

# The Chester Plays: The Passion

*Then Caiaphas and Annas and the soldiers shall lead Jesus to Pilate*

## **Caiaphas**

Sir Pilate, here we bring one 1  
that false is, and our elders' foe.  
And says that tribute may be given none  
to Caesar for him here.  
Wheresoever he and his fellows go,  
they turn the folk to them each one.  
Now ask we judgment here him upon 7  
From thee that has the power.

## **Annas**

Certainly he is our elders' foe. 9  
Wheresoever he goes, to or fro,  
that he is Christ, and king also,  
he preaches openly.  
If Caesar knew that, he would be woe  
such a man if we let go.  
Therefore to damn him we are keen, 15  
lest he us all destroy.

## **Pilate**

Come up, lordings, I you pray, 17  
and we shall hear what he will say  
among this fellowship here.  
What sayest thou, man in mis-array?  
If thou be King of the Jews, now say.

## **Jesus**

As thou sayest, men hear may 22  
a king that thou me make.

## **Pilate**

No cause find I, in good fay, 24  
to do this man to death today.

### **Caiaphas**

Sir, the people – us to displeas  
converted to him all he has. 26

### **Annas**

Yea, all the land of Galilee 28  
clean turned to him has he.  
Therefore judge now ask we,  
this false man to do down.

### **Pilate**

Since he was born there as say ye, 32  
to Herod sent soon shall he be;  
else deprive I him his royalty  
and blemish his renown.  
Go, lead him to Herod hastily,  
and say I send him to justify  
this man of which he hath mastery 38  
at his own liking.

### **First Soldier**

Him shall he have full hastily, 40  
and lead him thither anon will I.  
Come thou forth with thy ribaldry  
and speak with our king.

*Then the two soldiers shall go, leading Jesus to Herod*

Sir King, here Pilate hath you sent  
a shrew that our Law has shent,  
for to have his Judgement 46  
before he hither wend.

### **Herod**

Ah, welcome, Jesus, verament! 48  
And I thank Pilate of his present,  
for oft-times I have been of that intent  
after thee to have sent.

Jesus, much have I heard of thee. 52  
Some virtue fain now would I see.  
If thou from God in majesty  
be come, tell us here.

I pray thee, say now to me,  
and prove some of thy power,  
and much the gladder would I be, 58  
truly, all this year.

*Jesus shall make no reply.*

What! I know that man is wood, 60  
or else dumb, and can no good.  
Such a stalwart never before me stood,  
so stout and stern is he.

Speak on, Jesus, for Cock's blood,  
for Pilate shall not, by my hood,  
do thee none amiss. But mend thy mood 66  
and speak somewhat with me.

Alas, I am nigh mad for woe. 68  
Methinks this man is wondrous fierce,  
deaf and dumb as a doted doe,  
or frantic, truly.

Yet since that Pilate has done so,  
the ill-feeling that was between us two  
I forgive – no more his foe 74  
to be after this day.

Clothe him in white, for in this case 76  
to Pilate it may be solace,  
for Jews' custom before was  
to clothe men that were wood

or mad, as now he him makes,  
as well seems by his face;  
for him that has lost his state of grace 82  
this garment is full good.

*Then the soldiers shall dress him in a white garment*

### **First Soldier**

Have this, Jesus, upon thee – 84  
a noble garment, it seems to me,  
of the king's livery  
that now on thee alights!

### **Second Soldier**

Come on out. Thou may not flee. 88  
Now thou art in thy royalty –  
Sir Herod, king, by leave of thee!  
And gramercy this gift!

*Then the two soldiers shall leave, leading Jesus in the white garment  
to Pilate*

### **First Soldier**

Sir Pilate, here the King hath sent 92  
Jesus again, and since we went,  
he has forgiven his mal-intent  
for thy deed today.

### **Pilate**

Yes, fault in him I can find none, 96  
nor Herod, as seems hereupon.  
Therefore is best we let him go  
whither he will his way.

### **Second Soldier**

Nay, all, all we cry with one voice, 100  
nail him, nail him to the cross.

### **Pilate**

Ye men, for shame! Let be your noise! 102  
My counsel will I say.  
Ye know each one the manner:  
delivered must be a prisoner –  
this feast that now approaches near –  
for honour of the day.  
Will ye Jesus delivered be? 108

### **Third Soldier**

Nay, suffer the death worthy is he, 109  
and thereupon all cry we,  
and Barabbas preserved.

### **Pilate**

What shall I do with Jesus here 112  
that Christ is called, and King in as well?

### **Fourth Soldier**

Nail him on the cross in all manner, 114  
for so he hath deserved.

### **Pilate**

Now, since I see you so fervent, 116  
and agreed that he shall be shent,  
wash I will here in your presence,  
Rage however you would.

*Then Pilate shall wash his hands*

Ye shall all know verament 120  
that I am clean and innocent  
for to shed in no intent  
this righteous man's blood.

*Caiaphas and Annas shall withdraw with Pilate*

### **Pilate**

Ye prelates here every one, 124  
what will ye do? Let him go?

### **Caiaphas**

Nay! Nail him to the cross anon – 126  
and judge him before thou leave.

### **Pilate**

Take ye him, you who are so grim, 128  
and after your Law judge ye him.

### **Annas**

Nay, that is not lawful, joint nor limb 130  
for us no man to deprive.

**Pilate**

What devil of Hell is this to say? 132  
Jesus, tell me, I thee pray,  
art thou King – say “yea” or “nay” –  
of Jews by ancestry?

**Jesus**

Which is it, think thou it so be 136  
or did other men tell it thee?

**Pilate**

Nay, fay! ThyselF may know and see 138  
that no Jew am I.  
Men of thine own nation  
shout for thy damnation  
with many an accusation  
and all this day have done.  
Art thou king – say, for all their cry? 144

**Jesus**

My realm in this world, so say I, 145  
is not – but were it, certainly  
with Jews were I not taken.  
And if my realm in this world were,  
strive I would with you now here  
and wield me such power  
to deprive you of your prey. 151  
But my might in this manner  
will I not prove, nor now appear  
as worldly king; my cause unclear  
were then, in good fay.

**Pilate**

Ergo, a king thou art, or was? 156

**Jesus**

That thou sayest, it is no less. 157  
But now I tell thee here express  
that king I am and may be.  
In world I came to bear witness  
of soothness, and therefore born I was.

And all that believe in soothness  
take heed to that I say. 163

**Pilate**

What is soothness? Tell thou me. 164

**Jesus**

Soothness comes from God's own see. 165

**Pilate**

In Earth hath truth no power  
by thine opinion? 166

**Jesus**

How should truth in Earth be  
while thus judged in Earth is he  
by them that have no authority  
in Earth? Against reason! 168

**Pilate**

Lordings, I find no cause, I wiss,  
to damn this man that here is. 172

**Caiaphas**

Pilate, he hath done much amiss. 174  
Let him never pass.  
By Moses' Law live we  
and after that Law dead shall he be,  
for openly preached has he  
God's Son that he was.

**Annas**

Yea, Pilate, he that makes himself a peer  
either to king or king's consort  
challenges Caesar of all his power,  
and so we have proceeded against him.  
whoso calls himself a king here  
deprives Caesar of his power. 180

**Pilate**

Anon go scourge this losinger  
and beat him, joint and limb. 186

### **First Soldier**

Come now with care, 188  
fellow, for thy fare.  
On thy body bare  
strokes shall thou bear.

### **Second Soldier**

Cast off thy ware, 192  
all thy clothes, yare!  
Flinch now and stare!  
This stalwart I would steer.

*Then they shall strip him and shall bind him to a pillar*

### **Third Soldier**

Now he is bounden 196  
Be he never so wanton  
soon shall he be founden  
with blows in fere.

### **Fourth Soldier**

In woe is he wounden 200  
and his fate is grounden.  
No lad unto London  
such law can him learn.

*Then after they have scourged him, then they shall dress him in  
purple and sit him on a chair*

### **First Soldier**

Now, since he king is, 204  
elegant his clothing is.  
Beggar, I bring thee this,  
thee for to wear.

*Then the second soldier shall place a crown of thorns upon his head*

### **Second Soldier**

All in healing this is 208  
that of old sprung is.  
Of thorns this thing is,  
thee for to wear.

### **Third Soldier**

Now thou has a weed, 212  
have here a reed. *He shall hand him a reed*  
A sceptre I thee bede,  
a king for to be.

### **Fourth Soldier**

Harvey, take heed! 216  
Thus must I need  
for my foul deed  
kneel upon knee.  
Then they shall kneel.

### **First Soldier**

Hail, King of Jews! 221  
That so many men shows,  
ribald, now thee rues,  
with all thy reverence.

### **Second Soldier**

With iron on him hews, cuts 225  
and his hide hews.  
Anointment thee news revives  
for thine offence.

### **Third Soldier**

To paint on his face – 229  
thou that thee king makes,  
take what my nose has.  
Good spice! brand new!

### **Fourth Soldier**

With a hard grace 233  
thou came to this place.  
If thou pass this race,  
sore shalt thou rue.

### **Pilate**

Lordings, here you may see 237  
your king in all his royalty.

### **Caiaphas**

Nay, sir, forsooth, no king have we  
save the emperor of Rome, pardee;  
and unless thou nail him to the tree,  
the Emperor full wrath will be. 239

### **Annas**

All we say right says he. 243  
Judge him while thou hast time.

### **Pilate**

Whether of them will ye have, 245  
Jesus Christ or Barabbas?

### **Caiaphas**

Nay! Jesus, this traitor that is taken, 247  
must nailed be to the tree.  
And let Barabbas go his way.

### **Pilate**

Take him to you now, as I say, 250  
for save him I not may,  
undone but I would be.

### **First Soldier**

This judgment is at an end. 253  
Now propose I that we wend  
this shrew for to shend  
a little here beside.

*The second soldier shall place the cross on Jesus' back*

### **Second Soldier**

Here shalt thou not stay. 257  
Come hither, and be hend  
thy back for to bend.  
Here may thou not abide.

*Then they shall go towards the Mount of Calvary.*

### **Caiaphas**

Now of this fellow we been sure. 261  
Against us it boots him not to bicker.  
Though he sneer, flatter and flicker,  
this fist shall he not flee.

Thou, Jesus, would be our king!  
Go forth! Evil joy thee wring! 267  
For avenged on thee at our liking  
full soon we shall be.

Beat on fast and make him go,  
this fellow that is our elders' foe;  
for all his wiles, from this woe  
shall no man him were.

### **Annas**

Him seems weary of his way. 273  
Some help to get I will assay,  
for this cross, truly,  
so far he may not bear.

Come hither, Simon of Surrey,  
and take this cross anon in hie. 279  
Unto the Mount of Calvary  
help that it were borne.

### **Simon**

The Devil speed this company! 281  
For death he is not worthy!  
For his sake, certainly,  
I hold you all forlorn.

To bear no cross am I intent,  
for it was never mine assent 287  
to procure this prophet's judgement,  
who is full of the Holy Ghost.

### **Caiaphas**

Simon, unless thou want to be shent 289  
and suffer pain and imprisonment,  
this cross upon thy back thou hent  
and let be all thy boast.

### **Simon**

Alas, that ever I hither come! 293  
Would God I had been in Rome  
when I the way hither come,  
thus to be annoyed.

But God I take to witness  
that I do this by distress.  
All, iwiss, through your falseness 299  
I think will be destroyed.

*Then he shall take up the cross.*

### **Annas**

Have done! Bring forth those thieves two! 301  
On either half him they shall go.  
This wretch shall be handled so  
with fellowship together.

Take them here, bound fast,  
while this whipcord may last,  
for the prime of the day is past. 307  
How long shall we be here?

*Then they shall lead out Jesus and the two thieves, and the women  
shall come*

### **First Woman**

Alas, alas, and woe is me! 309  
A doleful sight this is to see.  
so many sick saved hath he  
and now goeth thus away.

### **Second Woman**

Sorrowful may his mother be 313  
to see the flesh so fair and free  
nailed so foul upon a tree,  
as he may be today.

### **Jesus**

Ye women of Jerusalem, 317  
weep not for me, nor make no tears;  
but for your own bairn-team  
ye must weep tenderly  
For time shall come, without doubt,  
ye shall bless belly that never child bear,  
and pap that never milk came near, 323  
so near is your annoy.

### **Caiaphas**

Have done! You tormentors, tite, 325  
and strip him that hath done us spite!

### **First Soldier**

Yea, though he both groan and shite, 327  
out he shall be shaken.  
Be thou angry or be thou fain,  
I will be thy chamberlain.  
This coat gets thou never again  
if I may be waken.

### **Second Soldier**

This coat shall be mine, 333  
for it is good and fine  
and seam is there none therein  
that I can see.

### **Third Soldier**

Yea, God give me pain 337  
if that shall be thine,  
for thou art ever incline  
to draw towards thee.

### **Fourth Soldier**

Nay, fellows, by this day, 341  
at the dice we will play,  
and there we shall assay  
this weed for to win.

### **First Soldier**

Ah, fellow, by this day, 345  
well can thou say!  
Lay forth those clothes – lay  
on board before we stop!

*Then they shall strip Jesus of his clothes and he shall stand naked  
until they have played their game of chance.*

### **Second Soldier**

Fellows, now let see - 349  
here are dice three! -  
which of all we  
shall win this ware.

### **Third Soldier**

Nay, parted they shall be, 353  
for that is equally.  
Therefore, as mote I thee,  
so may I thrive  
or we hither fair.

### **Fourth Soldier**

This coat bout seam, 358  
to break it were shame,  
for in all Jerusalem  
is none such a garment.

### **First Soldier**

His dame now may dream 362  
for her own barm-team;  
for neither aunt nor uncle  
gets this gay garment.

### **Second Soldier**

His other clothes all 366  
to us four can fall.  
First part them I shall,  
and after play for this.  
This kirtle mine I call.  
Take thou this pall.

Each man in this hall 372  
knows I do not amiss.

*To the Third:*

This Kirtle take to thee -

*To the Fourth:*

and thou this to thy fee.  
Each man now may see  
that all we be served.

### **Third Soldier**

Yea, now I advise that we 378  
sit down, as mote I thee,  
so may I thrive  
and look whose this shall be  
that is here reserved.

*Then all shall sit down and the First Soldier shall throw the dice*

### **First Soldier**

Now will I begin 383  
for to cast, before I stop,  
this coat for to win  
that is both good and fine.

*He throws and loses.*

### **Second Soldier**

By my father's kin, 387  
no part has thou therein!  
But, or I hence win,  
this coat shall be mine.  
Take! Here I dare lay,  
are doublets in good array.

*He throws and loses.*

### **Third Soldier**

Thou fails, fellow, truly, 393  
to have this to thy fee,  
for here is quatre-traits.

*He throws and loses.*

Therefore go thou thy way, 396  
and as well thou may,  
and leave this with me.

**Fourth Soldier**

Fellows, verament, 399  
I propose we be at one assent.  
This gay garment  
that is without seam,  
you give by judgement  
to me this vestment,

*He throws and wins*

For cinges God hath me sent, casts of five 405  
think you never so grieved.

**First Soldier**

As I have good grace, 407  
well won it thou has,  
for cinges there was  
that every man might see.

**Caiaphas**

Men, for Cock's face, 411  
how long shall pissing arse [Pewdreas]  
stand naked in that place?  
Go nail him on the tree!

**Second Soldier**

Anon, master, anon. 415  
A hammer have I won.  
As far as I have gone  
there is none such another.

**Third Soldier**

And here are, by my pon, 419  
nails good won  
to nail him upon  
and he were my brother.

### **Fourth Soldier**

Go we to as fast. 423  
This caitiff have I cast.  
He shall be cruelly twisted  
before I go away.

### **First Soldier**

Here is a rope will last 427  
for to draw at the mast.  
This bastard never passed  
so perilous a play.

### **Second Soldier**

Lay him thereupon, 431  
this same mad man,  
and I shall drive on  
this nail to the end.

### **Third Soldier**

As broke I my pon, 435  
cast him down I can  
and make him full wan  
before I from him wend.

*Then they shall place Jesus on the cross.*

### **Fourth Soldier**

Fellows, will ye see 439  
how sleight I shall be  
this fist, before I flee,  
here to make fast?

### **First Soldier**

Yea, but, as mote I thee, 443  
so may I thrive  
short-armed is he.  
To the boring of this tree  
it will not well last.

### **Second Soldier**

Ah, therefore care thee nought. 448  
A trick I have sought.  
Ropes must be bought  
to strain him with strength.

### **Third Soldier**

A rope, as I bethought, 452  
ye shall have in brought.  
Take it here, well wrought,  
and draw him a length.

*Then they shall tie the cord to his left hand because the right was  
nailed in earlier.*

### **Fourth Soldier**

Draws, for your fathers' kin, 456  
while that I drive in  
this ilk iron pin  
that I dare lay will last.

### **First Soldier**

As ever have I win, 460  
his arm is but a fin.  
Now drive on without din  
and we shall draw fast.

*Then three shall pull and the fourth shall drive the nail through.*

### **Second Soldier**

Fellow, by this light, 464  
now were his feet dight,  
this game went on right  
and up he should be raised.

### **Third Soldier**

That shall be done in height 468  
anon in your sight,  
for, by my truth I plight,  
I deserve to be praised.

*Then they shall nail through his feet.*

### **Fourth Soldier**

Fellows, will you see 472  
how I have stretched his knee?  
Why praise ye not me  
that have so well done?

### **First Soldier**

Yea, help now, that he 476  
on height raised may be,  
for, as mote I thee,  
so may I thrive  
almost it is noon.

*Then Pilate, holding a tablet in his hand, shall speak*

### **Pilate**

Come hither, thou, I command thee. 481  
Go nail this tablet unto the tree.  
Since he will King of Jews be  
he must have a cognisance.  
“Jesus of Nazareth” men may see;  
“King of Jews” - how likest thee? -  
is written thereon, for so said he 487  
without variance.

### **Second Soldier**

Nay, sir Pilate, to us take heed. 489  
King is he none, so God me speed.  
Therefore thou dost a sorry deed;  
this writing many a man rues.  
Thou should write that men might read  
how he lies to each lede  
and told everywhere that he went 495  
that he was King of Jews.

### **Pilate**

That that is written I have written. 497

### **Third Soldier**

And in good faith that is foul written, 498  
for every man may well witten  
that wrong thou has wrought.  
What the Devil? King is he none!  
But falsely thereas he hath gone  
he has told leasings many one,  
that dear they should be bought. 504

*Then they shall make merry in front of the cross, and Mary shall  
come, weeping.*

### **Mary**

Alas, my love, my life, my joy! 505  
Alas now, mourning, woe is me!  
Alas, son, my help thou be!  
Thy mother that thee bare  
think on, my fruit, I fostered thee  
and gave thee suck upon my knee.  
Upon my pain thou have pity! 511  
Thou lackest no power.

Alas, why will not my life forlorn 513  
to find my son here me before  
tugg-ed, lugg-ed, and all to-torn  
with traitors by this tide,  
with nails pierced, and crown of thorn?  
Therefore I grow mad, both even and morn,  
to see my child that I have borne 519  
this bitter bale to bide.

My sorrow, sweet son, thou cease, 521  
or from my life thou me release.  
How should I contented be or be in peace,  
to see thee in such penance?  
Since thou me for thy mother chose,  
and of my body born thou was,  
as I conceived thee sinless, 527  
thou grant me some relief.

Alas, the sorrow of this sight 529  
mars my mind, main and might,  
but always my heart methink is light  
to look on what I love.

And when I look anon right  
upon my child that thus is dight,  
would death deliver me in height, 535  
then I would be all above.

Alas, my sorrow when will thou slake 537  
and to these traitors me betake  
to suffer death, son, for thy sake,  
and do as I thee say?

Alas, thieves, why do ye so?  
Slay ye me, and let my son go -  
for him suffer I would this woe - 543  
and let him go away.

### **Mary Magdalene**

Alas, how should my heart be light 545  
to see my gracious Lord in sight  
dolefully drawn and so dight  
that did never man grievance?  
Marred I am main and might  
and for him I am unable to fight;  
but God, that rules always the right, 551  
give you much mischance.

### **Mary Jacobi**

Alas, sorrow sits me sore! 553  
Mirth of thee I get no more.  
Why wouldst thou die, Jesus, wherefore,  
that to the dead gave life?  
Help me, Jesus, with some thing  
and out of this bitter bale me bring,  
or else slay me for anything 559  
and keep me from this strife.

### **Mary Salome**

Come down, Lord, and break thy bonds! 561  
Loose and heal thy lovely hands!  
Or tell me, Jesus, for whom thou wonds, hesitates  
since thou art God and Man.  
Alas, that ever I born was  
to see thy body in such a case.  
My sorrow will never slacken nor cease, 567  
such sorrow is me upon.

### **Annas**

Now this wretch is raised on height 569  
I would see, for all his sleight,  
for his crown how he can fight  
and far from us flee.  
He that has healed so many one  
should now save himself, if that he can,  
and then all we shall believe him upon 575  
that is truly so.

### **Jesus**

Father of Heaven, if thy will be, 577  
forgive them this they do to me;  
for they be blind and may not see  
how wickedly they do amiss.

### **Caiaphas**

If thou be of such power, 581  
and God's son in majesty,  
come down, and we will believe on thee  
that it truly so is.

### **First Thief**

If thou be Christ truly 585  
and God's Son, now as I say,  
save us from this death today  
and thyself also.

### **Second Thief**

Ah, man, be still, I thee pray! 589  
Dread God, I advise thee, ay,  
for foolishly thou speakest, truly.  
Make not thy friend thy foe.  
Man, thou knowest well, iwiss,  
that justly we suffer this,  
for he hath not done so much amiss 595  
to suffer so great annoy.  
But, Lord, I beseech thee,  
when thou art in thy majesty,  
then that thou wilt think on me,  
and on me have mercy.

### **Jesus**

Man, I tell thee, truly, 601  
for thy belief is so verray,  
in Paradise thou shalt be today  
with me there in my bliss.  
And woman, to thee also I say,  
your own son there thou see may  
who clean virgin has been ay 607  
right as thyself is.  
And, John, there thy mother thou may see.

### **John**

Yea, Lord, her keeper I shall be. 610  
Welcome, Mary, mother free;  
together we must go.

### **Mary**

Alas, my heart will break in three! 613  
Alas, Death, I conjure thee!  
The life, son, thou take from me  
and twin me from this woe.

### **John**

Comfort thee now, sweet Mary, 617  
for though we suffer this annoy,  
sister, I tell thee certainly,  
alive thou shall him see  
and rise with full victory  
when he has fulfilled the prophecy.  
Thy son thou shalt see, surely, 623  
within these days three.

### **Jesus**

*Eloi, eloi, eloi, eloi!* 625  
My God, my God, I speak to thee!  
*Eloi lama sabachthani!*  
Why has thou thus forsaken me?

### **First Soldier**

Ah, hark, hark how he crieth upon Eli 629  
to deliver him of his annoy.

### **Second Soldier**

Abide, and we shall see in haste 631  
whether Eli dare come here.

### **Jesus**

My thirst is sore, my thirst is sore. 633

### **Third Soldier**

Yea, thou shalt have drink therefore 634  
that thou shalt want to drink no more  
for all this seven year.

### **Jesus**

Mighty God in majesty, 637  
to work thy will I would never wand. hesitate  
My spirit I betake to thee;  
receive it, Lord, unto thy hand.  
Consummatum est.

### **Centurion**

Lordings, I say you certainly, 642  
this was God's Son Almighty.  
No other, forsooth, believe will I,  
for needs so it must be.

I know by manner of his cry  
he has fulfilled the prophecy 648  
and godhead showed openly  
in him – all men may see.

### **Caiaphas**

Centurion, as God me speed, 650  
thou must be mad – thou canst not read! give advice  
But when thou seest his heart bleed,  
let's see what thou can say.  
Longeus, take this spear in hand  
and strike away from thee – look thou not wand.

### **Longinus**

Ah, Lord, I see neither sea nor land 656  
this seven year, truly.

### **Fourth Soldier**

Have this spear and take good heed. 658  
Thou must do, as the Bishop thee bade  
a thing that is of full great need.  
To resist I hold thee mad.

### **Longinus**

I will do as ye bid me, 662  
but on your peril it shall be.  
What I do I may not see,  
whether it be evil or good.

*Then Longinus shall pierce Christ's side with a spear*

High King of Heaven, I thee here.  
What have I done well know I never,

but on my hand and on my spear 668  
out water runneth throw;  
and on my eyes some does fall  
that I may see both one and all.  
Ah, Lord, wherever be this well  
that this water came from.

Alas, alas. And well-away! 674  
What deed have I done today?  
A man I see, sooth to say,  
I have never slain in this sted.  
But this I think may be Christ truly  
that sick and blind has healed ay.  
Of mercy, Lord, I thee now pray, 680  
for I knew not what I did.

Jesus, much have I heard speak of thee, 682  
that sick and blind through thy pity  
has healed before in this city  
as thou has me today.  
Thee will I serve, and with thee be,  
for well I believe in days three  
thou will rise full in power 688  
from enemies, Lord, I to thee pray.

### **Joseph**

Ah, Lord God, what hearts have ye 690  
to slay this man that I here see  
dead, hanging upon rood-tree,  
that never yet did amiss.  
For certainly, God's Son is he.  
Therefore a tomb – is made for me -  
therein his body buried shall be, 696  
for he is King of Bliss.

### **Nicodemus**

Sir Joseph, I say certainly 698  
this is God's son Almighty.  
Go ask from Pilate his body,  
and buried shall he be.  
I shall help thee, truthfully,

to take him down, devoutly,  
though Caiaphas go stark mad thereby, 704  
and all his company.

*Then Joseph of Arimathea shall come to Pilate and shall say:*

**Joseph**

Sir Pilate, particularly I thee pray 706  
a boon thou grant me as thou may.  
This prophet that is dead today,  
thou grant me his body.

**Pilate**

Joseph, all ready, truly! 710  
If that Centurion he will say  
that he is dead without nay,  
him will I not deny.  
Centurion, is Jesus dead?

**Centurion**

Yea, sir, as broke I my head, 715  
in him there is no life led,  
for I stood thereby.

**Pilate**

Joseph, take him then to thee 718  
and bury him where thy will be.

**Joseph**

Gramercy, sir, pardee. 720  
I thank you heartfully.

*Then Joseph shall go on to the Mount (of Calvary)*

Ah, sweet Jesus, sweet Jesus,  
as thou art God, faithful and true,  
in a tomb is made full new  
thy body shall be in laid.  
Shouldst thou never have such virtue 726  
as thou hast showed since I thee knew  
unless godhead thy deeds should show  
as thou before has said.

Therewith, Jesus, come hither to me. 730  
Thy blessed body buried shall be  
with all worship and honesty  
and honour – all that I may.  
Yet hope I within these days three  
in flesh and blood alive to see  
thee that art nail-ed on a tree 736  
unworthily today.

### **Nicodemus**

Joseph, brother, as I well see, 738  
this holy prophet is given to thee.  
Some worship he shall have of me  
that is of might-es most.  
For as I believe, by my faith,  
truly God's Son is he,  
for wondrous sights men might see 744  
when that he yielded his ghost.

For the sun lost all his light; 746  
earthquake made men afright;  
the rock that never before had split  
clave, that men might know;  
graves opened in men's sight;  
dead did rise. Therefore, by right,  
I may say this was God's son Almighty 752  
that so great signs can show.

Therefore here brought have I 754  
a hundred pounds of spicery.  
Myrrh, aloes, and many more thereby  
to honour him with I bring,  
for to anoint his sweet body  
in sepulchre for to lie,  
that he may have on me mercy 760  
in Heaven where he is King.