

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 PILATE (12.20.24)

ACT I—Scene 3: Pilate Arrives

PILATE: Claudia, it's good to see you here.

CLAUDIA: It's good to see you, too! How was your tour of inspection?

PILATE: It went well? When did you arrive from Caesarea?

CLAUDIA: Only a few hours ago. It went as well as can be expected. It was just long and lonely.

PILATE: In that case, I'll be sure to travel back with you.

(Herod and his entourage is coming down the Via)

CENTURION: Pilate, there are rumors that this holy man of the Jews...Messiah I believe they call him. There are rumors he's coming here.

PILATE: Longinus, it is more than rumor. It's fact. What is more, Herod my old enemy is also here for their Jewish Passover. But enough of this for now, let us go in.

Act III—Scene 4a: Pilate Private Trial

PILATE: You are of the Sanhedrin? I have been expecting you. What of the prisoner?

PRIEST 1: *(From the ground @ porch steps)* One Jesus of Nazareth, a self-proclaimed teacher who subverts the traditions of our nation. He has gained a radical following; you witnessed it five days ago when He came to the festival.

PILATE: If He breaks your traditions, judge Him yourselves, by your Law.

PRIEST 2: It's come to more than that. He has proclaimed Himself our Messiah, our King.

PILATE: Are you the king of the Jews?

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JESUS: The words are yours.

PILATE: The words are mine. Yes, indeed they are. *(To Claudia)* What an extraordinary reply. *(Now to priests)* What charge do you bring against him?

PRIEST 1: We believe He's a danger to the peace of Rome as well as our own nation.

PRIEST 2: His followers are encouraged against Rome in matters of taxes and rule.

PRIEST 1: His crimes are worthy of death by our Law and by Rome's.

PILATE: DEATH? You wish to put this man to death over those matters you've accounted?

PRIEST 2: That is our desire, his teaching has caused discontentment among the people all through Judea. It started in Galilee and has spread as far as this city.

PILATE: Is this man then a Galilean?

PRIEST 2: Yes, he is your Excellency *(realizing he has made a mistake)*.

PILATE: Why did you bring him to me then?

PRIEST 2: For trial, your Excellency.

PILATE: For trial? But is he not under Herod's jurisdiction? ...*(They debate among themselves)*... Answer my question!

PRIEST 2: This man is under Herod's jurisdiction, but...

PILATE: Herod is here in Jerusalem at this very time! Take him to Herod. Don't trouble me further. I (have no time) (don't have time) for such foolishness.

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Act III—Scene 4c: Jesus before Pilate Privately

PILATE: Centurion! What's your report?

LONGINUS: Herod is returning him to us.

PILATE: So then, Herod seeks my friendship; I'll be forced to judge this man myself. Longinus, you've been in the city these last few days; what have you seen and heard?

LONGINUS: The crowd thinks He is sent by God, their "Messiah." But I've not heard Him claim to be King. In addition, I heard Him tell the priests to pay what Caesar required. I think the priests don't care for their Law as much as they envy His popularity.

PILATE: *(To JESUS)* I ask again: Are You the King of the Jews?

JESUS: Is that your own idea, or have others suggested it to you?

PILATE: What kind of answer is that? You speak in riddles. Am I a Jew that I should be concerned with such matters? No, your own nation and their chief priests have brought you before me. I repeat: what in the world have you done?

JESUS: My Kingdom doesn't belong to this world. If it did, my followers would fight to save me from arrest. No, my kingdom is from another place.

PILATE: You are a King, then!

JESUS: King is your word. My task is to bear witness to the truth.

PILATE: Truth? What is truth?

JESUS: I know all who are not deaf to truth listen to my voice. For this was I born, for this did I come into the world.

CLAUDIA: Are you troubled by this?

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PILATE: *(Sitting down on judgment seat)* Angry is more like it! I hate being used as a pawn by those I am supposed to rule! They expect me to join with them!

CLAUDIA: You can't! Pilate, please! Surely you don't believe them! Jesus is innocent!

PILATE: I believe the charges are false. Claudia, why are you acting this way? Is there something more? You believe he's innocent; do you believe in Him?

CLAUDIA: I have seen Him in my dreams, quiet and strong... suffering. Can you free Him? You must free Him!

PILATE: I can't judge him guilty; that's... the truth. It's custom to release a prisoner, at the feast. I'll release the Nazarene.

Act III—Scene 6: Pilate Public Trial

PILATE: This man, Jesus, has been brought to me by your own chief priests and charged with rebellion against the authority of Rome. I've questioned Him and found no grounds for the charges against Him certainly nothing worthy of death. As is custom at this feast, I will release Him to you.

PRIEST 1: If you want to release someone, then give us Barabbas!

PILATE: Barabbas? Would you have me release a murderer into your very midst. Centurion, have Barabbas brought forth *(to the Centurion)*. Quickly! *(to Claudia)* I shall show them what type of man they would release.

CROWD: *(Cries louder)*

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PILATE: *(To Crowd)* Then, if I release Barabbas, who stands condemned, I'll also release Jesus, uncondemned!

CROWD: *(Various cries,)* "No!" "He must not be released!" Etc.

PILATE: But why? What's He guilty of?

[BARABBUS is brought out.]

CROWD: *(Roars louder)*

ANNAS: By our Law, He has committed blasphemy by claiming to be the Son of God. And, according to our Law, He must be put to death!

PILATE: *(To Barabbas)* Look at this man! He's a thief! A murderer! Now which would you have me release to you? Barabbas? Or Jesus called Messiah?

PRIEST 2: Release Barabbas *(Voices rise crying out for BARABBAS.)*

PILATE: Speak to me! Don't you know I have the power to release you, or have you crucified?

JESUS: You would have no power over me if it hadn't been given you from above.

PILATE: *(To the Roman with JESUS)* Remove him. *(To the ROMAN with BARABBAS)* Release Barabbas. *(To CENTURION)* Have Him flogged; humiliate Him; perhaps that will satisfy them.

[JESUS is brought to the flogging post.]

LONGINUS: Lysimus, now!

5 pairs of hits, break, and then 3 pairs of hits.

LONGINUS: Hold!

(Roman laughter)

MOTHER MARY, MARY MAGDALENE, AND JOHN SCENE

RECORD WITH JESUS VOICE AS WELL IN FIRST PERSON ISAIAH 50:6

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JOHN: The prophet Isaiah wrote of this:
(JESUS FIRST PERSON) "He/I will offer his/my back to those who
beat him/me..."

MOTHER MARY/(JESUS FIRST PERSON): his/my cheek to those who pull out his/my
beard...

MARY MAG: He/I will not hide his face from mocking and spitting.

JOHN: Sovereign Lord, help him.

ROMAN 1: We crown you King of the Jews!

ROMAN 2: Hail O great and mighty king!

[Roman laughter]

PILATE: Enough! Behold your king!! He's been flogged,
beaten, ridiculed, spit on. What more do you want!

CROWD: Crucify him! *(etc.)*

PILATE: Crucify him? Bring water! I am washing my
hands. My hands are clean of this innocent man's
blood.

Let it be recorded that it is on the eve of your Jewish
Passover, it is the 6th hour as I sit here on my
tribunal, my seat of judgment. Behold here is your
King, the man called Jesus. I ask you one last and
final time, what would you have me do with him?

PRIEST 2: Crucify him, Pilate! Crucify Him!

PILATE: Crucify Him yourselves! I hold no charge against
Him. I would release him.

CROWD: *(Cries louder.)*

CAIAPHAS: Anyone who makes Himself a King defies Caesar! You cannot release
Him!

PILATE: Should I crucify Your King?

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CROWD: (*Cries for Caesar*) We have no King but Caesar! We have no King but Caesar! Caesar! Caesar!

PILATE: Then away with Him!

Act III—Scene 7a: Carry the cross

PRIEST 1: Do you see what is written there?

GUARD 2: King of the Jews?

PRIEST 2: You must tell the high priest; Go!

PILATE: What is it, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS: Pilate, the charges on His cross read, "King of the Jews." Many of the people are reading it; it should say that He only "claimed" to be the King of the Jews.

PILATE: What I have written, I have written.

Act IV—Scene 3: Request for Guards

PILATE: So, you are here again?

CAIAPHAS: Governor, we have remembered that this Jesus said He would rise from the dead after three days.

ANNAS: Considering the earthquake and other circumstances surrounding His death, we believe His followers may hide His body and claim He has risen.

CAIAPHAS: This would be worse than if He had never died!

PILATE: I see, yes...yes, I see very well. Set a guard.
Make the area secure.