

PASSION PLAY – 2025 NICODEMUS SCRIPT 12.24

ACT I—Scene 2: Guards at City Gates & Witnessing Mourner

ROMAN 1: *(on the ground)* Who goes there?

PILGRIM/WITNESS 1: Only a traveler from afar who comes to Jerusalem to celebrate the great feast.

ROMAN 2: *(on the top of the wall)* It's just another pilgrim! The city is already overflowing with them.

ROMAN 1: *(on the ground)* Come down from there. We'd better get back to our post, Pilate is due to return any time now. You'll be getting us both in trouble.

[Sheep run across set]

WITNESSING MOURNER: Good Masters, I have just come from Bethany where I was mourning the death of Lazarus and consoling his family. Many of you knew him and some here attended his burial four days ago. The man, Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee, came and stood before the tomb and called upon God and **RAISED LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD!**

(CROWD Noise with following voices overlapping)

PRIEST 2: What?! What are you talking about?!

PRIEST 3: Impossible! Why did you even come here?!

PRIEST 1: It can't be true!

PRIEST 2: Never!

WITNESSING MOURNER: He was dead; now He lives!

PRIEST 1: Guard, remove this man *(emphatically)*.

ANNAS: *(Interrupting)* Wait, *(Approaching the WITNESS)* You were there, and you believe this? *[MOURNER nods agreement]*

CAIAPHAS: Annas, that he believes it is all that matters, true or not. *(To the MOURNER)* Thank you; you may go.

JOSEPH: Caiaphas, this man has done many miracles.

PRIEST 2: Yes, Joseph, he has. And what are we going to do about it?

PRIEST 3: What can we do? It's a sign!

PRIEST 1: A sign of what? If He continues, everyone will believe in Him, Him! And declare Him as King! Then, the Romans will strip us of our privileges, and disperse our nation!

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NICODEMUS: I do not believe He has proclaimed Himself as King.

[ANNAS stands & all are quiet.]

ANNAS: His followers do say it, and He doesn't discourage it. Nicodemus, though we've often disagreed, I have always respected you. You have believed in His... miracles; do you believe in Him? Is He your Messiah?

CAIAPHAS: Do none of you know or see the real issue at hand? It's better that One should die for all rather than the whole nation to perish. If we don't act, the Romans will. He must be arrested, apart from His crowd, so we may question Him. You may go.

[PRIESTS disperse.]

CAIAPHAS & ANNAS proceed out of Sanhedrin with GUARDS 1 & 2.]

CAIAPHAS: *(Pausing & turning to GUARD 2)* Let it out that anyone who cooperates in His capture will be rewarded.

Act I—Scene 4F: Joseph and Nicodemus

JOSEPH: Nicodemus, as far as the high priests are concerned, Jesus might as well have said, "You won't see Me until you hail Me as King!"

NICODEMUS: I know, Joseph. I don't understand Him, but, I sense God all around Him.

JOSEPH: Powerful words. Truthful.

NICODEMUS: Puzzling. When I first met him, he said that the Son of Man must be lifted up just as Moses had lifted up the snake in the wilderness.

JOSEPH: Yes, the children of Israel had sinned against God while wandering in the wilderness and venomous snakes came among them, and God told Moses to fashion a bronze snake and put it on a pole.

NICODEMUS: God said, "If anyone was bitten, they could simply look at the snake on the pole and by faith they would live." But, I still don't understand what

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he means...that the Son of Man must be lifted up just like that.

JOSEPH: Where's he going with all of this?

NICODEMUS: I can't tell. He once told me, "The wind blows where it will," and "You do not know where it's going."

JOSEPH: Nicodemus, let's hope the wind knows where it's going.

Act III—Scene 2: Sanhedrin trial

CAIAPHAS: Annas has questioned him and He wouldn't cooperate. We will hear testimony from those who have heard Him firsthand.

PRIEST 3: (*Rises and is acknowledged by CAIAPHAS*) We were in the synagogue on the Sabbath, as is our custom. Jesus of Nazareth was also present, and before us all, he healed a man whose hand was deformed.

CAIAPHAS: In the synagogue, on the Sabbath?

PRIEST 3: Yes! He has made it a point to call healing and deliverance His "work." Therefore, He "works" on the Sabbath!

JOSEPH: If there was a miracle, it had to be the hand of God!

PRIEST 3: God? God? Have you forgotten that Satan does signs and wonders?

PRIEST 4: He heals and delivers in the name of demons!

PRIEST 3: Even the prince of demons!

JOSEPH: And you heard Him call upon Satan?

PRIEST 3: Of course not!

JOSEPH: Then why did you say it?

[Agitated Crowd noises]

CAIAPHAS: Order! Order! You must wait to be recognized before speaking!

SCRIBE: Then call witnesses!

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PRIEST 4: Jesus of Nazareth has not only taught in outlying synagogues, he's spoken openly in our own Temple courts. Many of you here were present when he threatened to tear down our Temple!

[PRIESTS nod & acknowledge it as truth.]

WITNESS 1: (Stepping up & being recognized) I heard Him say, "I will throw down this Temple made with human hands. And, in three days I'll build another not made with hands."

WITNESS 2: He said, "I can pull down the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days."

WITNESS 1: That's what he said!

NICODEMUS: *(Stepping up & being recognized)* Is this supposed to be reliable testimony? He said He would 'build another Temple not made with hands," clearly symbolic, and that was from three years ago! If that was so serious, it should've been addressed then, not now. I've followed this man's ministry for these three years. I believe He's a man of integrity, honoring God Whom He calls His Father. Indeed, God's the Father of us all!

CAIAPHAS: *(Getting an idea from NICODEMUS' last line, silences all and steps up to NICODEMUS)* Honoring God in truth is the heart of our religion. *(Turning to JESUS)* Do you have anything to say concerning what has been...witnessed?

CAIAPHAS: *(Looking at NICODEMUS)* Then, in the Name of Almighty God, *(Turning to Jesus)* I place you under oath. Are You the Christ, the Son of God?

JESUS: I AM! And you will see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of God and coming with the clouds of heaven.

ANNAS: Blasphemy! *(and more commotion among the priests)*

PRIEST 1: He has claimed to be God!

CAIAPHAS: *(To GUARD 2)* Take Him to Pilate, then go and gather a crowd, our crowd, and have them there at daybreak.

JOSEPH: A time for prayer, my friend?

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NICODEMUS: Joseph, a time for miracles.

Act III—Scene 8a: Crucifixion

LONGINUS: (To SCRIBE) (2:45) Record this: Three crucified at nine o'clock this morning, Gastas and Dysmas for theft and rebellion, and one Jesus, King of the Jews! Nail him to the cross.

NICODEMUS: (3:00-3:05) It's as He told me... Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness...

(NAIL, NAIL.)

MOTHER MARY: (3:15) so the Son of Man must be lifted up...

(NAIL, NAIL.)

NICODEMUS: (3:22) This is what he meant.

(NAIL, NAIL, NAIL.)

JOHN: (3:28-48) For God so loves the world that He has given His Only Begotten Son... (Record as well He has given His One and Ony Son for redundancy)

JESUS: (4:01) Father, forgive them! They do not know what they do!

GASTAS: (4:05) Are You not the Messiah? Save yourself...and us!

DYSMAS: (4:17) Have you no fear of God? You are under the same sentence as He, for it is plain justice. We are paying the price for our misdeeds, but this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!

JESUS: (4:40) I tell you the truth. Today, you will be with me in Paradise.

PRIEST 1: (4:56) You said you were The Son of God; if You are, come down from the cross!

PRIEST 2: Are You, our King? Come down, and then we will believe!

PRIEST 3: (5:07) He has saved others; why can't He save himself?

PRIEST 1: (5:11) Why won't God rescue Him, if He is God's Son?

MARY LAZ: (5:30) What are they doing? What's happening?

SIMON OF CYRENE: (5:35) The Roman soldiers are dividing his garments.

JOSEPH: (5:37) How can this be? How can they know? Is this David's prophecy?

NICODEMUS: (5:43) It must be. "They have pierced his hands and his feet.

They divided his clothes among them and cast lots for his garments."

JESUS: (6:00) Mother, see your son! (6:07) John, here is your mother!

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JESUS: (6:20-23) *(Record two versions: One with a loud voice and another with a very soft voice)* My GOD! My GOD! Why have You forsaken Me?

ROMAN 1: (6:33) *(To ROMAN 2)* What is this? A Storm?

ROMAN 2: I don't know. It's midday, but the sun is going dark.

LONGINUS: I can feel this darkness. Report this to Pilate.

JESUS: (6:50) ...I...I am thirsty.

JESUS: (With a loud voice) (7:06) It is finished! (7:17) Father! Into Your Hand, I commit my Spirit!

Act IV—Scene 2: Burial

JOSEPH: Friends, Pilate has granted us the body.

JAMES: Let us take him down from the cross.

NICODEMUS: We have brought spices and linen to bury Him.

JOSEPH: And I have a new tomb nearby; we can take Him there.

MOTHER MARY: My own Son, how has this happened? Simeon warned me of this so many years ago, when Joseph and I first brought him to Jerusalem. I cradled him tightly, my little baby boy, after Simeon told me: "A sword will pierce your soul." Now I know what he meant.

(The Pieta)

NICODEMUS: Is this what the prophet Isaiah spoke of?

JOSEPH: Surely, He took up our pain...

MOTHER MARY: He bore our suffering...

JOHN: He was pierced for our transgressions,

MARY LAZ: crushed for our iniquities,

MAGDALENE: the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,

MOTHER MARY: and by his wounds we are healed.