



Passiontide – From the Last Supper to the high council

Zurich. The Passiontide began with celebration of Palm Sunday. Now we commemorate the Passion of Jesus Christ, who selflessly served mankind to the very end.

Passiontide signifies Christ's time of suffering. During this period of the year, the Christian churches commemorate the sufferings of Jesus Christ as they are portrayed in the gospels. The account of the passion is not a hero's tale, by any means. It all starts with the institution of Holy Communion—Jesus celebrates in the circle of His disciples. But one of them, Judas, betrays Him. Step by dramatic step, however, the world of the believer starts to slip off the rails.

Palm Sunday

As recently as Palm Sunday, Jesus Christ's entry into Jerusalem was met with cheers of "Hosanna". The people held palm fronds and olive branches in their hands.

Last Supper with the disciples

For the very last time, the Lord eats the Passover lamb together with His disciples and Apostles. While they are together, He takes off His outer garment, girds Himself with an apron, pours water into a basin, and washes the feet of His disciples. But one of their number will betray Him: Judas Iscariot.

Gethsemane

After the meal, the Lord and the Apostles go out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus tells the disciples that they will all abandon Him in this night. "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me." – what an urgent cry of the soul! "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." – here too Jesus appears as one burdened with suffering. Even as He speaks, Judas arrives with a great number of armed soldiers. He kisses his Lord. The latter counters by saying, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" The soldiers arrest Jesus.

Peter denies the Lord

To begin with, Jesus is brought to the house of the incumbent high priest, Caiaphas. Simon Peter follows the crowd. When one of the women recognizes him, he denies knowing Jesus—a total of three times. Then the rooster crows.

The interrogation before the high council

The Lord Jesus is questioned. False witnesses bring forth their testimony, and He is accused. Finally He states openly that He is the Son of God: "It is as you say. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." The high priest tears his clothes and says, "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? He is deserving of death."

And so the scene is set for what is about to happen on Good Friday, the culmination of Jesus' time of suffering.

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