need of witnesses have we now? There! You have just heard the blasphemy. What is your opinion?
N They answered,
C He deserves to die.
N Then they spat in his face and hit him with their fists; others said as they struck him:
C Play the prophet, Christ! Who hit you then?
N Meanwhile Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard, and a servant-girl came up to him and said,
O You too were with Jesus the Galilean.
N But he denied it in front of them all, saying:
O I do not know what you are talking about.
N When he went out to the gateway another servant-girl saw him and said to the people there:
O This man was with Jesus the Nazarene.
N And again, with an oath, he denied it:
O I do not know the man.
N A little later the bystanders came up and said to Peter:
C You are one of them for sure! Why, your accent gives you away.
N Then he started calling down curses on himself and swearing:
O I do not know the man.
N At that moment the cock crew, and Peter remembered what Jesus had said, 'Before the cock crows you will have disowned me three times'. And he went outside and wept bitterly.

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people met in council to bring about the death of Jesus.

They had him bound, and led him away to hand him over to Pilate, the governor.

When he found that Jesus had been condemned, Judas his betrayer was filled with remorse and took the thirty silver pieces back to the chief priests and elders, saying:

O I have sinned. I have betrayed innocent blood.

N They replied:

C What is that to us? That is your concern.

N And flinging down the silver pieces in the sanctuary he made off and hanged himself. The chief priests picked up the silver pieces and said:

C It is against the Law to put this into the. treasury; it is blood-money.

N So they discussed the matter and bought the potter's field with it as a graveyard for foreigners, and this is why the field is called the Field of Blood today. The words of the prophet Jeremiah were then fulfilled: And they took the thirty silver pieces, the sum at which the precious One was priced by children of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, just as the Lord directed me.

Jesus, then, was brought before the governor, and the governor put to him this question:

O Are you the king of the Jews?

N Jesus replied:

J It is you who say it.

N But when he was accused by the chief priests and the elders he refused to answer at all. Pilate then said to him:

O Do you not hear how many charges they have brought against you?

N But to the governor's complete amazement, he offered no reply to any of the charges.

At festival time it was the governor's practice to release a prisoner for the people, anyone they chose. Now there was at

that time a notorious prisoner whose name was Barabbas. So when the crowd gathered, Pi late said to them:
O Which do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?
N For Pilate knew it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. Now as he was seated in the chair of judgement, his wife sent him a message,
O Have nothing to do with that man; I have been upset all day by a dream I had about him.
N The chief priests and the elders, however, had persuaded the crowd to demand the release of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus. So when the governor spoke and asked them:
O Which of the two do you want me to release for you?
N They said:
C Barabbas.
N Pilate said to them:
O What am I to do with Jesus who is called Christ?
N They all said,
C Let him be crucified!
N Pilate asked:
O Why? What harm has he done?
N But they shouted all the louder:
C Let him be crucified!
N Then Pilate saw that he was making no impression, that in fact a riot was imminent. So he took some water, washed his hands in front of the crowd and said,
O I am innocent of this man's blood. It is your concern.
N And the people, to a man, shouted back:
C His blood be on us and on our children!
N Then he released Barabbas for them. He ordered Jesus to be first scourged and then handed over to be crucified.

The governor's soldiers took Jesus with them into the Praetorium and collected the whole cohort round him. Then they stripped him and made him wear a scarlet cloak, and having twisted some thorns into a crown they put this on his head and placed a reed in his right hand. To make fun of him they knelt to him saying:

C Hail, king of the Jews!

N And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head with it. And when they had finished making fun of him, they took off the cloak and dressed him in his own clothes and led him away to crucify him.

On their way out they came across a man from Cyrene, Simon by name, and enlisted him to carry his cross. When they had reached a place called Golgotha, that is, the place of the skull, they gave him wine to drink mixed with gall, which he tasted but refused to drink.

When they had finished crucifying him they shared out his clothing by casting lots, and then sat down and stayed there keeping guard over him. Above his head was placed the charge against him; it read: 'This is Jesus, the King of the Jews'. At the same time two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

The passers-by jeered at him; they shook their heads and said:

C So you would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days! Then save yourself! If you are God's son, come down from the cross!

N The chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him in the same way, saying:

C He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He puts 'his trust in God; now let God rescue him if he wants him. For he did say, 'I am the son of God'.

N Even the robbers who were crucified with him taunted him in the same way.

From the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out in a loud voice:

J Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?

N That is, 'My God, my God, why have you deserted me?' When some of those who stood there heard this, they said:

C The man is calling on Elijah,

N and one of them quickly ran to get a ,sponge which he dipped in vinegar and, putting it on a reed, gave it him to drink. The rest of them said:

C Wait! See if Elijah will come to save him.

N But Jesus, again crying out in a loud voice, yielded up his spirit.

All kneel and pause a moment

N At that, the veil of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom; the earth quaked; the rocks were split; the tombs opened and the bodies of many holy men rose from the dead, and these, after his resurrection, came out of the tombs, entered the Holy City and appeared to a number of people.

Meanwhile the centurion, together with the others guarding Jesus, had seen the earthquake and all that was taking place, and they were terrified and. said,

C In truth this was a son of God.

N And many women were there, watching from a distance, the same women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and looked after him. Among them were Mary of Magdala, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

When it was evening, there came a rich man of Arimathaea, called Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of

Jesus. Pilate thereupon ordered it to be handed over. So Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean shroud and put it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock. He then rolled a large stone across the entrance of the tomb and went away. Now Mary of Magdala and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the sepulchre.

Next day, that is, when Preparation Day was over, the chief priests and the Pharisees went in a body to Pilate and said to him:

C Your Excellency, we recall that this impostor said, while he was still alive, 'After three days I shall rise again'. Therefore give the order to have the sepulchre kept secure until the third day, for fear his disciples come and steal him away and tell the people, 'He has risen from the dead'. This last piece of fraud would be worse than what went before.

N Pilate said to them:

O You may have your guards. Go and make all as secure as you know how.

N So they went and made the sepulchre secure, putting seals on the stone and mounting a guard.