

## **Matthew 27:11-54 The Message (MSG)**

### **Pilate**

<sup>11</sup> Jesus was placed before the governor, who questioned him: "Are you the 'King of the Jews'?"

Jesus said, "If you say so."

<sup>12-14</sup> But when the accusations rained down hot and heavy from the high priests and religious leaders, he said nothing. Pilate asked him, "Do you hear that long list of accusations? Aren't you going to say something?" Jesus kept silence—not a word from his mouth. The governor was impressed, really impressed.

<sup>15-18</sup> 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 the infamous Jesus Barabbas in prison. With the crowd before him, Pilate said, "Which prisoner do you want me to pardon: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus the so-called Christ?" He knew it was through sheer spite that they had turned Jesus over to him.

<sup>19</sup> While court was still in session, Pilate's wife sent him a message: "Don't get mixed up in judging this noble man. I've just been through a long and troubled night because of a dream about him."

<sup>20</sup> Meanwhile, the high priests and religious leaders had talked the crowd into asking for the pardon of Barabbas and the execution of Jesus.

<sup>21</sup> The governor asked, "Which of the two do you want me to pardon?"

They said, "Barabbas!"

<sup>22</sup> "Then what do I do with Jesus, the so-called Christ?"

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

<sup>23</sup> He objected, "But for what crime?"

But they yelled all the louder, "Nail him to a cross!"

<sup>24</sup> When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and that a riot was imminent, he took a basin of water and washed his hands in full sight of the

crowd, saying, "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."

<sup>25</sup>The crowd answered, "We'll take the blame, we and our children after us."

<sup>26</sup>Then he pardoned Barabbas. But he had Jesus whipped, and then handed over for crucifixion.

## The Crucifixion

<sup>27-31</sup>The soldiers assigned to the governor took Jesus into the governor's palace and got the entire brigade together for some fun. They stripped him and dressed him in a red toga. They plaited a crown from branches of a thornbush and set it on his head. They put a stick in his right hand for a scepter. Then they knelt before him in mocking reverence: "Bravo, King of the Jews!" they said. "Bravo!" Then they spit on him and hit him on the head with the stick. When they had had their fun, they took off the toga and put his own clothes back on him. Then they proceeded out to the crucifixion.

<sup>32-34</sup>Along the way they came on a man from Cyrene named Simon and made him carry Jesus' cross. Arriving at Golgotha, the place they call "Skull Hill," they offered him a mild painkiller (a mixture of wine and myrrh), but when he tasted it he wouldn't drink it.

<sup>35-40</sup>After they had finished nailing him to the cross and were waiting for him to die, they whiled away the time by throwing dice for his clothes. Above his head they had posted the criminal charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Along with him, they also crucified two criminals, one to his right, the other to his left. People passing along the road jeered, shaking their heads in mock lament: "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!"

<sup>41-44</sup>The high priests, along with the religion scholars and leaders, were right there mixing it up with the rest of them, having a great time poking fun at him: "He saved others—he can't save himself! King of Israel, is he? Then let him get down from that cross. We'll *all* become believers then! He was so sure of God—well, let him rescue his 'Son' now—if he wants him! He did

claim to be God's Son, didn't he?" Even the two criminals crucified next to him joined in the mockery.

<sup>45-46</sup> From noon to three, the whole earth was dark. Around midafternoon Jesus groaned out of the depths, crying loudly, "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

<sup>47-49</sup> Some bystanders who heard him said, "He's calling for Elijah." 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."

<sup>50</sup> But Jesus, again crying out loudly, breathed his last.

<sup>51-53</sup> 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.)

<sup>54</sup> 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!"