

Stations of the Cross to be Dramatized

Jesus is condemned to death

Pilate found himself in a bind. He had to choose between what was politically expedient and what was right, so he did what was politically expedient and had Jesus crucified.

Matthew 27:15-26

¹⁵ Now it was the governor's custom each year during the Passover celebration to release one prisoner to the crowd—anyone they wanted. ¹⁶ This year there was a notorious prisoner, a man named Barabbas. ^[a] ¹⁷ As the crowds gathered before Pilate's house that morning, he asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you—Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" ¹⁸ (He knew very well that the religious leaders had arrested Jesus out of envy.)

¹⁹ Just then, as Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent him this message: "Leave that innocent man alone. I suffered through a terrible nightmare about him last night."

²⁰ Meanwhile, the leading priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be put to death. ²¹ So the governor asked again, "Which of these two do you want me to release to you?"

The crowd shouted back, "Barabbas!"

²² Pilate responded, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

They shouted back, "Crucify him!"

²³ "Why?" Pilate demanded. "What crime has he committed?"

But the mob roared even louder, "Crucify him!"

²⁴ Pilate saw that he wasn't getting anywhere and that a riot was developing. So he sent for a bowl of water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood. The responsibility is yours!"

²⁵ And all the people yelled back, "We will take responsibility for his death—we and our children!"^[b]

²⁶ So Pilate released Barabbas to them. He ordered Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip, then turned him over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified.

2008 Cantata Crucify HIM song

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Jesus takes up the cross

It was Roman practice to scourge, whip, and insult a capital prisoner, then make him carry the crossbeam of the cross to the site of the crucifixion. On the way, they made a public spectacle of the prisoner and encouraged the crowds to insult him.

Mark 15:16-20

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

¹⁶ The soldiers took Jesus into the courtyard of the governor's headquarters (called the Praetorium) and called out the entire regiment. ¹⁷ They dressed him in a purple robe, and they wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head. ¹⁸ Then they saluted him and taunted, "Hail! King of the Jews!" ¹⁹ And they struck him on the head with a reed stick, spit on him, and dropped to their knees in mock worship. ²⁰ When they were finally tired of mocking him, they took off the purple robe and put his own clothes on him again. Then they led him away to be crucified.

Jeremy Camp's *This Man*

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Jesus dies

Jesus died about 3:00 in the afternoon, at the time of the evening sacrifice in the Temple. The Lamb of God was slain at the same time as the paschal lambs were being slain in the Temple.

Luke 23:44-49

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁴ By this time it was noon, and darkness fell across the whole land until three o'clock. ⁴⁵ The light from the sun was gone. And suddenly, the curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple was torn down the middle. ⁴⁶ Then Jesus shouted, "Father, I entrust my spirit into your hands!"^[a] And with those words he breathed his last.

⁴⁷ When the Roman officer^[b] overseeing the execution saw what had happened, he worshiped God and said, "Surely this man was innocent."^[c] ⁴⁸ And when all the crowd that came to see the crucifixion saw what had happened, they went home in deep sorrow.^[d] ⁴⁹ But Jesus' friends, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance watching.

Give time to place cards on the cross.

Ronnie Bowman's *Three Rusty Nails*

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Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus Lay Jesus in the Tomb

Joseph and Nicodemus prepared Jesus for burial and put him in a tomb that Joseph had donated. Preparing bodies for burial was normally women's work, so this is an act of devotion. The women witnessed this from afar. Because they stood at a distance and because it was near sundown, they could not see that Joseph and Nicodemus had prepared the body, but they did know where the tomb was.

John 19:39-42 (New Living Translation)

³⁹ With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought seventy-five pounds^[a] of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. ⁴⁰ Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus' body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. ⁴¹ The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. ⁴² And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover^[b] and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Adagio for Strings, as all color is removed from the sanctuary the cross is draped in black and people leave in silence.