

PASSION PLAY – 2025- ANNAS SCRIPT (12.6.24)

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!

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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!

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 4D: SANHEDRIN UNREST INSERT

PRIEST 1: Caiaphas, the Nazarene has come to the feast with His disciples and
Lazarus. He is disrupting the commerce at the Temple, and His followers are
hailing him as King! Our guards could not risk a riot...Pilate was watching.

CAIAPHAS: Pilate heard them proclaim Him King?

PRIEST 1: They cried, "Hosanna" and called Him the "Son of David." He might not
understand.

ANNAS: He will understand! We can make sure of that,
and use Pilate to solve this matter.

CAIAPHAS: The Nazarene is teaching at the Temple?

PRIEST 1: Yes, and working miracles!

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CAIAPHAS: Then, ask questions that guide his teaching toward Rome. Perhaps he will say something Pilate will act upon.

ANNAS: If he even hesitates to answer, his followers will think he is afraid. If he cannot answer a question, he will lose their respect. That is what we want, to turn the crowd. Understand? We will come shortly.

ASIDE WITH PRIESTS

PRIEST 1: *(To Annas and Caiaphas)* See?! The whole world is going after him. Enough with these questions, we need to act.

CAIAPHAS: We can't arrest him here and now. The people would riot.

ANNAS: For now, just question him.

ACT II—SCENE 1: JUDAS PLOTTING

JUDAS: *(To Sanhedrin GUARD at porch)* I am here to see the high priest concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

MALCHUS: *(going to CAIAPHAS & ANNAS)* A man to see you about the Nazarene.

JUDAS: I am Judas of Kerioth, a long-time disciple of Jesus, the one you are looking for. Why is it you are seeking to arrest Him?

ANNAS: At the first, we only wished to meet with Him. The Sanhedrin is divided as to what He teaches and what He says of Himself. Caiaphas and I felt that, if He could meet with them, the differences could be settled.

CAIAPHAS: He's a powerful teacher and could be a good leader if His youthful zeal could be tempered.

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ANNAS: He teaches peace, even towards Rome. This could be a great advantage to our nation, considering our circumstances.

CAIAPHAS: However, many of his followers are as confused as our own Sanhedrin. If Caesar were to learn they cry, "Hosanna" to their King, it would be disastrous to our nation; we don't want that, and we believe he doesn't either.

ANNAS: And, we are confident we could end this division if we could only bring him before the Sanhedrin.

JUDAS: But he's openly denounced you!

ANNAS: He cries for holiness. We don't resent that.

CAIAPHAS: But it has made it difficult for us. That is why it's necessary to arrest him before it goes too far. We can't afford a riot.

JUDAS: I can help you. It won't be easy. And it will cost you.

ANNAS: We understand, and appreciate your position. We can certainly help with something to carry you through.

CAIAPHAS: (*Counting out coins & putting them in bag*) Here, thirty silver coins enough?

JUDAS: It is enough ... it is; and this needs to be kept quiet.

CAIAPHAS: I will instruct the Temple guard. Go to them when the time is right. No crowd, no riot. We want it kept quiet as well.

ACT II—SCENE 4: GATHER A CROWD

[PRIEST 2 & SANHEDRIN GUARDS appear from Temple doors and come to steps at center.]

PRIEST 2: (To GUARD 2) Go get Malchus. Make sure Caiaphas is informed. We will need to know where to bring Him and how.

PRIEST 2: Secure a Roman detachment for the arrest.

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PRIEST 2: *(To GUARD 4)* Gather some men, our crowd. We need enough to deter any ideas about resistance, but be quiet; we must not take the chance of alerting the city, YET. We must be sure we have enough show of support to put fear into the Nazarene's followers.

ANNAS: *(To MALCHUS)* When you take Him, bind Him and bring Him here first, as well as any of His followers who would stand up for Him. We must prevent them from gathering resistance.

CAIAPHAS: Do not let Judas know our plans I will go to the Sanhedrin. We will convene and have the Nazarene to Pilate by morning.

ACT II—SCENE 5: GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

JESUS: Yes. This is your moment, the hour when darkness reigns.

ACT III—SCENE 1: PETER'S DENIAL

PRIEST 2: We have taken Him.

ANNAS: How many of His followers did you take?

PRIEST 2: There were only a few; we could've taken them, but Malchus released them.

ANNAS: *(To MALCHUS)* You released His followers?

MALCHUS: There were only a few, and they will not do anything; Jesus told them not to.

ANNAS: And why is it you believed Him? Word will get out now; you should have followed orders.

MALCHUS: One of Jesus' disciples began to attack, cutting off my ear. *(Removing helmet so all can see)* Jesus stopped him and...healed me. They will not fight.

ANNAS: Indeed.... I see.

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SERVANT WOMAN: (*Letting PETER in*) Are you one of this man's disciples?

PETER: Woman, I do not know Him. (*Goes to JOHN.*)

SERVANT WOMAN: Come inside then.

PETER: I'll just stay out here.

ANNAS: Jesus of Nazareth, your disciples openly hail you as King. You don't discourage this; on the contrary, you have publicly defended them. What have you told them in private? Can you explain this "Kingdom of Heaven" You preach?

JESUS: I have spoken openly in the synagogues and Temple courts where all Jews come to be taught. Why are you asking me when you could ask the ones who have heard me?

[GUARD 2 steps up.]

GUARD 2: (*Slaps JESUS*) Is that the way to answer the high priest!

JESUS: If I am wrong, show the evidence. If not, then why am I punished?

ANNAS: If you won't tell us, we will hear... witnesses!

[ANNAS leaves for a moment.]

GUARD 3: (*To PETER*) Aren't you the one that attacked Malchus in the garden tonight?

PETER: You are mistaken.

ACT III—SCENE 2: SANHEDRIN TRIAL

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

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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?

NICODEMUS: Joseph, a time for miracles.

ACT III—SCENE 3: RETURN OF THE SILVER

JUDAS: I must see the high priest!

SERVANT WOMAN: Who are you and why have you come?

ANNAS: It's all right. *(To Judas)* Why have you come? Everything went well, just as expected.

JUDAS: Expected? Then, why was He condemned? Whose "expectations" were met in that? Not mine, and if they were yours all along, then I was lied to!

CAIAPHAS: We didn't know where the questioning would go or what direction His explanation would take...

JUDAS: *(Interrupting)* Explanation! You still expect me to believe you were trying to reconcile the two sides?

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ANNAS: He said He was the Christ; the Son of God, before the whole council! That was the end of any explanation!

CAIAPHAS: Pilate will condemn just one, instead of all, and our place will be safe!

JUDAS: You mean your "profit" will be safe!

ANNAS: You accuse us? With the silver still in your hands?

JUDAS: Silver? Silver? (*Breaking down*) in my blood-covered hands! Innocent blood! Innocent blood, I tell you!

CAIAPHAS: He is not innocent to us. If you believe He is, that's your problem.

ACT III—SCENE 5: IT IS TIME!

CAIAPHAS: Is everything set then?

PRIEST 1: Yes, Caiaphas, there will be a mob gathering at Pilate's porch shortly. Word of punishment for His followers is out, and our guard will be watching the crowd.

ANNAS: Pilate will release a prisoner for the feast, and Jesus' followers may cry out for Him. Who else stands condemned?

PRIEST 2: There are three, one Gastas, another Dysmas, and Barabbas. Of the three, Barabbas is the most known. He has ties with the Zealots and our own guard.

ANNAS: Then spread the word to ask for him.

CAIAPHAS: It is time.

ACT III—SCENE 6: PILATE PUBLIC TRIAL

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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*)

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

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.*]

ACT IV—SCENE 1: SANHEDRIN FEAR

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CAIAPHAS: What is it you called us here for?

PRIEST 1: About the earthquake; it's damaged the curtain in the Temple. It's entirely torn!

PRIEST 2: Top to Bottom! And, it happened precisely at the same time Jesus died!

PRIEST 1: Many are saying it was a sign from God, and that Jesus was a righteous man!

ANNAS: This is most unfortunate. It will give momentum to the cause of His followers.

CAIAPHAS: We have heard how He said He would rise after three days. If His disciples hid the body; this superstitious mob would be out of control!

ANNAS: Then we must guard his tomb; hold his body until after the three days. Then his words will mean nothing!

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.

ACT IV—SCENE 10: BRIBING THE GUARDS

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): While we guarded the tomb, there was an earthquake...

ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): And an angel appeared and rolled away the stone!

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ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): Both of us were knocked out!

ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): When we came to, the tomb was empty and we came here...

CAIAPHAS: Are you trying to cover for yourselves? You let His disciples steal the body!

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): We swear! It was just as we said!

ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): And we don't know where the body is!

ANNAS: Stop this! No one else but you two were there?

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): No, there wasn't.

ANNAS: Then no one else knows what...happened.

CAIAPHAS: We don't know what happened!

ANNAS: We know He didn't rise from the dead! (To GUARDS) You must say His disciples took the body.

ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): But we don't know who took it!

CAIAPHAS: Annas is right, who else would take it?

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): But the angel....

CAIAPHAS: No one else saw the angel, did they? You will do as we say, or you will be punished. You probably fell asleep and dreamed of the angel!

ANNAS: That will be the story. You fell asleep and His disciples stole the body. Spread that around and we will reward you even though you failed. If Pilate hears it, we will deal with him. Agreed?

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): Yes!

ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): Agreed!

ACT IV—SCENE 11: APPEARANCE TO THOMAS