

PALM SUNDAY SCRIPT

SCENE 1: LITURGY OF THE PALMS (*Matthew 21:1-9*)

DEACON OR PRIEST

When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, just say this, "The Lord needs them." And he will send them immediately. This took place to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet, saying, 'Tell the daughter of Zion, Look, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey, and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'

The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. A very large crowd spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!'

Celebrant: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give God thanks and praise.**

Celebrant: It is right to praise you, Almighty God, for the acts of love by which you have redeemed us through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord. On this day he entered the holy city of Jerusalem in triumph, and was proclaimed as King of kings by those who spread their garments and branches of palm along his way. Let these branches be for us signs of his victory, and grant that we who bear them in his name may ever hail him as our King, and follow him in the way that leads to eternal life; who lives and reigns in glory with you and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Celebrant: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

People: **Hosanna in the highest.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3SzM6yNynRc>

SCENE 2: JUDAS (*Matthew 26:14*)

NARRATOR

Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests.

JUDAS

What will you give me if I turn him over to you?

CHIEF PRIEST

Here – take thirty pieces of silver. That should do it.

NARRATOR

And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

SONG: *Were you there, vv 1.*

SCENE 2: GETHSEMANE (*Matthew 26:36-46*)

BETRAYAL AND ARREST OF JESUS (*Matthew 26:47-56; Matthew 27:3-5*)

NARRATOR:

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples

JESUS:

Sit here while I go over there and pray. Peter, James, John, come with me. This sorrow is crushing my life out of me. stay here, and stay awake with me.

NARRATOR:

Jesus threw himself to the ground. His friends lay down and began to doze off.

JESUS:

My Father, if there is any way, get me out of this. But please, not what I want. You, what do *you* want?

NARRATOR:

Jesus came back to where Peter, James and John were lying, asleep.

JESUS:

Peter, you couldn't stay awake with me one hour? Stay awake and pray that you don't get tested. You are so eager, ready for anything in God. But another part of you is as lazy as an old dog sleeping by the fire.

NARRATOR:

Again, Jesus walked into the garden and prayed.

JESUS:

My Father, if there is no other way than this, drinking this cup to the dregs, I'm ready. Do it your way."

NARRATOR:

Once again, Jesus came back to where Peter, James and John were sleeping.

JESUS:

Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? My time is up! The Son of Man is about to be handed into the hands of sinners. Get up! Let's go. My betrayer is here.

NARRATOR:

Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him."
Judas approached Jesus and embraced him.

JUDAS:

Hey, Teacher!

JESUS:

Friend, do what you are here to do.

NARRATOR:

Jesus said to the guards and the crowds,

JESUS:

Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But all this has happened so that what the prophets wrote so long ago may be fulfilled.

NARRATOR:

Then all the disciples deserted him and fled. They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor. When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned, he was sorry and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He said,

JUDAS:

(Agonized) I have sinned! I have betrayed an innocent man!

CHIEF PRIESTS:

What do we care? That's your problem!

NARRATOR:

JUDAS threw down the 30 silver coins and ran away; he went out and hanged himself.

SCENE 4: JESUS BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN (*Matthew 26:57-68*)

NARRATOR:

When morning came, all the chief priests and the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. But even though many stepped up, making up one false accusation after another, nothing was believable.

WITNESS

I heard him say, 'I can tear down this Temple of God and after three days rebuild it.'

CHIEF PRIEST

What do you have to say to the accusation? (JESUS *doesn't answer.*)

I command you by the authority of the living God to say if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.

JESUS

You yourself said it. And that's not all. Soon you'll see it for yourself:

The Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Mighty One, arriving on the clouds of heaven."

CHIEF PRIEST

(Tears his robes and yells.) He blasphemed! Why do we need witnesses to accuse him? You all heard him blaspheme! Are you going to stand for such blasphemy?"

CHIEF PRIESTS

Death! That seals his death sentence.

NARRATOR:

Then they were spitting in his face and banging him around.

They jeered as they slapped him: "Prophecy, Messiah: Who hit you that time?"

SCENE 4: PETER DENIES JESUS (*Matthew 26:69-75*)

NARRATOR

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said,

SERVANT 1

You also were with Jesus the Galilean.

PETER

I don't know what you're talking about.

SERVANT 2

You also were with that Jesus guy, the preacher from Galilee.

PETER

I do not know that guy.

BYSTANDER

You've got to be one of them. Your Galilean accent gives you away.

PETER

For God's sakes, I tell you, I do not know that man!

NARRATOR

Just then, a cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept.

INTERLUDE: PETER

I know what you're thinking – a tough guy like me? Crying like a baby? But I couldn't help it. After what I did... He told me, you know? He said one of us was going to betray him and we were all going to deny we knew him, and I said, "Oh, no, Lord, I'll never deny you! Even if I have to die with you!"

But I guess he didn't want us to fight. He said it had to happen like this. This, from a guy who has power and authority like you've never seen. But this man, last night, got down on his knees and washed our feet. Like a servant. He knelt down in front of me with this basin and started to wash my feet. I pulled them back! The idea of him, touching my feet!

My feet... my feet are filthy. They smell like the oldest, ripest piece of cheese you ever left lying around your kitchen for too many weeks. They're caked in mud and dirt and God knows what. They've got sores all over...

But he washed my feet like they were babies. He washed my feet like he loved them, and me along with them. Everything he'd ever said made sense right then, because he loved me so much. I don't understand it. I'm not lovable. I'm loud, crude, ornery. I'm always charging in without thinking... but he loves me. There's nothing I've done to make it so. I betrayed him tonight, as much as Judas. I ran like a coward. I lied about him, three times.

But just now, they brought him out and as he passed, he looked at me. He knew what I had done, but he looked at me with those eyes that see everything, and he still loved me. No matter what I do. It's an amazing thing. And I'll tell you something, I'd die for that love.

SCENE 6: JESUS BEFORE PILATE (*Matthew 27:1-3, 11-26*)

NARRATOR:

In the first light of dawn, all the high priests and religious leaders met and put the finishing touches on their plot to kill Jesus. Then they tied him up and paraded him to Pilate, the governor. Jesus was placed before the governor, who questioned him:

PILATE

Are you the 'King of the Jews'?

JESUS

If you say so.

NARRATOR:

But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer.

PILATE

Do you hear that long list of accusations? Aren't you going to say something?

NARRATOR:

But Jesus gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now, it was an old custom during the Feast for the governor to pardon a single prisoner named by the crowd. At the time, they had an infamous Jesus Barabbas in prison. With the crowd before him, Pilate said,

PILATE

Which prisoner do you want me to pardon: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the so-called Christ?

NARRATOR

He knew it was through sheer spite that they had turned Jesus over to him. Meanwhile, the high priests and religious leaders had talked the crowd into asking for the pardon of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus.

PILATE

Which of the two do you want me to pardon?

NARRATOR

They shouted, "Barabbas!"

PILATE

Then what do I do with Jesus, the so-called Christ?

NARRATOR

They shouted, "Nail him to a cross!"

PILATE

Then what do I do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah?

NARRATOR

They shouted again, "Nail him to a cross!"

NARRATOR

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying,

PILATE

I'm washing my hands of responsibility for this man's death. From now on, it's in your hands. You're judge and jury.

NARRATOR

Then he pardoned Barabbas. But he had Jesus whipped, and then handed over for crucifixion. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying,

GUARDS

Hail, King of the Jews!

NARRATOR

They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

SONG: *Were you there, vv 2*

SCENE 7: THE CRUCIFIXION AND DERIDING (*Matthew 27:32-56*)

NARRATOR

And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots; then they sat down there and kept watch over him. Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. People who passed by jeered at him, shaking their heads and saying,

PASSERSBY

You bragged that you could tear down the Temple and then rebuild it in three days—so show us your stuff! Save yourself! If you're really God's Son, come down from that cross!

NARRATOR

In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying,

CHIEF PRIESTS

He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.'

NARRATOR

From noon to three, the whole earth was dark. Around midafternoon Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly,

JESUS

Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"

NARRATOR

Which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

BYSTANDER

He's calling for Elijah.

NARRATOR

One of them ran and got a sponge soaked in sour wine and lifted it on a stick so he could drink. The others joked, "Don't be in such a hurry. Let's see if Elijah comes and saves him." But Jesus, again crying out loudly, breathed his last.

At that moment, the Temple curtain was ripped in two, top to bottom. There was an earthquake, and rocks were split in pieces. What's more, tombs were opened up, and many bodies of believers asleep in their graves were raised. (After Jesus' resurrection, they left the tombs, entered the holy city, and appeared to many.)

The captain of the guard and those with him, when they saw the earthquake and everything else that was happening, were scared to death.

They said, "This has to be the Son of God!"

SONG: *Were you there, vv 4*

NARRATOR

There were also quite a few women watching from a distance, women who had followed Jesus from Galilee in order to serve him. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the Zebedee brothers.

Late in the afternoon a wealthy man from Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, arrived. His name was Joseph. He went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate granted his request. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in clean linens, put it in his own tomb, a new tomb only recently cut into the rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

INTERLUDE: MARY

My name is Mary. I'm from Magdala. I'm one of those women, one of those who followed him from Galilee and helped take care of him and the disciples. This man, this man they killed today? This man healed me, and set me free from the worst kind of bondage you can imagine. He cast out seven demons from me, who were torturing me. He gave me back my life. After that he was my life. I would have followed him anywhere. I would have died for him, if they'd let me. He was my Lord.

So following him and tending to his needs and those of his disciples – what else could I do? The only thing that made sense now was serving him. He set me free, you see, and all I wanted to use my freedom for was to serve him. Do you understand? That's who my Lord was.

That's how it was for all of us – this motley collection of people who had been set free – from demons, from sin and degradation, some from blindness, crippling diseases, some from despair and loneliness and meaningless lives – just a bunch of people who love him because of what he did for them. Fairly selfish kind of love, when you think about it. But it was real, it was real when you were with him. He made it real. He made us all able to love in a way we didn't naturally know.

Anyway, the first thing we have to do is bury him. I hear someone has given him a tomb. We'll have to see to it. I guess it's too late now to anoint him before the Sabbath begins. We'll have to do it on Sunday...

(sighs) I'd better find the others and see where they're taking him.

THE END

Palm Sunday 2020/11

Cast:	Narrator:	Steve Seely
	Jesus	Larry Poe
	Chief Priests (3)	Wilkinsons
	Guard	
	Judas	Chris Zabriskie
	Peter	Bill Hoxie
	Servant 1	Beverlie Ludy
	Servant 2	Mary Kercher
	Bystander	Barry Kercher
	Witness/Passerby	Steve and Nancy
	Pilate	Barbara Poe
	Mary	Lisa Colvin