

Arrest and Trial of Jesus

69.— Garden of Gethsemane.

1. When Jesus had finished His prayer, He went with His disciples to the garden of Gethsemane, near Mount Olivet. Having entered, He bade His disciples sit down and rest, while He went to pray. Taking with Him Peter and James and John, He went away a little distance. Oppressed with grief, He said: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death: stay here and watch."

2. Leaving the three apostles, He went forward a little distance, and, falling flat on the ground, prayed thus: "O My Father! if it is possible, let this chalice pass from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Then, rising, He came to the apostles; but they were asleep. Jesus left them, and went again and prayed as He had done before. For the third time He prayed in the same manner, saying the same words.

3. When Jesus had finished His prayer, and for the third time had submitted Himself to the will of His Father, He began His agony. Oppressed with the load of sin that was placed upon Him, and overwhelmed with grief, His sweat became as drops of blood trickling on the ground. His Father sent an angel to comfort Him. When His agony was over, Jesus rose, and, coming to His disciples, said, "Arise, let us go; he that shall betray Me is at hand."

70.—Jesus Delivered to His Enemies.

1. Whilst Jesus was still speaking to His apostles, a great multitude of the priests and people came into the garden. Some carried swords in their hands; others carried clubs and torches. Judas Iscariot walked at their head. When Judas came to Jesus he said, "Hail, Rabbi," and kissed Him.

2. Jesus advanced towards the multitude and asked them whom they sought. They said, "Jesus of Nazareth." He simply answered, "I am He;" when the multitude, overcome with fear, went back and fell to the ground. Then Jesus said, "You have come to seize Me as if I were a thief: whilst I was daily in the Temple, you did not touch Me."

3. As soon as Jesus had said this, the soldiers advanced and seized Him. Peter, seeing what was done to his Master, drew his sword and cut off the

ear of Malchus, the servant of the high priest; but Jesus bade him put back his sword into the scabbard, saying that, if He needed help, His Father Would send Him more than twelve legions of angels.

4. Jesus touched the ear of Malchus and healed it; then He delivered Himself into the hands of the soldiers, who bound Him. The disciples, seeing this, fled; Peter and John alone following at a distance.

71.—Jesus before the High Priest.

1. The multitude led Jesus to the house of Annas, one of the priests. There He was asked concerning His doctrines and disciples. Jesus simply answered, He had taught openly; His words and actions were well known. For this, one of the servants struck Him, asking how He dared to answer thus.

2. After much abuse, Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas the high priest. Here were assembled the priests and the Scribes and a great multitude of the people. Christ was led into their midst; false witnesses were brought in, and all manner of accusations were made against Him; they were determined to put Him to death.

3. When the witnesses had been examined, Caiaphas rose and asked Jesus if He had anything to say; but Jesus held His peace.

Again Caiaphas rose, and adjured Him by the living God to tell whether He was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answered, "*I am.*"

4. The high priest, hearing of this, rent his garments, and declared there was no need of further evidence: all had heard the blasphemy, and, by their law, He who made Himself God, deserved death. He then asked what they thought. They all cried out, "He is worthy of death."

72.—Peter Denies Jesus

1. Whilst Jesus was before the tribunal of the high priest, Peter remained in the hall, among the soldiers, warming himself. One of the servants of the high priest came to him and accused him of being not only a follower of Jesus, but of having been in the garden with Him. Peter declared he knew Him not; and the cock crew.

2. A short time after this, another servant, seeing Peter, said to those that were standing about: "This man was also with Jesus." Peter again denied, and swore with an oath that he knew not Jesus.

3. About an hour after this, a friend of Malchus, whose ear Peter had cut off, also charged him with being a disciple of Jesus; but Peter began to swear he knew not the man. The cock crew the second time.

4. At that moment Jesus was led through the hall. Turning, He looked at Peter, who remembered what Christ had said to him in the early part of the evening: "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice." Peter went out and wept bitterly.

It is related in history that after his denial of Christ Peter always wept when he heard a cock crow, and so frequent were his tears that they made furrows in his cheeks.

5. Man is very weak: Peter saw his Master on Thabor, and yet denied Him in the judgment hall. Had he prayed in the garden, he would not have been so timid in trial: let us, therefore, watch and pray.

73.—The Despair of Judas.

1. When Judas saw that Jesus was condemned to death, he repented of what he had done. Going to the chief priests, he threw down the thirty pieces of silver, declaring he had betrayed innocent blood; then he went out and hanged himself.

2. The priests, taking the money, bought with it a potter's field, in which to bury strangers, for it was not lawful to put blood-money in the treasury of the Temple. This field was called by the Jews Haceldama; that is, *the field of blood*.

74.—Jesus Insulted.

After Jesus was condemned by the great council, the soldiers took him into a large hall, and there began to mock Him and to spit upon Him. Blindfolding Him, they buffeted Him, and then tauntingly asked who struck Him; yet, in the midst of their blasphemies, their jeers, and their scoffs, Jesus remained silent—a wonder to men and angels.

75.—Jesus Before Pilate and Herod.

1. As soon as it was day the great council of the Jews assembled, and again condemned Jesus to death. But Judea being at that time a Roman province, the Jews were forbidden to inflict punishment of death on anyone until they had received the permission of the governor. They therefore, dragged Jesus before Pontius Pilate, who was then governor of Judea.

2. When Jesus was brought before him, Pilate asked what was the accusation against Him. The multitude cried out, "He is a seditious man; He forbids the people to pay tribute to Caesar, and, moreover, declares He is Christ, the King."

3. Pilate asked Jesus if He were a king. He declared He was, but that His kingdom was not of this world. When Pilate heard this he said to the people, "I find no fault in the man." But they only cried out the more, "He is a disturber of the peace, from Galilee even to Jerusalem."

4. Pilate, hearing of Galilee, asked if Jesus were a Galilean. Learning He was, Pilate sent Him to Herod, governor of Galilee, who was then in Jerusalem attending the Paschal feast. When Herod saw Jesus he was very much pleased. He had heard a great deal about Him, and now hoped to see some miracle.

5. But, when questioned, Jesus remained silent. Herod, seeing that his idle curiosity would not be gratified, mocked Our Savior, and, in derision, clothing Him in a white garment, sent Him back to Pilate. That same day Herod and Pilate were reconciled to each other, having before been enemies.

76.—Jesus and Barabbas.

1. During the whole of Christ's trial, Pilate strove to save Him, because he saw Jesus was innocent. But Pilate was a weak man, and feared to resist popular opinion. To add to his embarrassment, his wife had a dream which frightened her very much, and, while Pilate was sitting in the judgment-hall, she sent him a message to have nothing to do with Jesus, because He was a just man.

2. There was a custom among the Jews that, on the feast of the Pasch, the governor should release any prisoner whom the people chose. Pilate, hoping to save Jesus, presented for their choice

Jesus or Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a thief and an assassin.

3. The priests and the ancients persuaded the people to demand the release of Barabbas and the death of Jesus; so, when Pilate again asked whom would he release, they cried out, "Barabbas;" and when he asked what he would do with Jesus, they cried out, "Crucify Him."

4. Barabbas is a picture of sin. Man disobeys, and, by his sin, drives the grace of God from his soul, thus, in a certain sense, killing the soul. Jesus came to free man from sin, and, by His sufferings, pay the ransom for all sin.

77.—Jesus is Scourged and Crowned with Thorns.

1. Pilate still hoped to save Jesus from death, and, at the same time, satisfy the people; He, therefore, ordered Jesus to be scourged. The soldiers led our blessed Savior out of the hall into a courtyard. There they stripped Him, and, tying Him to a pillar, scourged Him.

2. After this, mocking Him, they put a purple garment on him, and, plating a crown of thorns, put it on His head. For a sceptre they put a reed in His hand, and, coming, bowed the knee before Him, saying: "Hail, King of the Jews." They also spat on Him, and, taking the reed, struck Him with it, thus driving the thorns deeper into His head.

78.—Jesus is Condemned to Death.

1. Pilate, seeing the pitiable condition to which Jesus was reduced, thought the sight of Him would appease the malice of the Jews. For this reason he led the Son of God out on a high balcony, and, presenting Him in all His misery, said, "Behold the Man." But the barbarous, blood-thirsty people only cried out the more, "Crucify Him, crucify Him."

2. Pilate still continued irresolute, and hesitated what to do. But when the leaders of the people came and said to him, if he released Jesus he was no friend of Caesar's, he seems to have made up his mind. Hoping to quiet the stings of his conscience, he took a basin of water and, going before the multitude, washed his hands, saying: "I am innocent of the blood of this just man." But the people cried out, "His blood be upon us, and upon our children."

3. For eighteen hundred years has the blood of Christ been upon the Jews. Driven from Judea—without country, without home—strangers amongst strangers—hated, yet feared—have they wandered from nation to nation, bearing with them the visible signs of God's curse. Like Cain, marked with a mysterious sign, they shall continue to wander till the end of the world.