Jesus Christ Is Judged

When the supper was over, Jesus and His disciples left the house. They went to a garden which was just outside the city. It was a place where Jesus often went when He wanted to pray alone.

This time He asked three of His disciples to stay and watch with Him while He prayed. For a long time He prayed, for His heart was heavy and sad. When He came back He found that the three disciples had fallen asleep. "What! Could you not watch with Me one hour?" He said, and then He went away to pray again. But the disciples were so tired that they fell asleep again. At last Jesus woke them up and said: "Arise, and let us go. Here comes the man who betrayed Me."

As He spoke, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, came up, followed by a great crowd of soldiers. Judas had told the soldiers beforehand: "I shall show you whom you must take. I will come up to Him and kiss Him." When Judas saw Jesus in the garden he came up to Him and greeted Him with a kiss. "Judas," said Jesus, "is it with a kiss that you betray Me?"

Then the soldiers took Jesus and led Him away. One of the disciples, Peter, wanted to fight for Jesus. He had a sword with him; he took it out and struck one of the soldiers. But Jesus told him to put the sword away. Then Jesus healed the man that Peter had wounded. All of Christ's friends and disciples were so frightened that they ran away; they left Jesus alone with the soldiers. Only Peter followed Him - from a distance.

At first the soldiers led Jesus to the high priest of the Jews. All the most important Jewish people were gathered there. They all tried to find some fault with Jesus so that they could put Him to death. But no matter how hard they tried, they could not find anything wrong. At last the high priest asked Jesus: "Are you Christ, the Son of God?" Jesus answered: "Yes." Then the high priest was so angry that he tore his clothes and said: "This man calls Himself the Son of God!" And all those

who were there cried: "Put Him to death! Put Him to death!" And the servants took Jesus in the yard, laughed at Him, spat in His face, and struck Him.

Now Peter had followed the crowd and was standing in the yard. He was warming his hands over a fire when one of the servant girls recognized him and said: "You were also with Jesus!" Peter was frightened and said: "No, I do not know Him." Then another servant came up and said, pointing at Peter: "This is one of the disciples of Jesus," and again Peter said: "No." Again someone said: "You must be one of them, for you speak the same way they do." But Peter, speaking loudly, said he was sure he did not even know Jesus Christ. As soon as he said this, he heard the cock crowing, and from the other side of the yard Jesus turned around and looked at him. Then Peter remembered how Jesus had told him during the supper: "This very night, before the cock crows, you will three times deny Me," and Peter left the yard, crying.

The Jews led Jesus to the Roman governor of their country. The Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, wanted to be fair in everything he did. He knew that Jesus Christ had done no harm. He asked Jesus some questions and wanted to let Him go. But the crowd began shouting: "Put Him to death, put Him to death!" Pontius Pilate thought that perhaps the people would feel sorry for Jesus if they saw Him treated badly. So he told his soldiers to take Jesus out and punish Him. The soldiers made a crown of prickly thorns and put it on Christ's head, and they put a red robe, like that of the king, on his shoulders. They laughed at Him and said: "Hail, King of the Jews!" and struck Him again and again. Then they brought Him back to the front porch. Pilate showed Jesus to the crowd, His forehead bleeding, His face and body bruised.

Pilate said: "Here is your king," but the crowd shouted: "We have no king but the Roman king! Put - Jesus to death!" And Pontius Pilate had a bowl of water brought to him. He washed his hands to show that it was not his fault if he did this unjust thing. Then he told his soldiers to take Jesus and put Him to death by nailing Him to a cross.