

The Passion According to St. Mark

What follows is an abridged version of the Passion according to Mark. Suggestions for use of percussion instruments and hymn stanzas are included. With the exception of pauses between sections, the narration should move quickly among the three readers. The readers are indicated by numbers 1, 2, and 3. The percussion embellishments happen concurrent with the reading unless a note directs the reader to pause or wait. A timpani could be used in place of cymbal rolls.

1: The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark.

3: It was two days before the Passover and the festival of Unleavened Bread. The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him;

2: for they said, “Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.”

3: Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, (*tambourine trill/shake begins*) went to the chief priests in order to betray Jesus to them.

1: When they heard it, they were greatly pleased, and promised to give him money.

2: So Judas began to look for an opportunity to betray Jesus. (*tambourine stops*)

1: On the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed, at evening Jesus came with the twelve. And when they had taken their places and were eating, Jesus said,

3: “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me, the one who is eating with me.”

1: They began to be distressed and to say to him one after another, “Surely, not I?”

3: Jesus said to them, “It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the bowl with me.

2: For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” (*cymbal rim*)

1: While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.”

3: Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it.

1: Jesus said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly I tell you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.”

2: When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

1: And Jesus said to them, “You will all become deserters; for it is written,

2: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’ But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”

3: Peter said to him, “Even though all become deserters, I will not.”

1: Jesus said to him, “Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.”

3: But Peter said vehemently, (*tambourine trill*) “Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you.”

1: And all of them said the same. (*tambourine stops*)

Hymn

Go to dark Gethsemane ELW 347, st. 1

3: They went to a place called Gethsemane; and Jesus said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.”

2: He took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be distressed and agitated.

1: And Jesus said to them, “I am deeply grieved, even to death; (*hand drum throughout this section: quarter and two eighths*) remain here, and keep awake.”

2: And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

3: He said, "Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want."

1: Jesus came and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep awake one hour? (*drum crescendo begins*)

2: Keep awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

3: And again he went away and prayed, saying the same words.

2: And once more he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were very heavy; and they did not know what to say to him.

3: Jesus came a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? Enough! The hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

1: Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand." (*drum stops*)

2: Immediately, while Jesus was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; and with him there was a crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders.

3: Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard."

1: So when he came, he went up to Jesus at once and said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him.

2: Then they laid hands on Jesus and arrested him.

3: But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. (*cymbal rim*)

2: Then Jesus said to them, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit?"

3: Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled." (*tambourine trill*)

Hymn

O sacred head, now wounded ELW 351, st. 1

2: All of them deserted him and fled.

1: A certain young man was following him, wearing nothing but a linen cloth.

2: They caught hold of him, but he left the linen cloth and ran off naked.

3: They took Jesus to the high priest; and all the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes were assembled.

1: Peter had followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest; and he was sitting with the guards, warming himself at the fire.

2: Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none.

1: For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree.

3: Some stood up and gave false testimony against him, saying, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.'"

2: But even on this point their testimony did not agree.

1: Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?"

2: But he was silent and did not answer.

1: Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

2: Jesus said, “I am; and (*soft cymbal roll begins and slowly crescendos through the entire section*) ‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’”

3: Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, (*cymbal slow, dramatic crescendo*) “Why do we still need witnesses? You have heard his blasphemy! What is your decision?”

1: All of them condemned him as deserving death. Some began to spit on him, to blindfold him, and to strike him, saying to him, “Prophesy!” The guards also took him over and beat him. (*crescendo leads to cymbal crash*)

Hymn

O sacred head, now wounded ELW 351, st. 3

3: While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by.

1: When she saw Peter warming himself, she stared at him and said, “You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.”

2: But Peter denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” (*tambourine trill*) And he went out into the forecourt.

3: Then the cock crowed. (*tambourine trill ends with a hand slap*)

2: And the servant girl, on seeing him, began again to say to the bystanders, “This man is one of them.”

3: But again he denied it.

1: Then after a little while the bystanders again said to Peter, “Certainly you are one of them; for you are a Galilean.”

2: But he began to curse, and he swore an oath, (*tambourine trill*) “I do not know this man you are talking about.”

1: At that moment the cock crowed for the second time. (*tambourine hand slap*) Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the cock crows twice, you will deny me three times.”

3: And he broke down and wept. (*cymbal rim*)

3: 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.

2: Pilate asked him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” He answered him, “You say so.”

3: Then the chief priests accused him of many things.

1: Pilate asked him again, “Have you no answer? See how many charges they bring against you.”

3: But Jesus made no further reply, so that Pilate was amazed.

2: Now at the festival he used to release a prisoner for them, anyone for whom they asked.

3: Now a man called Barabbas was in prison with the rebels who had committed murder during the insurrection.

1: So the crowd came and began to ask Pilate to do for them according to his custom. Then he answered them, (*cymbal roll*) “Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?”

2: For he realized that it was out of jealousy that the chief priests had handed him over.

3: But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. (*roll leads to cymbal crash*)

1: Pilate spoke to them again, “Then what do you wish me to do with the man you call the King of the Jews?”

2: They shouted back, “Crucify him!” (*cymbal roll*)

3: Pilate asked them, “Why, what evil has he done?”

2: But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him!” (*roll leads to cymbal crash*)

1: So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Hymn

Were you there ELW 353, st. 1

3: Then the soldiers led him into the courtyard of the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters); and they called together the whole cohort.

2: And they clothed him in a purple cloak; (*tambourine trill*) and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on him.

1: And they began saluting him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

2: They struck his head with a reed, spat upon him, and knelt down in homage to him.

3: 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. (*tambourine stops*)

2: 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.

3: Then they brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means the place of a skull).

1: And they offered him wine mixed with myrrh; but he did not take it.

2: And they crucified him, and divided his clothes among them, casting lots to decide what each should take.

1: 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."

The assembly stands.

2: And with him they crucified two bandits, one on his right and one on his left.

1: Those who passed by derided him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!"

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

2: Those who were crucified with him also taunted him. (*cymbal rim*)

Hymn

Were you there ELW 353, st. 3

1: When it was noon, (*slow hand drum toll in this section*) darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon.

2: At three o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (*drum crescendo*)

3: When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "Listen, he is calling for Elijah."

2: And someone ran, filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink, saying, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down."

1: Then Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last. (*drum stops*)

Ten seconds of silence.

(*out of the silence a cymbal roll crescendos to a very loud crash*)

3: (wait until the crash) And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.

1: Now when the centurion, who stood facing Jesus, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

2: Then Joseph bought a linen cloth, and taking down the body, wrapped it in the linen cloth, and laid it in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock.

1: He then rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of
Joseph saw where the body was laid.

3: The passion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Hymn

Were you there ELW 353, st. 5

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