

# **FOUR BIBLICAL DRAMAS**

**BY**  
**BRUCE HENNIGAN**

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# THE CARPENTER'S SON

A THREE ACT PLAY

BY  
BRUCE HENNIGAN

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**THE CARPENTER'S SON  
A THREE ACT PLAY**

**by  
Bruce Hennigan**

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APPROX. TIME 35 MINUTES**

**SUMMARY:** This is a play that follows the life of small boy, a carpenter's son, from his childhood to the cross of Jesus. Jesus is also depicted as a teenager confronting the Roman powers in order to save his father, Joseph. The Roman centurion who was touched by the death of Christ is followed from his younger days to the foot of the cross.

**CAST:**

BENJAMIN: A CARPENTER  
JOSEPH  
MARY  
YOUNG JESUS  
SIMON -- YOUNG BOY  
TEENAGER (SON OF BENJAMIN IN LATER YEARS)  
OLDER JESUS  
JUSTIS -- ROMAN CENTURION  
ROMAN SOLDIER AT THE FOOT OF CROSS

## ACT 1

*This scene opens with a man and his young son (around 14 to 15 years old) standing around a wooden table beneath an outside lean to or shed. On the table is a large piece of rough wood. Another man is talking to them, a cloth bag draped over his shoulder. His name is Benjamin.*

**BENJAMIN:** It's just gotten too dangerous around here for my family.

**JOSEPH:** I've never known you to run from problems, Benjamin. But, I understand. Once, I had to take my family and run.

**BENJAMIN:** We have only a month until our child is born. With the rebellion getting worse, it has gotten so dangerous around here. And, if I stay here, the Romans will surely . . .

**JOSEPH:** *(Placing his hands on the other man's shoulders.)* Say no more. I will pray for you, Benjamin. Take your family to Jerusalem.

**BENJAMIN:** But, you will be the only carpenter in the village!

**JOSEPH:** I can handle it.

**BENJAMIN:** *(Looks over at the man's son.)* What about your health?

**JOSEPH:** It is just fine. Now, go! And take care of the new son you will have. Perhaps one day we can see him.

**BENJAMIN:** Are you sure you will not come with me? You would be wise to move before there is more trouble.

**JOSEPH:** When God wants me to move, He will tell me. He has done so before.

**BENJAMIN:** Next year, in Jerusalem.

**JESUS AND JOSEPH:** Next year, in Jerusalem. *(Man walks off.)*

**JOSEPH:** *(Turns to the wood on the table.)* See how the lathe strips away the outer layers of roughness.

**JESUS:** Yes. Father, look how white the heart of the wood is.

**JOSEPH:** The inside of a tree, when stripped of its bark, is strong, and smooth, and clean. Feel it.

**JESUS:** (Reaches over to rub his hand across the wood. His father places his hand on his son's and together they feel the wood.) So smooth, father. Your hands are almost magic.

**JOSEPH:** (Laughs.) No. Not magic, son. Just the touch of experience. Now, don't get me wrong, not all wood is like this. Some trees look strong and mighty on the surface and you go to all the trouble to bring them down only to be surprised. You cut through the bark and all you find is rot and decay inside. The tree is eaten away from the inside and never knew it.

**JESUS:** May I try it, father?

**JOSEPH:** Yes. (The father puts his son's hands on the lathe and then places his own on the son's. Together, they lathe the wood.) There. That's good. (Son gently lathes away wood shavings.) You've learned well. You have a gentle, yet strong touch. But, you have always been a good learner.

**JESUS:** Thank you, father.

(A woman comes out of the house with a clay urn and dipper)

**MARY:** Are my two men working hard?

**JESUS:** Mother, father says I have learned quickly. He says I have a gentle touch with the wood.

**MARY:** That doesn't surprise me. Your father is a good teacher.

**JOSEPH:** And a thirsty one.

**MARY:** As I suspected. I just drew this water from the well so it is still cold.

(Father and son drink deeply and the father pours a little of the water on the wood.)

**JOSEPH:** Son, see how the wood glistens and glows after the water. When you clean away the debris of the wood shavings, you see the true nature of the heart of the wood.

**JESUS:** Yes, the water washes away the trash. It is beautiful, father.

**MARY:** Oh dear, we seem to have company. (She looks off stage.)

**JOSEPH:** It is a Roman soldier. What could he want with us?

**JESUS:** Perhaps he is only thirsty, father.

*(Roman soldier walks onto stage, cocky and arrogant.)*

**JUSTIS:** Hey, woman. *(Delivers next sentence loudly and arrogantly. It must be obvious as it will be repeated in the last scene.)* I thirst. Do you hear me, I thirst? Bring me some wine.

**MARY:** *(Looks questioning at her husband and he is getting angry.)* I'm sorry, sir. We do not have any wine.

**JOSEPH:** *(Steps defiantly up to soldier.)* We don't have any wine, today. But, my wife has just brought some cold water from the well. You are welcome to it.

**JUSTIS:** Water? No wine? Well, unless you can work a miracle and turn that water into wine, I'll do without. *(He hesitates and then walks over to the crock.)* I've heard there are lepers in these parts. *(Picks up a ladle full of water and sniffs it.)* But, I am too thirsty to worry about that. If I get ill, you'll pay dearly. *(He drinks from crock and spits part of water on ground.)* It's not as cold as I would like, but it will do.

**JESUS:** Can I fetch you some more, sir?

**JUSTIS:** No. *(He studies the young man suspiciously.)* You are very eager to please me. I suppose your father hasn't pounded sedition and rebellion into your head, yet.

**JOSEPH:** Sir, we lead a peaceful existence here. I do not want to cause you or my family any trouble. I am but a simple carpenter.

**JUSTIS:** *(Reacts with surprise.)* The gods are smiling on me today! I am searching for this village's carpenter. I have work for you.

**JOSEPH:** What kind of work?

**JUSTIS:** Due to your rebellions, the Emperor has ordered the crucifixion of hundreds of rebels. Frankly, we don't have enough crosses. So, I am rounding up carpenters in these parts to make crosses. *(He takes a scroll from his belt.)* Let's see. Three should suffice from you. I'll need them by day after tomorrow.

**JOSEPH:** Crosses? *(He reacts angrily.)* You want to me to make crosses? So that you and your kind can kill more of my people? *(He*

*reaches up and clutches his chest and seems to be in pain.)* Out of the question!

**JUSTIS:** *(Laughing.)* What the Emperor wants he gets, Jew.

**JOSEPH:** *(Wife comes over to her husband and tries to calm him down. He pushes her away and comes up to soldier.)* What are you going to do if I refuse? Crucify me? *(He laughs, still clutching his chest.)* I'll have to build the cross first!

**JUSTIS:** *(Seems to be displeased about the course of this conversation.)* You pigs are all alike. I know how to persuade you. I have something you cannot refuse. Money. *(He takes a bag out of his belt.)* Silver for your crosses.

**JOSEPH:** *(Loses his temper, his wife and son hold him back.)* How dare you try to buy my loyalty! *(He suddenly clutches his chest.)*

**JUSTIS:** *(Removes a cat of nine tails from his belt and cracks it against the ground.)* Then I will have to use this! Perhaps a few stripes on your back will make you wish you had taken the money.

**JESUS:** *(Roman Soldier draws back his whip and as he brings it forward, the young man grabs his wrist and they stand, hands raised between them, eye to eye.)* I will take my father's stripes.

*(The Roman Soldier trembles with rage while the young man stares at him silently. Slowly, the Roman Soldier relaxes and their hands, clenched together fall. The young man turns his back on the soldier and goes to his father.)*

**JESUS:** Father, go inside and rest. I will handle this.

**JOSEPH:** *(Still clutching his chest in pain.)* He cannot talk to us that way!

**JESUS:** *(Places his hand on his father's heart. He holds it there while his father looks down at it. The son shakes his head as tears form in his eyes.)* Father, forgive me.

**JOSEPH:** *(Reaches up and takes the young man's hand in his own. Brings it to his lips and kisses it.)* It is not yet your time, son. *(The woman helps the weakened man off the stage and the man's hands and his son's hands part reluctantly as he is led away, mirroring the famous painting of Adam and God touching fingertips.)*

**JUSTIS:** (During the last scene, the Roman Soldier glances down at his cat of nine tails and lamely gathers it back into a loop. He places it back on his belt, studying his hand where the young man gripped his wrist. He tries to regain his military bearing as the young man turns to face him.) Looks like your father is not well, boy.

**JESUS:** He will not be with us much longer. And, there is nothing I can do.

**JUSTIS:** Well, he wouldn't survive a decent flogging and that leaves me right where I began. Without a carpenter. But, Roman law must be carried out.

**JESUS:** If you will leave my father alone, I will take his stripes and I will build your crosses.

**JUSTIS:** Well! Such nobility and self sacrifice. Or, is flogging a small price to pay for thirty pieces of silver? I'd say you are a man who knows the value of a few pieces of silver.

**JESUS:** I don't want your money. You may keep it.

**JUSTIS:** Then why are you doing this?

**JESUS:** I shall give unto Caesar that which is Caesar's.

**JUSTIS:** I see. (He walks over to the table and touches the wood.) I hope for your sake this wood will be strong enough. Lately some of the crosses have been weak. Last week I had to have three rebels nailed back onto their crosses after the crosspiece cracked.

**JESUS:** This wood is strong. See, it has a strong heart. There are some trees who look strong on the outside but are rotten within. They cannot stand the stresses of life. When hardships arise, they splinter.

**JUSTIS:** You have a very unusual outlook on life, young man. Tell me, does it bother you that I want your wood for a cross?

**JESUS:** The wood comes from a tree. In its life, the tree reaches toward the heavens. It seeks the embrace of God. That is what is in the heart, the desire to reach out to God. One can suppress it, one can hide it beneath the blood of martyrs, but it will always be there. You may break the back of the people of God, but you can not break their spirit. Like the wood, their hearts are strong from reaching toward God and they will not be crushed by hardship.

**JUSTIS:** *(Rubs his hands across the wood as he listens. Then he pulls his hand away suddenly.)* Such talk! And who will lead your motley rabble against the emperor? Ah, yes, I remember. The Messiah. You Jews keep talking about your Messiah. How he will come and sweep us off the face of the Earth. Ha! I'd like to meet him! Bring him on! I haven't had any problem killing troublemakers like him before. I'll have no trouble killing him. If he is brave enough to show his face. Boy, have you seen the Messiah?

**JESUS:** You will find the Messiah in the place you would least expect.

**JUSTIS:** We shall see, Jewish boy! I want the crosses by day after tomorrow. I will send a man through here with a cart to pick them up. Since I will not be here, he will give you your beating. Don't try to run away.

**JESUS:** I will be here, sir.

**JUSTIS:** *(Starts to walk off stage and turns to study the young man.)* Perhaps we shall meet again someday. I hope it is not upon a cross.

## ACT 2

*(Scene opens in a wooded area. A young man is bent over a piece of wood on the ground. His back is to the audience and as he talks, we are led to believe he is the same young man as in scene one. As he turns around, we see he is someone different.)*

**SIMON:** No problem, I told him! I can have it done by tomorrow, I told him! What a fool I am! Do I know how to build a cross, he asks me. Sure, I say! No problem! Now, look what a mess I've made!

*(Boy has now turned around and we see he is different from the young man in scene 1.)*

I should have listened to father more carefully when he tried to teach me how to use the lathe. I'll never get these crosses built.

*(An older man walks onto stage from stage left and pauses behind the young man as he continues the next lines. No one knows this is Jesus.)*

**SIMON:** What am I going to do? When that Roman centurion returns and finds I haven't finished these crosses, he'll flog me. And even though my father is the best carpenter in these parts, I can't go to him for help...

**JESUS:** Why not?

**SIMON:** *(Turns around suddenly in obvious alarm.)* Where did you come from? You scared me!

**JESUS:** Forgive me. I could not help overhearing your lamentations. Why can't you go to your father for help?

**SIMON:** *(Glances down at the wooden cross piece which he is straddling. He falls back in alarm and sits astride the cross, looking dejected. He will sit here until the man helps him up later.)* Can't you see what I am building? A cross. Three crosses, in fact. Now what would any good Jewish father do if he found out his son was building crosses for the Romans?

**JESUS:** What do you think he would do?

**SIMON:** My father, Benjamin, would whip me. Just like the Roman centurion is going to do if I don't finish them. Father doesn't know I'm doing this. The centurion demanded we build three crosses and father refused. But, I knew we needed the money. Mother is sick and my little brother is crippled. We need food! But father couldn't see it that way. So, I sneaked away and told the centurion I would do it. For the money. For my family. Is that wrong?

**JESUS:** Sacrifices for love are never wrong.

**SIMON:** Yeah, sacrifices. I'm going to end up one when the centurion returns.

**JESUS:** Perhaps I could help you.

**SIMON:** You? I need a carpenter.

**JESUS:** I am a carpenter. (*Reaches out his hand and takes the boy's hand, helping him up. The boy glances at the man's hands.*)

**SIMON:** What? You don't look like a carpenter. I mean, your hands are too smooth. No cuts. No callouses.

**JESUS:** It has been a long time since I handled the wood. But, it shall come back to me. (*He comes over to the wood and examines the lathe.*) This will strip away the rough bark. The heart of the wood will come out, smooth and clean.

**SIMON:** (*Watches as the man begins to work with the wood.*) It doesn't have to be a work of art! After all the Romans are going to nail one of us to it.

**JESUS:** You hate the Romans so and yet you build crosses for them.

**SIMON:** Yes, I hate them! My father had to run from them when I was still in my mother's womb. They chased him away from his home to the safety of Jerusalem. Now, Jerusalem is full of their filth! I'll be glad when the Messiah overthrows them. I've heard he has arrived here in Jerusalem. Why, these crosses may never be used. He'll teach those Romans a thing or two. He'll make them pay for all the Jews who have died at the hands of their Emperor.

**JESUS:** That's very interesting. Where did you learn about the Messiah's mission on Earth?

**SIMON:** From my father. And the scriptures.

**JESUS:** How would you feel if the Messiah were not the type of person you expected?

**SIMON:** What do you mean?

**JESUS:** For instance, are you familiar with the scripture from Isaiah?

**SIMON:** Well, sort of...

**JESUS:** "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth."

**SIMON:** Are you telling me that the Messiah is going to let himself be taken prisoner and not fight back! That is not possible! He is going to deliver us and wipe out the Romans!

**JESUS:** Why do you hate your enemies so?

**SIMON:** I guess you're going to tell me to love them? You mean to tell me that this cross I'm building is a symbol of love?

**JESUS:** True love is unconditional.

**SIMON:** *(Reaches down and removes the tool from the man's hand.)* Maybe you had just better go on your way, sir. You sound like a Roman sympathizer.

**JESUS:** And this from a young man who is building crosses for the Romans.

**SIMON:** That's different.

**JESUS:** Is it? You have made a great sacrifice out of your love for your father. Love can bring a man to do many things he never thought possible.

**SIMON:** My father? I forgot how mad he will be at me.

**JESUS:** Perhaps not. I am sure he will forgive you. He loves you as only a father can love his son. And unconditional love can bring one to levels of forgiveness one never imagined possible.

**SIMON:** My father will forgive me for doing something like this?

**JESUS:** Yes.

**SIMON:** *(Looks up at the sky.)* It is beginning to get dark. I have to finish quickly. Father will want me at the Passover meal tonight.

**JESUS:** I believe this cross is finished.

*(Roman soldier comes onto stage.)*

**JUSTIS:** Well, boy. Have you finished the crosses.

**SIMON:** Yes, I have. Three crosses.

**JUSTIS:** Good. Here is your silver. *(He hands him a bag.)*

**SIMON:** *(The boy looks at the bag hesitantly and then looks at the man.)* I don't want it. You can keep it. I've done something I'm not proud of. And my father would not be proud, either. Keep your silver.

**JUSTIS:** Very well. But, these crosses had better hold up or I'll be coming after you. *(He notices the man and glances at him strangely.)* You look familiar. Have we met?

**JESUS:** Have we?

**JUSTIS:** Perhaps, somewhere. You look all alike. Act all alike, too. I offer good silver and you refuse to take it and yet you would deprive me of my last denari if I wanted to buy some of your bread. I will never understand you. Why, years ago, a carpenter built me three crosses and refused the money. Can you imagine? I think you're all crazy! Especially this Messiah of yours.

**SIMON:** He's not crazy. He's coming to throw you and your kind out of our land!

**JUSTIS:** Oh, he is now? He and whose army? Your God's? *(Laughs out loud.)* If I had time I would force you to make another cross just for him. But these three are spoken for. Two thieves and that assassin, Barabbas.

**SIMON:** Oh yeah? Well, he would just come right down off of that cross if you nailed him there! He would call down the armies of God's angels and wipe you off the face of the Earth!

**JUSTIS:** *(He steps up to the boy and grabs him roughly by the chin.)* It is a good thing you didn't take this silver, boy. Because after what you just said, I would have taken it back and thrown you in the dungeon. *(He pushes him roughly away. He falls up against the chest of the man and*

*the man's hands fall on his shoulders. The boy glances at the hands and gently pulls away from them, turning to confront the man.)*

**SIMON:** And you expect me to forgive him for that?

**JESUS:** No. God expects you to be forgiving.

**SIMON:** We're not talking about the same God! My God wouldn't be pushed around like that. Especially by a Roman!

**JESUS:** Young man, please go home to your Passover meal and then read Isaiah again. You will be surprised at what you read.

**SIMON:** I'm only surprised at you. A good Jew who takes the side of the Romans. *(He spits on the man and runs off the stage.)*

**JUSTIS:** *(Saunters up to the man, a puzzled look on his face. He studies him as he slowly circles around him.)* You are very strange. Just whose side are you on?

**JESUS:** Yours, his, everyone's.

*Lights go down. See Transition at beginning of Act 3.*

## ACT 3

### Transition:

*Takes place at the foot of the cross. During the transition from scene 2 to scene 3, the man stands up each cross. He stands up the one in the center last and looks up to study it as the lights go down. When the lights come back up, he is gone and the centurion walks up and studies the foot of each cross, speaking to another Roman soldier accompanying him. Note that the tall portion of the cross has a white spot on it that was washed in the first scene. This should face the audience and be plainly visible.*

**JUSTIS:** And you are sure that each cross is securely in place?

**ROMAN SOLDIER:** Yes, sir. I inspected the placement, myself.

**JUSTIS:** Good. This will be a short one, thank the gods. These Jews and their Passover! All this talk about blood and sacrifices! I do not understand them at all! But, the coming of the Passover will shorten these criminal's suffering.

**ROMAN SOLDIER:** Too bad! I enjoy watching them moan and groan for days!

**JUSTIS:** (Gives the man a peculiar look.) I once felt as you do. Twenty years ago. When our conquest of these people was still fresh and new. But, I have seen too many crucifixions, too many deaths since then. I no longer enjoy anything. I am empty. (He looks down at his hands and rubs them together.) These hands are covered by the blood of many men. (He glances up at the crosses and sighs.) It makes me tired.

**ROMAN SOLDIER:** What you need, sir, is a good flagon of wine!

**JUSTIS:** (Studies him carefully.) I wish it were that simple. Wine will not wash away the blood. (As he is looking at his hand a drop of blood appears and he looks squinting up into the sun at the middle cross. For a second he seems to recognize the man and then shakes his head.) Is this one their precious Messiah?

**ROMAN SOLDIER:** Yes! See how high and mighty he is! Lifted up to reign over all his filthy followers. He even wears a crown! (*He laughs.*) And over there is his royal robe. Not exactly what the Jews were waiting for, is he?

**JUSTIS:** Hardly the Son of God. (*He wipes away the blood from his hand and can't seem to make it go away. He rubs his hands against his clothing, spits in his hand, rubs it against the white part of the wood of the cross obscuring the white patch with red blood. The young boy suddenly make his way onto the stage, out of breath.*)

**SIMON:** Where is he? Where is he?

**ROMAN SOLDIER:** Stop there! Where do you think you're going?

**SIMON:** (*Struggling against the soldier.*) I must see him!

**JUSTIS:** Well, if it isn't our little carpenter's son! Have you come to inspect your handiwork? Very fine work. Very fine, indeed. Some of the best crosses I ever seen and I have seen many of them.

**SIMON:** The crosses? Oh, how I wish I had never seen a cross! How I wish I had never agreed to make them! (*Suddenly looks at him angrily.*) You lied to me! You said these crosses were for thieves and assassins. Not the Messiah!

**JUSTIS:** (*Looks at the soldier holding back the boy.*) Release him. And leave us alone.

**SIMON:** You lied to me.

**JUSTIS:** Boy, I can not go against Pilate's will. He gave this Messiah of yours to your own people. They called for Barabbus! Your own people, boy, cried out for us to crucify him!

**SIMON:** But, they don't understand. He told me to read the scriptures. To read about the Messiah. I had it all wrong. He didn't come to overthrow the Romans. He came to die for us.

**JUSTIS:** To die for you? Sounds like a lamb led to the slaughter on one of your altars. That makes no sense. What good does it do for him to die alone on a cross? How on Earth can that do anyone any good? I've nailed hundreds to crosses and I've never seen any good come of it.

**SIMON:** I'm not sure, but, it has to do with love. He talked about unconditional love. And I heard one of his disciples talking about

what he said. Greater love has no man than to lay down his life for a friend.

**JUSTIS:** The credo of a coward, if you ask me.

**SIMON:** No wonder we rejected him. He wasn't our idea of a Messiah. In fact, the scriptures say, He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Look what you've done to his hands! (*They look up at the middle cross. The Centurion shades his eyes.*) You drove spikes through them! Those hands that touched so many lives. Hands of healing, hands of compassion, hands of love.

*(From the cross we hear "I thirst")*

*(The centurion suddenly comprehends who he is seeing on the cross.)*

**JUSTIS:** I know this man. He is the one who was in the grove yesterday with you... And, that voice. He said I thirst. Thirst. Yes, it is coming back to me. Water. Wine. How can it be? He is the same one. The one who rejected the thirty pieces of silver. The three crosses.

**SIMON:** You've met him before?

**JUSTIS:** Yes. Many years ago. When I was younger. When I still believed in what I was doing. (*Reaches down and rubs his wrist where they had touched many years before. His fingers trail off into the center of his left palm where the blood fell.*) He kept me from flogging his father. He took the punishment for him. I don't understand.

**SIMON:** He tried to tell me he was the Messiah. He tried to tell me what the Messiah really stood for. Love. Unconditional love. Sacrifice. Forgiveness.

**JUSTIS:** Then, I suppose you will have no problem forgiving me for driving the nails through his hands?

**SIMON:** If the Messiah can forgive you. Then, I must, also.

**JUSTIS:** You believe he is this Messiah you claimed would overthrow us? The Son of your God? (*He studies the cross, his mind working furiously.*) He told me I would find the Messiah in a place I would least expect. Is it possible I will find forgiveness, also, in the place I least expect? Ha! How could any man, or god, for that matter ever forgive me for what I have done?

**SIMON:** And how can God ever forgive me for being so blind?

*(From the cross we hear, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.)*

*(The boy and centurion gaze upward, tears form in their eyes, and the centurion reaches over, placing his arm around the boy's shoulders.)*

**JUSTIS:** Truly, this was the Son of God.

*This play was written for the First Annual Christian Writer's Contest held in Alexandria, Louisiana April 7, 1991 and won first prize in the Play division.*

# THE CARPENTER'S BROTHER

A ONE ACT PLAY  
IN THREE SCENES

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BRUCE HENNIGAN  
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# **THE CARPENTER'S BROTHER**

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The CARPENTER'S SON is about the life and writings of James, the brother of Jesus. Three events in the life of James are the centerpiece of each scene. Scene one concerns an incident described in John 7. The brothers and sisters of Jesus came to Him and tried to convince Him to present himself as the Messiah at the Feast of Tabernacles in Judea.

Scene occurs almost twenty years later when James is the head of the church in Jerusalem and presided over what came to be known as the Jerusalem Council. This meeting determined the future of the church and James was responsible for determining that everyone, Jew and Gentile, are deserving of salvation.

The final scene is a flashback to the pivotal point in James' life mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15:7. This is the moment when James' life was forever changed by an encounter with his resurrected brother.

## SCENE 1

### CAST:

#### **Brothers of Jesus:**

**James, YOUNG AND OLDER**  
**Jude**  
**Joses**  
**Simon**

#### **Sisters of Jesus:**

**Sarah**  
**Rebecca**

**Mary**  
**Jesus**  
**John**

*(The play opens with James standing alone center stage staring out at the audience. In the background the sound of the surf and seagulls crying is heard. To the far stage left, Jesus is seen with a hand full of people. Joses enters stage right, out of breath as if he has been running.)*

**JOSES:** James, mother and the others are on their way.

**JAMES:** Mother is coming? I hoped she would stay at cousin Abraham's house.

**JOSES:** So, why are we here?

**JAMES:** Jesus is preaching in the house over there. And, since tomorrow is the beginning of the Feast I thought it would be a perfect time to have our talk with him.

**JOSES:** I don't know about this, James. It seemed like a good idea at first. But, now, . . .

*(Simon and Jude arrive.)*

**SIMON:** What seemed like a good idea?

**JOSES:** Our plan.

**JUDE:** I'm like Joses, here. I'm beginning to have doubts.

**JAMES:** You are? And what of you, Simon?

**SIMON:** Well, Jesus is surrounded by all of his disciples. And there are only four of us.

**JAMES:** That's right. Four brothers. And at least two of his sisters. Why are you afraid of his disciples? They're just fishermen. Smelly, dirty fishermen. Look

down there at the shore. See their boats? I've worked on those kinds of boats before repairing the woodwork. They stink!

**JOSES:** Simon, look down there! I remember this place. Don't you?

**SIMON:** Remember? When?

**JUDE:** Joses is right. That's the inlet where we learned how to swim. Remember?

**SIMON:** I was so young, then. But I seem to remember. It was the summer we came to visit cousin Abraham and I pulled up his cloak to see if father was under there.

**JAMES:** What?

**SIMON:** Father had just passed away. And mother said he had gone to be in Abraham's bosom. So, I was looking for father. In Abraham's bosom.

**JUDE:** Jesus took us out into the inlet and taught us all how to swim. Even Sarah and Rebecca.

**JAMES:** He never taught me how to swim.

**JOSES:** You had to stay behind and work in the carpenter shop.

**JAMES:** I always had to stay behind. I never said I enjoyed being the second oldest. It seemed every time Jesus decided to go off on one of his desert retreats, I was left behind to watch the place.

*(Jude, Sarah, and Rebecca arrive.)*

**SARAH:** Well, we finally made it, James. Mother will be along in a moment. I hope you have a good reason for us to leave the comfort of cousin Abraham's house for this smelly seashore.

**JAMES:** I do have a good reason. Jesus is here and it is time we spoke to him about this matter we have discussed. I wanted all of us to be together.

**REBECCA:** Shouldn't we wait for mother?

**JAMES:** No! This is between us and Jesus. Stay here and I'll get one of his fishermen followers to bring him out to us.

*(James crosses to the crowd and motions to John. John separates himself from the crowd and comes over to James.)*

**JOHN:** I know you. You're James, Jesus' oldest brother.

**JAMES:** Yes. And these are his other brothers and sisters. And you are?

**JOHN:** John.

**JAMES:** John? You're brother's name is James, also, isn't it? And you're father is Zebedee.

**JOHN:** Yes. You know him?

**JAMES:** I did some repair work on his boat some years back. I seem to remember that you had gone off to follow John, the Baptist. How did you end following Jesus?

**JOHN:** John sent James and me to follow Jesus after he baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. He said that Jesus was the true Messiah about which he had been preaching. We have never regretted it.

**JAMES:** I see. Well, I wouldn't sever my ties with John, the Baptist if I were you. Would you please go and tell our brother we must see him?

**JOHN:** Certainly. (*John goes into the crowd and converses with Jesus. Jesus glances over in James' direction and addresses the crowd.*)

**JESUS:** John tells me my brothers and sisters are outside and demand my attention. I tell you that any one who hears the words of God and does them is my brother and sister.

**JAMES:** Anyone who hears? What of flesh and blood? (*Reacting angrily as he overhears the words. He storms over to his brothers and sisters.*) He won't even come over here and talk to his own brothers and sisters. Just who does he think he is?

**MARY:** (*Walks up behind the group.*) He is his Father's son. And he must be about the business of the father. James, I don't know what you're planning to say to Jesus, but I think we had better go back to the house.

**JAMES:** I came here to speak to Jesus about the Feast of the Tabernacles.

**SARAH:** The Feast? Do you mean in Judea?

**JAMES:** Yes.

**JOSES:** But, he said the Jews sought to kill him in Judea.

**MARY:** James, surely you don't expect him to place his followers in danger?

**JAMES:** There will be many followers at the Feast in Judea. He can proclaim himself in front of all of them.

**JUDE:** You mean, proclaim himself the Messiah?

**SARAH:** (*With obvious disgust.*) Messiah! That's all I've heard since he left home. My best friend, Lydia came taunting for days. "Well, I hear your brother Jesus is calling himself the Messiah. Does this mean you will have a seat in his court when he comes into power?"

**REBECCA:** Yes, and I thought Marcus would take more than a passing interest in me until he found out my brother was Jesus, the religious fanatic.

**JUDE:** Mother, could he be insane?

**JOSES:** It was that time he stayed in the desert for forty days.

**SIMON:** Too much sun! Probably fried his brains.

**MARY:** Stop this! All of you. How can you speak this way of your own brother?

**JAMES:** He is no longer our bother. He is now the Messiah (*He says this with contempt.*) We will speak with him and force him to go to Judea. If he is the Messiah, then let him reveal his power. Let him stand before the people and show them his strength and wisdom instead of wandering around the countryside preaching to the lost and destitute.

*(James pauses as he senses someone behind him. He turns and Jesus has left the crowd behind and is standing behind him.)*

**JESUS:** My brother, do not trouble our mother with this. Say what you need to. I will listen.

**JAMES:** Well, it's about time you gave us some of your precious attention. Listen, you've been wandering around the countryside working miracles, so they say. Some say you've preached in the tabernacles. And, I heard that just a few weeks ago your preaching almost cost you your life in Judea.

*(He pauses and studied Jesus carefully.)* Do you still claim to be the Son of God?

**MARY:** James! Stop it this instant. I will not listen to someone speak this way to a son of mine!

**JAMES:** I am your son, too. Or have you forgotten the rest of us? I am tired of always taking second place to Jesus just because he thinks he is the Messiah. (*He turns angrily to Jesus.*) If you are the Messiah, then go to Judea. Tomorrow, the Feast of the Tabernacle begins and there will be thousands at the temple. Go there and proclaim yourself Messiah in the temple. Show them your miracles. Stop this silly stalking around the countryside with fishermen and tax collectors. Let your brothers stand beside you and show the world who you are. (*He pauses for effect, pushing his face close to Jesus'.*) That is, if you really are the Messiah.

**JESUS:** My moment of manifestation as the Christ is not yet come but is determined by the Father. But your time, your moment of importance is always ready. You are the master of your own fate, James. You see, the world cannot possibly hate you. But, it hates me because I testify that its works are evil.

If you were to go up to the feast and stand in the temple you would see that the world would not hate you. But, I am not yet going up to this feast. (*He looks over at Mary, his eyes filling with pain.*) My time has not yet fully come.

*(Reaching out he touches James' shoulder and James jerks it away. Jesus slowly turns and heads back to the crowd.)*

**JAMES:** Your time has come and gone, Jesus. Don't fool these people anymore. Hey, all of you, listen to me. I was there when Jesus was a teenager. I was there when he was sick. I was there when he fell and cut his head. I've seen him bleed. Can a Messiah bleed?

*(Mary comes up to James to calm him down and he pushes her away.)* He's just a man. Just a carpenter. Ask any of us. He's not the Messiah.

**JOSES:** James, it is time for us to go.

**JAMES:** (Pulling roughly away.) I'm not finished! I've got more to say! I've kept my mouth shut for too long. (Tauntingly.) Why don't you and Simon go swimming! Better yet, get one of his disciples to baptize you.

**MARY:** James! That is enough!

**JAMES:** No it isn't! I've stood in his shadow too long. And, I'm tired of it. If he is the Messiah then let him prove himself. Walk on the water. Perform a miracle. DO something. After all he did nothing when father was dying. Don't you remember?

**MARY:** Don't say these things, James. They are words you can never take back. Don't say them!

**JAMES:** Say what? That he stood by and let father die? That he stood there, his body filled with the power to heal and he did nothing? (Turning to address the crowd,) Did you hear that? He did nothing? Just stood there with all the power of the universe at his disposal and he did nothing! What kind of Messiah is that?

**JUDE:** Come on, James. Let's go.

**SIMON:** Enough, James.

**JAMES:** No! He let father die. He let him die. Don't you understand? (James is sobbing now, falling to his knees. Mary tries to comfort him but he shrugs her away and they all slowly pull away from James. James looks up at the sky.)

He let daddy die! Some Messiah!

**JESUS:** (By this time, the crowd has exited stage left and James is alone center stage. Jesus is standing alone stage left, his eyes filled with tears.) My time had not yet come.

(Lights go down on them and come up on older James. Or, younger and older James can be same person and can convey wisdom with a difference in posture, voice inflection, etc.)

**OLDER JAMES:** Harsh words, aren't they? Ah, the loose tongue of hot headed youth and idealism. I've learned so much since then. God has grown me in the years of adversity since that fateful day when I spoke out against my own brother. I set myself up as judge and jury over his actions. Maybe I was jealous of his power and popularity. Maybe I was mad because he didn't bother to call his own brothers to follow him and be part of his inner circle.

Judgment. How easily we pass it. ***My brothers and sisters, we all stumble in many things. If a man does not stumble it is because he can bridle the whole body. We put bits in horses' mouths that they may obey us and in so doing, we can turn the whole body. The whole body from one small object. Why look at ships that are driven by great sails. And yet, they are steered by the smallest of objects. The rudder. In much the same way, the tongue is a little member and boasts great power.***

**See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity! The tongue is so set among our members that it defines and defiles the whole body. Man has conquered nature and yet he cannot tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.**

How my words must have stung my brother. I made it my mission in the ensuing months to undermine his credibility. When I told him to go to the Feast of Tabernacle it was an ultimatum. I dared Him. Double dared him. Drew a line in the sand and dared him to step over it. I wanted to push him, to control him, to force him to put up or shut up. My anger was so great and it poured forth through this small instrument of guile. (*He points to the tongue.*)

I must confess that when Jesus showed up later at the feast I started rumors about him. I told the crowd that He was my brother. An ordinary man. A carpenter from Nazareth. A prophet without honor in his own country. (*James pauses looking pained.*) Or, it turns out, in his own home. I grew up day after day with Jesus at my side. He taught me the trade of carpentry after our father, Joseph, died. And yet, I forgot all of that in the span of a heartbeat and let my tongue ruin the day.

**The tongue. With it we bless God and Father, and at the same time with it we curse men, who have been made in the very image of God. Out of this same mouth proceeds cursing and blessing.**

Just who was I? Jesus' loving brother? Or, his bitter enemy? How can a man hold such conflicting loyalties at the same time?

**Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter water from the same opening? Can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? No spring yields both salt water and fresh.**

I know my own heart. I know the power of this tongue to hurt and spear the heart of any man or woman. Have you realized it about your own self? Look into your heart.

**Do not speak evil of one another, brothers and sisters. He who speaks evil of his brother or sister and judges them speaks evil of the law and judges the law. There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?**

**What of this wisdom can I leave with you? It is a wisdom born of trial and temptation. A wisdom revealed to me by the Father above. And it is this:**

**Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.**

## SCENE 2

### CAST:

**JAMES, YOUNG AND OLDER**  
**PAUL**  
**BARNABUS**  
**PETER**  
**JOHN**  
**PHARISEE 1**  
**PHARISEE 2**  
**PHARISEE 3 -- LYDIA**

*(James pauses and lights come up on the stage. The older James is seen center stage and sits in chair. The above mentioned characters wander onto the stage in disarray, mumbling among themselves. They are obviously split into two camps, the apostles stage right, the other believers stage left.)*

**JAMES:** The Church of Jerusalem shall come to order. Paul and Barnabus, tell us of your journeys.

**PAUL:** James, we have journeyed to Cyprus, Lystra, Antioch . . .

**BARNABUS:** And Perga! And so many were saved! Hundreds have come to know our Master as their personal Lord and Savior.

**PAUL:** But, on our return through Judea, we ran into some problems.

**BARNABUS:** Men, who are good in their hearts, but filled with false doctrine.

**JAMES:** What false doctrine?

**PAUL:** They teach that unless you are circumcised according to the customs of Moses, you cannot be saved.

**PHAR. 1:** *(Located on opposite stage.)* And you disagree with this?

**PAUL:** I have seen men and women come to know our Master as personal Savior. What does it matter if they are Gentile or Jew?

**PHAR. 2:** What does it matter? Have you lost your senses? Did not Jehovah God call us to be pure and separate from this world?

**BARNABUS:** Yes. But not separate from the Gentiles.

**PHAR. 3:** Then you would eat of an animal with cloven hooves, then?

**PAUL:** Well, yes. If I had to.

*(The groups recoils in revulsion.)*

**PETER:** Wait. Have you so soon forgotten what happened at the house of my good friend, Cornelius. How God sent me a vision of a sheet filled with all kinds of

animals, fish and fowl. Have you forgotten what God revealed to me in that vision? What God has cleansed, you must not call common." This was a very hard lesson for me to learn. ***Men and brethren, I believe that God that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. And God, who knows the heart, acknowledged our efforts by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us and made no distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.***

**PHAR. 1:** I should have expected such from the mouth of a fisherman!

**PHAR. 2:** A commoner! God has blessed us when we were Pharisees with wealth and wisdom because we obeyed the law.

**PHAR. 3:** And now you expect us to throw that all away!

**JOHN:** Friends, you miss the point of this whole encounter. It is not enough that you have wealth and sit in your seats in the temple and cast your money in the coffers. You cannot expect your faith in Jesus to relieve you of going out into the world and telling others of the message of our Master. Remember his last words. Go out into all the world and teach them all things I have taught you.

**PAUL:** John is right. ***Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? Did not Jesus die and rise again to do away with the burden of the law? We believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved in the same manner as they.***

(James arises from his seat center stage and comes forward to address the audience or older James addresses audience as lights go down center stage. The remainder of the group remains quietly in the background.)

**JAMES:** ***What does it profit if someone says he has faith but does not have works? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Depart in peace, be warm and filled with food." but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit?***

You sit so smugly and comfortably in your seats in the places of worship. You pray and nod at the sermons and scriptures. You toss your tithe in the coffers so SOMEONE else can attend to these needs. How comfortable it can become to merely believe. To merely think that your faith in Jesus is all you are expected to show.

Paul and I have had many discussions on this point. Paul will tell you, and rightly so that works will not get you to heaven. It is only through faith in the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that we are reconciled with Him. I agree with Paul.

***But, I say, show me your faith without works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You can sit in your seats and say, "I believe that there is one God. You do well. (Vehemently) But, even the demons believe -- and tremble! Was not our father Abraham justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works his faith was revealed as perfect?***

Listen to me! If you are, by faith, a son of God then your life will yield up such works that the very Earth will prick up its ears to hear! Look at Peter. John. Barnabus. Paul. Can you not see that their faith compels them to go out into the world and tell others of the message of Jesus Christ? If you have faith, you cannot sit still! You cannot be silent.

For it you are saved, then you must realize one thing. ***As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without good works is a dead faith. Hear me! Faith without works is dead.***

Look at these men and women. ***Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members? You lust for what you do not have. You murder and covet and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Are these the works of men and women of faith?***

***Rather, realize that we must humble ourselves before God. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands; purify your hearts. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.***

***Where envy and self seeking exit, confusion and every evil thing are there. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.***

***Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only. Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit the oppressed, the widows and orphans in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.***

***Do not grumble against one another, brethren, lest you be condemned. Behold, the Judge is standing at the door. Therefore, be patient until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, waiting patiently for it until it receives the early and latter rain. You also be patient! Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand!***

(James returns to center stage and all eyes fall upon him.)

**JAMES:** My brethren, listen to me. For years I walked beside our Lord and called him my earthly brother. Such wisdom did he pass on that my mind cannot recall it all. But one thing he taught me. The value of the scriptures. Peter has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a prophet for His name. So listen to these words from the prophet:

(He takes a scroll and unrolls it)

***After this I will return and will rebuild the tabernacle of David which has fallen down. I will rebuild its ruins, and I will set it up. So that the REST OF MANKIND may seek the Lord. EVEN ALL THE GENTILES who are called by my name, says the Lord who does all these things.***

***Known to God from eternity are all His works. Therefore, I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God. But, I do believe there are principles of the law that should apply to Jew and Gentile alike for they are the very heart of our faith in the Lord Jesus. So, I say we write to all that they must abstain from things polluted by idols. For in so partaking, we partake of the pagan worship. And, we should abstain from sexual immorality for our bodies are a temple to the spirit of God. And we should abstain from foods that are from animals killed in a violent fashion such as strangulation. And we should abstain***

***from blood, the very symbol of life. God alone can give and take life. What say you?***

*(The group nods in agreement and the Jewish believers cross center stage to embrace the apostles. James comes forward as the group exits the stage.)*

### SCENE 3

#### CAST:

**JAMES, YOUNG AND OLDER**  
**JESUS**  
**JOHN**  
**PETER**  
**THOMAS**  
**MARY MAGDALENE**  
**ROMAN CENTURION**

**OLDER JAMES:** No one could understand how momentous this council meeting would prove to be in the history of the early church. I was to watch in the following years as Paul and Silas and Timothy and Barnabus and John Mark would spread the Gospel all the way to Rome.

How did I get here? How did I become transformed from the doubting, angry brother of Jesus to a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ?

I spent years at the side of Jesus. I grew up in his shadow. I discussed philosophy, religion, sports, fishing, and most of all, carpentry with him. I did not know it until after the council meeting but those years with my brother were responsible for filling me with a God given gift of wisdom that He would use to establish His church. Isn't it strange how you can know the facts, know the logic, know the right words and the right beliefs and yet still be so blind to the truth? The truth was right there, staring me in the face day after day and I couldn't see it. Why? Simple.

Knowing the scripture. Coming to the worship service. Giving your tithe. Listening to sermons. You can do all of these things weekly, religiously, your entire life but it means nothing. Unless you have a personal, one on one encounter with the risen Lord.

*(Lights fade down on older James and lights come up center stage with young James. We see a group of men and women gathered. They appear agitated, conversing among themselves.)*

**MARY MAG:** I tell you I saw Him. We went to the tomb and it was empty.

**JAMES:** Mary, you are mistaken. Jesus is dead.

**MARY MAG:** How would you know? *(She angrily confronts him.)* None of his brothers and sisters were at the cross with Mary. Jesus spoke to John from the cross and turned over the care of his mother to him.

**JAMES:** We didn't know. We heard Jesus had ridden into Jerusalem for the Passover and mother had come with relatives for the celebration. We stayed behind to tend to the business.

**MARY MAG:** How sad that those who followed Him so closely *(She turns and surveys the disciples.)* and those who grew up beside Him would desert Him in his moment of greatest need.

**JOHN:** Mary, I was there. And, James, I ran to the tomb with Peter and saw the burial cloth thrown aside. I believe He is risen.

**JAMES:** John, you are mistaken. I heard they took him down from the cross sooner than most criminals. Perhaps he was not dead.

**CENTURION:** No. He was dead. I was there. I saw them pierce his side with the spear. I saw him die. I heard him say, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." I was a part of his death, James, but I also heard him say, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." That is why I came to believe that truly, he was the Son of God.

**JAMES:** And now you are all taken away with rumors and ghost stories. If he is dead, then there must be another reason for the empty tomb.

**THOMAS:** (*Enters room.*) There is. He is alive. I am Thomas, one of the twelve. I have just seen Jesus with my own eyes. I touched the wounds in his hands and in his feet. I doubted like you James until I faced Him. He is alive!

**JAMES:** This makes no sense. Why would Jesus call himself the Messiah, then allow himself to die on a cross only to rise again on the third day?

**PETER:** Forgiveness, James. I know. I betrayed our Master in my own way. But, He has forgiven me. He has forgiven us all. His death was the ultimate sacrifice for all of our sins. For all of time. Once and for all the price of shed blood has been paid. And in his resurrection is the hope for our future.

**JOHN:** Yes. He once told me that God so loved the world that He gave His only son and that whoever believed in him would never perish but have everlasting life.

**JAMES:** I can't believe this! I walked with him. I watched him grow up beside me. I worked in the carpenter's shop! Don't you understand?

*(Jesus enters behind James. The rest of the people fade away as Jesus nears James and the lights come down on Jesus and James alone.)*

**JESUS:** I understand.

*(James turns and stares at Jesus.)*

**JAMES:** Jesus? My brother, how can this be?

**JESUS:** I am risen from the dead, James. Do you not remember what I told you? How the Son of Man would be put to death and then rise again on the third day?

**JAMES:** That is not possible.

**JESUS:** With our Father anything is possible. My death and resurrection is a gift from God. ***Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of His own will He brought you forth by the word of truth, that you might be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.***

**JAMES:** How blind I have been. And, how deaf. You said so many crazy things when we were growing up. They made no sense. Then. Now, maybe they make more

sense. Since you are alive, then it must be true. You are not my brother. You must be the Son of God. (*James falls on his knees.*) Oh, how can I ever look you in the face. Your own brother has defiled your name, spoken against you, plotted against you. God must have a special punishment planned just for me.

**JESUS:** (He comes over to James and touches his shoulder.) No, James. All that God has for you is what I have purchased with my shed blood. Your forgiveness.

**JAMES:** Then you forgive me?

**JESUS:** It is what I have lived. And died for.

(*James arises and pauses for a moment, eyes fixed on Jesus. Slowly he steps toward him and they embrace.*)

# THE TRIAL OF JUDAS ISCARIOT

A MULTI ACT PLAY  
BY  
BRUCE HENNIGAN  
AND  
NICKY NIX

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## **THE TRIAL OF JUDAS ISCARIOT**

**A MULTI-SCENE PLAY  
BY  
BRUCE HENNIGAN  
and  
NICKY NIX**

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**APPROX. TIME 45 MINUTES**

### **CAST:**

**JOHN DRAKE -- ATTORNEY  
MARLA RICHARDS -- ATTORNEY  
ROGER MITCHUM -- SENIOR PARTNER OF LAW FIRM  
JUDGE WILLIAMS  
SIMEON -- A PHARISEE  
MARY -- MARTHA'S SISTER  
CAIAPHUS  
PETER  
ABBADON -- A WOMAN DEMON  
JOHN, THE APOSTLE**

**SUMMARY:**

*Marla Richards is a member of a law firm and is persecuted by her partners for her Christian beliefs. She is in danger of losing her job because she refuses to take on cases contrary to her beliefs. She is given a chance to try a murderer. If she succeeds, she can remain in the firm. She takes the case not only to keep her job, but to prove that God can and does forgive anyone who asks for forgiveness. She is shocked to learn the murderer is Judas Iscariot.*

**SETTING:**

*The stage represents a courtroom with the judge's bench upcenter, witness stand to the left. A table sits to the right of the bench and to the left of the bench facing the audience. These tables will represent the table for prospectively, the prosecution and the defense. The witnesses can sit in the front row of the audience. The jury is the audience and all remarks directed to the jury are directed to the audience.*

*In the opening scene, one table can be the focus of the meeting with the remainder of the stage in darkness.*

### SCENE 1 -- THE MEETING

*(Marla Richards sits in a darkened room at a huge conference table. A man steps into the room. His floral tie is tied precisely against his white starched shirt. His European style suit hangs on his perfect frame. Everything about him spoke total control, utter perfection.)*

**DRAKE:** *Marla, why are you sitting in the darkness?*

**MARLA:** *I'm just thinking, John.*

**DRAKE:** *Are you sure you weren't praying?*

*(John's tone carries a hint of sarcasm. He walks around the table and sits next to her.)*

*Maybe prayer is your only hope. I hear the boss is planning to come down pretty heavy on you.*

**MARLA:** *Is that all you have to tell me, John? More rumors? As a matter of fact, I have had my talk with God.*

**DRAKE:** *Talking to God again? Just what did he tell you today, Marla? Did he give you any tips on the stock market or who will win the next horse race?*

**MARLA:** *Don't start on me, John. We've been over this ground before and you know what they say about a dead cat. The more you run over it, the flatter it gets.*

**DRAKE:** *(John laughs.)*

*I thought you Christians were supposed to be meek and mild. You're not supposed to harm a cat.*

**MARLA:** *John, why do you constantly harass me? Please let the issue rest.*

**DRAKE:** *(Continuing his attack.)*

*I thought you were supposed to be witnessing to me, Marla. Aren't you supposed to try to save my soul, so I won't go to hell?*

**MARLA:** *I've decided to stop casting my pearls before swine. All you want to do is argue with me. Arguing is a waster of time because you've made your choices between heaven and hell.*

**DRAKE:** *Listen, I'm sick and tired of people hitting me over the head with the message that I'm either going to heaven or hell.*

*Don't tell me about some kind of God somewhere out there in the universe who thinks he's so wonderful that I'm supposed to fall down on my knees and worship him. Who does he think he is, anyway?*

**MARLA:** *Who does he think he is? He's God, that's who.*

*(Roger Mitchum, an older, distinguished appearing man enters the room. He is the head of the law firm. A few other lawyers enter also, seating themselves around the table. They conspicuously avoid Marla as if she has the plague. )*

**MITCHUM:** *Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Today is our annual partnership review and we will review each lawyer's performance in the last year. I'm happy to report that our firm has done very well in the last year. In fact, this has been the best year we've had in the last decade. Most of that increase has been due to your hard work, particularly the hard work of our senior associate, John Drake.*

*However, there have been some low points in this year. I have taken the liberty of reviewing every partner's performance in the last year, and as much as it pains me, it is clear some of you must improve your work performance.*

*(Roger Mitchum leans over the table and opens a manila folder. He scans through the documents silently while the partners sit nervously around the table. The only one who wears a smile is John Drake.)*

**MITCHUM:** *Marla, I've noticed that you've turned down at least five very cases in the last year. You're an excellent attorney and your record as a litigator and as a defense lawyer is above reproach. Yet, I fail to understand why you would turn down perfectly good work.*

**MARLA:** *(Marla looks at the documents offered by Mr. Mitchum.) Mr. Mitchum, you must understand that I live by a set of principles that are unshakable and uncompromising. Every one of these five cases would have required me to compromise my basic personal beliefs. I could not take them for that reason.*

**DRAKE:** *What she really means to say is that she is nothing but a "wimpy" Christian.*

**MITCHUM:** *We all respect your personal beliefs, Marla. But, as you know, when you take on a case, you're representing a client and that client's beliefs. Those beliefs do not directly reflect upon you. I appreciate your effort at sticking with your own convictions, but there is no room for that in a law firm of our size and our nature.*

**MARLA:** *Well, maybe I just don't belong with this firm anymore. For the last few months I've been the target of unending*

*personal jabs aimed at my religion and my beliefs. I respect you. I don't go around banging you over the head with a Bible. The least you could do is give me the same amount of respect that I afford you.*

**DRAKE:** *Just because you can't see it our way and defend some murderous, homeless derelict from the street or some lecherous, old account executive because of your conscience doesn't mean we have to keep you in our firm.*

**MITCHUM:** *My firm, Mr. Drake. (Mitchum speaks sternly to Drake.)*

*Marla, I see no reason why you should quit our firm. However, I can't justify advancing you higher in the partnership if you're unwilling to tackle the difficult cases. If you don't pull your load, you can't climb the ladder.*

**DRAKE:** *Doesn't your Christian belief teach you something about forgiveness? Surely, you would have no trouble defending a murderer if you knew that he could be forgiven by this God of yours. All this fuss over your moral issues is nothing more than a dodge.*

**MARLA:** *I didn't say that I had any trouble defending a murderer. Yes, there is room for forgiveness for everybody. Even you. But that doesn't mean that I have to lie down with dogs and walk away with fleas.*

**MITCHUM:** *There may a way to solve this problem. I have a proposition for you, Marla. Suppose I were to give you a case that I think you could easily defend without conflicting with your convictions, based on your beliefs in a God-sent forgiveness for sins. Suppose I gave you this case and allowed you to defend someone who is considered beyond defense. If you would take that case and if you successfully defend this person, then I will advance you in the partnership of this firm.*

**DRAKE:** *Wait a minute. That's not fair to the rest of us. She hasn't pulled her weight. We've all got to take the bad and the good cases.*

**MITCHUM:** *That's true, John. But, this law firm could probably use a good case of moral convictions. Every now and then. I'm going to give Marla a chance.*

*(He pulls a manila folder from his pile.)*

*This case I'm talking about is a pro bono case. It's an indigent who has been assigned to our firm, not only to defend but to prosecute. A most unusual circumstance, I must admit. He is a homeless man, a wanderer, who is an accessory to the murder of a very prominent religious figure. Marla, if you would agree to defend this man successfully, then I would strongly consider advancing you in your partnership.*

**DRAKE:** *(John Drake reaches over and pulls the manila folder out of the Mitchum's hands and glances at the title. He reacted with surprise.)*

*I'll even offer you a vote of confidence, Marla. I'll prosecute this man and you can defend him. And if you can pull this off then I'll vote for you to become the next senior partner in this firm and I'll never pick on you for being a Christian again. In fact, I'll show you the highest degree of respect.*

**MARLA:** *I'll take the case. Who is it?*

**DRAKE:** *(Smiling as he looks at folder.) JUDAS ISCARIOT.*

## SCENE 2 -- MARY

*(The scene takes place in a courtroom. Upcenter is a judge's bench with a witness stand to the judge's left. The counselor tables sit stageright and stageleft facing the audience which will be the jury. Judge Williams enters and sits behind his bench..)*

**JUDGE:** *Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to remind you of the seriousness of the proceedings that you are about to witness. I run this courtroom with an iron hand and I expect no theatrics or shenanigans. Mr. Drake, are you ready to proceed?*

**DRAKE:** *The prosecution is ready.*

**JUDGE:** *Is the defense ready?*

**MARLA:** *Yes, your honor.*

**JUDGE:** *Mr. Drake, the prosecution may proceed with its opening statement.*

**DRAKE:** *(Drake walks centerstage and faces the audience who will be "the jury" throughout the trial.)*

*Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I stand before you today to tell you one of the saddest tales that you will ever hear. It is a tale of friendship and betrayal. Judas of Carioth swore his allegiance, his loyalty, his very life to this man known as Jesus of Nazareth. He followed Jesus throughout his ministry as he preached and talked across the landscape. And yet, this man sold his friendship and his loyalty for a handful of silver coins. It is my intent today to prove to you that this man named Judas, did willfully, and maliciously, and with forethought, betray his own friend into the hands of conspirators who put him to death. It is my intention to prove that jealousy, power, and greed led to this man's actions.*

**MARLA:** *(Marla addresses the jury.)*

*I am here today to defend the man and not his actions. No doubt you have heard this story, and you have heard the rumors, and you have heard the tale of this man's betrayal of Jesus of Nazareth. It is my intention to prove that Judas' actions were not of his own doing. I am here to show you a tortured soul. A man who was trapped between a dream he never should have had and a future that could never be. I am here to prove that Judas' actions were not supposed to lead to the cross at Calvary, on which Jesus of Nazareth was murdered.*

*It is my intention to prove that this man had far loftier goals in mind and thus is not guilty as an accessory to first degree murder.*

**JUDGE:** *Mr. Drake, call your first witness.*

**DRAKE:** *I call Mary to the stand.*

*(A woman dressed in Biblical costume hesitantly makes her way to the stand and takes the oath.)*

**DRAKE:** *Will you state your name for the jury please.*

**MARY:** *My name is Mary, the sister of Martha and the brother of Lazarus.*

**DRAKE:** *You are not the Mary related to Jesus Christ?*

**MARY:** *Physically, I am not related to him but I am part of his kingdom.*

**DRAKE:** *Well, that's very nice, Mary. Did you see Jesus shortly before his arrest? Did you, in fact, anoint him with oil?*

**MARY:** *Yes. I am not a wealthy woman. I thought for weeks of what kind of gift I could give to the master. I did have a flask of anointing spices to be used in my burial. The spices are quite expensive and were a gift from my parents.*

*I decided that this was one gift that I could give to the master. I don't know why his disciples couldn't hear what he was saying. I heard what he said and it frightened me. He spoke of his impending death. I couldn't believe that such a thing could happen. I thought if I could give the spice to him, in life, where he could enjoy them, it would be a far better gift than to wait for his death.*

*While Jesus and his disciples were at my brother's house, I broke the flask and I anointed his feet and his hands. Emotion overcame me and I began to weep and my tears fell on his skin, so I washed his feet with my tears and I dried them with my hair.*

**DRAKE:** *That's very moving, Mary. How did his disciples react?*

**MARY:** *One of the disciples became very upset. In fact, he was quite angry. (Mary shows anger) He accused me of wasting a precious, priceless, flask of spices.*

**DRAKE:** *Who was that disciple, Mary?*

**MARY:** *Judas Iscariot.*

**DRAKE:** *I'm interested in your feelings and the impressions that you gained from Judas Iscariot. Do you think that he was greedy?*

**MARLA:** *I object, your honor. The prosecution is leading the witness.*

**JUDGE:** *Objection sustained.*

**DRAKE:** *Let me rephrase the question. Mary, what did Judas say to you about your use of the spices?*

**MARY:** *He told me that I should have sold the spices for money.*

**DRAKE:** *So, Judas Iscariot told you that your act of kindness toward Jesus was wasted.*

**MARY:** *(Angrily) Yes!*

**DRAKE:** *Weren't you surprised that one who professed to love and follow Jesus Christ would call this act of love a waste?*

**MARY:** *Yes!*

**DRAKE:** *Yet, Judas told you that any goodness expressed toward Jesus Christ was a waste of time.*

**MARY:** *Yes!*

**DRAKE:** *Did Jesus respond to Judas' statements?*

**MARY:** *Yes, Jesus rebuked Judas for his attitudes. Jesus appreciated my gift.*

**DRAKE:** *And how did Judas react to Jesus' statements.*

**MARY:** *He was so mad, he was speechless. His eyes were filled with hatred and anger and . . . murder. I saw it there in his eyes. Nobody else would listen to what Jesus was saying. Nobody else knew that the end was near. That is why I gave him the burial spices. I knew that soon, very soon, Jesus would die. (She becomes emotional and begins to cry.)*

**DRAKE:** *No further questions, your honor.*

**JUDGE:** *Your cross examination, counselor.*

**MARLA:** *Mary, the story that you have told today is very moving. Would you repeat for the jury exactly what Judas said in response to your gift?*

**MARY:** *You heard what I said earlier. He was angry. He thought it was a waste.*

**MARLA:** *Did he offer any alternative use for the spices?*

**MARY:** *(Hesitantly.) Yes. But . . .*

**MARLA:** *He did? What else did he say?*

**MARY:** *I don't think he meant it.*

**MARLA:** *(Sternly) Mary, I am not interested in your opinion. I'm interested in the facts. I want you to tell the jury what alternative Judas offered as a use for the money.*

**MARY:** *(Looks at Marla and the jury angrily.) He suggested I should have sold it and given the money to the poor.*

**MARLA:** *No further questions, your honor.*

**MARY:** *Wait a minute! You're supposed to be a Christian. How can you defend Judas? How?*

**JUDGE:** *Madam, please restrain yourself.*

**MARY:** *Jesus' mission was based on love. My gift was a gift of love. But Judas' kiss was not an act of love!*

**JUDGE:** *Mary, any more outbursts and I will hold you in contempt. Does the defense wish the statements stricken from the record?*

**MARLA:** *(Marla pauses and thinks. It is obvious she is under pressure. She gazes out over the audience and then glances back at Mary.) No.*

**JUDGE:** *You may step down.*

**DRAKE:** *(Suppressing a grin.) No rebuttal, your honor.*

### SCENE 3 -- SIMEON

**DRAKE:** *Prosecution calls Simeon to the stand.*

*(A man dressed in the black robes of a priest walks up to the stand and takes the oath and sits in the witness stand.)*

**DRAKE:** *Would you state your name and occupation for the jury please?*

**SIMEON:** *I am Simeon, a priest who sits with the Pharisees on the Sanhedrin.*

**DRAKE:** *Do you know Judas Iscariot?*

**SIMEON:** *Yes.*

**DRAKE:** *Would you tell the jury, Simeon, under what circumstances you first met Judas Iscariot.*

**SIMEON:** *A few of the Pharisees were interested in the teachings of this Jesus Christ. We followed he and his followers about the city. Judas Iscariot was one of his followers. One evening, Judas came to us. We were following Jesus after his arrival in Jerusalem and Judas stayed behind when the disciples wandered off. He came over to speak to us. We took the opportunity to ask him about the mission of his master.*

**DRAKE:** *Why were you so interested in Jesus?*

**SIMEON:** *We wanted to learn what Jesus Christ was really teaching to his followers. We suspected that the man was a blasphemer. He proclaimed himself the Messiah, the Son of God. We reasoned that if we spoke with Judas Iscariot we would learn more about the true motives of this man.*

**DRAKE:** *How would you characterize Judas Iscariot's frame of mind at this meeting?*

**SIMEON:** *He was very upset. Very anxious. I can't read the man's mind but I think it is safe to say that he was beginning to realize that Jesus Christ was not the Messiah that he claimed to be.*

**MARLA:** *Objection. The witness admitted he was not a mind reader and yet proceeds to tell us what Judas was thinking.*

**JUDGE:** *Objection sustained. The jury will disregard the statement made concerning Judas Iscariot's realizations.*

**DRAKE:** *Mr. Simeon, what transpired as a result of this meeting?*

**SIMEON:** *We agreed to another meeting. Judas Iscariot met with us again and agreed to surrender Jesus Christ over to our authorities for the price of thirty pieces of silver.*

**DRAKE:** *Simeon, it is very important to understand something. Did Judas Iscariot betray his master willingly?*

**MARLA:** *I object, your honor. The prosecution is requiring the witness to draw a conclusion without a proper foundation having been laid to show if this witness had any reason to know this information.*

**DRAKE:** *Your honor, I am merely trying to ascertain what Simeon believed was the frame of mind of Judas Iscariot. I submit that it would be obvious to anyone dealing with Judas Iscariot whether or not he was doing so willingly. I can, however, rephrase the question.*

**JUDGE:** *You may proceed, counselor.*

**DRAKE:** *Based on your observations, do you believe that Judas Iscariot betrayed his master willingly?*

**SIMEON:** *I would say that Judas Iscariot was very willing to betray his master.*

**DRAKE:** *No further questions, your honor.*

*(Marla rises and crosses to witness stand.)*

**MARLA:** *Am I wrong in assuming that you stalked the disciples in order to learn more about Jesus' claims to be the Messiah?*

**SIMEON:** *Stalked is a rather strong word. We merely followed them to try to learn what Jesus was teaching.*

**MARLA:** *Simeon, could you help me to understand something? Just what do you expect the Messiah to be?*

**SIMEON:** *Well, the Messiah is the great promised Redeemer. He is a conquering king that God will send to overthrow our enemies and make the nation of Israel the master of the world once again.*

**MARLA:** *Do you feel that Jesus Christ was this type of Messiah?*

**SIMEON:** *Absolutely not. That is the very reason that we thought he was a blasphemer. Why, such a man could never be the Messiah. He calls himself a shepherd! A suffering servant! How can a king be a servant? How can a servant lead?*

**MARLA:** *He who is first, shall be last. And he who is last shall be first. Isn't that what He said?*

**SIMEON:** *I don't know. I tried not to pay any attention to what he said. I wasn't as gullible as the masses.*

**MARLA:** *So, if this Jesus was an effective leader, a failed Messiah, why did you ask Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus Christ?*

**SIMEON:** *Because we were very angry with him. Jesus was a blasphemer and under the law of Jehovah, he was to be put to death for his blasphemy.*

**MARLA:** *So you admit that you asked Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus Christ?*

**SIMEON:** *I didn't say that.*

**MARLA:** *If you would please recall my previous question I asked,*  
*(She refers to her notes.)*

*"So, if this Jesus was an effective leader, a failed Messiah, why did you ask Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus Christ?"*

*Now do you recall your testimony that you asked Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus Christ?*

**SIMEON:** *Well, I didn't mean that. You're putting words in my mouth. Judas . . .*

**MARLA:** *(Interrupting him.)*

*Now, about this meeting with Judas Iscariot. Did he agree that Jesus was not the type of Messiah that was being expected?*

**SIMEON:** *Judas doubted the validity of Jesus' claims to be the Messiah. Judas showed distaste with Jesus' claim to be a suffering Messiah who would die for the people he loved the most. Judas especially had trouble with the one phrase about laying down your life for a friend.*

**MARLA:** *"No greater love has any man than that he lay down his life for his friends." Is that the statement you are referring to?*

**SIMEON:** *Yes. Ridiculous, isn't it?*

**MARLA:** *Simeon, if your Messiah were to be arrested by the Roman authorities and to face crucifixion, what do you think his response would be?*

**DRAKE:** *I object, your honor, to this whole line of questioning. It is completely irrelevant.*

**MARLA:** *(To Drake.) Too much Scripture, Drake?*

*(To the jury and judge.) On the contrary, your honor, the nature of the Messiah and ideas of Judas and Simeon on that subject are certainly relevant.*

**JUDGE:** *I think I'll allow this question, counselor. I would like to hear the opinion of Simeon.*

**SIMEON:** *The Messiah would never allow such a thing to happen. If he were arrested and any attempt was made to nail him to a cross, he would call ten thousand angels to his rescue. He would take up arms against the Roman soldiers and he would destroy his enemies!*

**MARLA:** *Would you agree Simeon, that Judas Iscariot probably shared the same convictions that you do that Jesus was not acting like the type of Messiah that you expected?*

**SIMEON:** *Yes, I would say he agreed. After all, he betrayed him.*

**MARLA:** *Then would it not be reasonable to assume that the real reason that Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ was to force his hand, while on the cross, to reveal that he actually was the Messiah everyone was expecting.*

**DRAKE:** *I object, your honor.*

**MARLA:** *(Continuing.)*

*Isn't it true, Simeon, that Judas was influenced by your ideas about the nature of the Messiah and was coerced into thinking that if Jesus were arrested, he would be forced to reveal his heavenly power? You never believed Jesus was the Messiah, did you? You used Judas' misconceptions to encourage him to betray Jesus Christ!*

**DRAKE:** *Your honor, I object! The defense attorney is asking the witness to draw a conclusion without having laid any foundation.*

**JUDGE:** *(To Marla.)*

*Counselor, you are dangerously close to contempt of this court. Objection sustained.*

**MARLA:** *I withdraw the question. No further questions.*

**JUDGE:** *Rebuttal, Mr. Drake?*

**DRAKE:** *Yes, your honor. I have a few questions. Simeon, why did you pay Judas thirty pieces of silver?*

**SIMEON:** *He asked for it.*

**DRAKE:** *Are you saying that he named a price for his act of betrayal?*

**SIMEON:** *Yes. The man loved money.*

**DRAKE:** *If you had not agreed to pay Judas, would he have betrayed Jesus?*

**MARLA:** *Objection, your honor. The prosecution is asking the witness to draw a conclusion without sufficient information.*

**DRAKE:** *I will rephrase the question. Did Judas haggle over the price of his betrayal?*

**SIMEON:** *No. He was adamant about his price. Thirty pieces of silver.*

**DRAKE:** *You say he was adamant. Did he say what he would do if you didn't meet his price?*

**SIMEON:** *Yes. If we didn't pay him, he wouldn't go through with the betrayal. There were no lofty goals about the Messiah motivating him. That may have been his initial reason for considering betrayal. But, that wasn't the reason later on. You should have seen his eyes light up when he saw the coins. No, he did it for the money.*

**DRAKE:** *No further questions, your honor.*

**JUDGE:** *You may step down.*

**SCENE 4 -- PETER**

**DRAKE:** *I call Peter to the stand.*

**(Peter crosses to the stand and sits.)**

**DRAKE:** *Are you a follower of Jesus Christ?*

**PETER:** *Yes.*

**DRAKE:** *Did you know the accused, Judas Iscariot?*

**PETER:** *I walked with the traitor every day.*

**DRAKE:** *Were you present the night Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus with a kiss?*

**PETER:** *Yes. I pulled out my sword to defend the Master. But, I couldn't get to Judas. So I attacked one of the soldiers.*

**DRAKE:** *Were you surprised by Judas' actions?*

**PETER:** *Not really. He had always taken care of the expenses, hoarding our meager money as if it were his own. He was always talking of the Messiah and the coming kingdom. I suppose he wanted to take care of the money in that kingdom, too.*

**DRAKE:** *During the earlier part of the evening on which Jesus was arrested, can you tell us what transpired in the upper room?*

**PETER:** *Jesus wanted to share a last meal with us. None of us really understood what that phrase, last meal meant at the time. Then, right in the middle of the feast, he shocked us all by saying that someone would betray him. John asked who and Jesus said "He who dips his bread with me in the sop."*

*I watched as Judas dipped his bread in the same bowl. If Andrew had not been sitting by me, I would have attacked the man right there. I had no idea what Jesus meant by betrayal, but I knew that Judas had threatened my Master. Andrew stopped me and we all watched Judas disappear into the night.*

**DRAKE:** *So, Jesus accused Judas directly of betrayal?*

**MARLA:** *Objection. Hearsay.*

**JUDGE:** *Sustained.*

**DRAKE:** *Later that night, who led the soldiers that arrested Jesus?  
Who betrayed Jesus with a kiss?*

**PETER:** *Judas Iscariot.*

**DRAKE:** *Based on your observations, Peter, did Judas Iscariot  
conspire to lead to the arrest and murder of Jesus Christ?*

**PETER:** *Yes.*

**DRAKE:** *No further questions, your honor.*

**MARLA:** *Your honor, I would like to reserve the right to recall the  
witness later for my cross examination.*

**DRAKE:** *No objections.*

**JUDGE:** *You may step down and will be called back for further  
testimony.*

**SCENE 5 -- CAIAPHUS**

**DRAKE:** *I call Caiaphus to the stand.*

*(A man dressed as Caiaphus makes his way to the stand and sits in the chair.)*

**DRAKE:** *Would you state your name and occupation for the jury, sir.*

**CAIAPHUS:** *I am Caiaphus, the high priest of the temple in Jerusalem.*

**DRAKE:** *Caiaphus, have you ever met the accused, Judas Iscariot?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Yes, I did meet him. He appeared before the council on the night that blasphemer, Jesus of Nazareth, was apprehended. Later, Judas led a group of our soldiers to the garden of Gethsemane.*

**DRAKE:** *Caiaphus, just what was Judas' role in this apprehension?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Judas was the Accuser.*

**DRAKE:** *The Accuser? Explain that term, Caiaphus.*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Under our law, the Accuser must identify the criminal in person so that later the Accuser can testify in court against the accused.*

**DRAKE:** *So Judas was to indicate which man was to be arrested. Is that correct?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Yes. You see, Judas Iscariot was very close to Jesus of Nazareth. In fact, he sat with him at the meal that night.*

**DRAKE:** *How did you learn this, Caiaphus?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Judas told me that Jesus of Nazareth most likely knew that he was going to betray him. Something about dipping his bread in the same bowl as Judas. I don't know. In any event, I surmise that they were very close. So close in fact, that Judas suggested that his sign of accusation would be a kiss.*

**DRAKE:** *So, Judas Iscariot was going to betray his lord and master, the man to whom he is the closest, with a kiss. Is that right, Caiaphus?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Yes.*

**DRAKE:** *No further questions.*

**MARLA:** *Caiaphus, what were your feelings about Jesus Christ?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *He was a blasphemer. An enemy of the temple. He claimed to be the Son of God and the fulfillment of the messianic prophecies. According to the law of God, he had to be put to death.*

**MARLA:** *I understand that he was brought before your ruling counsel, Caiaphus and that you, yourself, questioned him. Is that correct?*

**CAIAPHUS:** Yes.

**MARLA:** *In fact, didn't you become so enraged at his answers that you tore your clothing from your body?*

**CAIAPHUS:** Yes.

**MARLA:** *I understand that is a very emotional response for a man of your standing.*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Emotional, yes. But also appropriate for a man of my standing faced with such blatant blasphemy.*

**MARLA:** *Were you angry enough to have Jesus killed?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Of course! He deserved the death penalty under our law.*

**MARLA:** *Was Judas Iscariot present at the trial of Jesus Christ?*

**CAIAPHUS:** No.

**MARLA:** *You have just stated that Judas was the Accuser. And, by your own admission, the Accuser must be present to testify against the accused. And yet, Judas was not there. Correct?*

**CAIAPHUS:** No.

**MARLA:** *And you continued with the trial, anyway?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *There were other witnesses.*

**MARLA:** *Other witnesses? Where are they? Why are they not on trial in this court of law?*

**DRAKE:** *I object, your honor. This is not a question which this witness can answer. The defense is simply trying to improperly influence the jury.*

**JUDGE:** *Sustained.*

**MARLA:** *Caiaphus, you have referred often to the law under which Jesus was condemned. What is the nature of this law?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *The Laws of Jehovah are the Laws under which we live. God passed them down to us when Moses received the Ten Commandments. They rule our very existence. They influence out every thought, our every action, our every word.*

**MARLA:** *Just what did Jesus say about the law that caused you to have such a violent reaction, Caiaphus?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *He claimed that his authority superseded the laws of God.*

**MARLA:** *Were those his very words?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *No.*

**MARLA:** *Can you state for the jury his exacts words?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *(Reluctantly) He said he had not come to do away with the law but to fulfill it.*

**MARLA:** *Did you see Judas Iscariot again after he betrayed Jesus of Nazareth?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *(Very reluctantly) Yes.*

**MARLA:** *Where did you see Judas Iscariot?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *In the temple.*

**MARLA:** *He came to the temple?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Yes.*

**MARLA:** *When?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *It was in the night time, shortly after he betrayed Jesus of Nazareth.*

**MARLA:** *And what did Judas Iscariot do while he was at the temple?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *He was very emotional, quiet hysterical.*

**MARLA:** *What did he do while he was in the temple, Caiaphus?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *He returned the money.*

**MARLA:** *What money?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *The thirty pieces of silver.*

**MARLA:** *What exactly did he do?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *He threw it on the ground.*

**MARLA:** *You said he was emotional, hysterical, and he threw the money, quite literally at your feet. Why did he do this?*

**DRAKE:** *I object, your honor. . .*

**MARLA:** *(Interrupting.) Your honor, this question gets to the very heart of the defense.*

**JUDGE:** *Objection overruled. The witness will answer the question.*

**CAIAPHUS:** *He said it was because he was sorry. But he really wasn't. What kind of man would betray his own friend?*

**MARLA:** *Your honor, I move to strike the last portion of the answer as unresponsive and beyond the knowledge of this witness.*

**CAIAPHUS:** *Tell me, madam defense attorney, what kind of man would betray his own master, his best friend with a kiss?*

**JUDGE:** *I instruct the witness to cease speaking now or I will hold you in contempt of court.*

**CAIAPHUS:** *You have no authority over me! I am the high priest of the temple. I answer only to Jehovah God for my actions. But, I have nothing more to say. My conscience is clear. The law is of the utmost importance. The law rules supreme and I saw to it that the law prevailed.*

**MARLA:** *No further questions.*

**DRAKE:** *On rebuttal, your honor. Judas Iscariot was to be the Accuser but was not at the trial of Jesus Christ. Do you think it was because he had changed his mind?*

**CAIAPHUS:** *No. It was because he was dead. He committed suicide.*

**DRAKE:** *No further questions.*

**JUDGE:** *You may step down.*

*(Caiaphus arises and leaves the bench.)*

**DRAKE:** *Your honor, we have no further witnesses. The prosecution rests.*

**JUDGE:** *Is the defense ready to proceed?*

**MARLA:** *Yes, your honor.*

**JUDGE:** *Proceed.*



**SCENE 6 -- JOHN**

**MARLA:** *I call John to the stand. Would you tell the jury your name and profession.*

**JOHN:** *I am the apostle John, a follower of Jesus.*

**MARLA:** *John, do you recall the night of the betrayal of Jesus?*

**JOHN:** *How could I forget. I sat at his right side.*

**MARLA:** *When was your first suspicion that Jesus was about to be betrayed?*

**JOHN:** *Right after he washed our feet. He said he would not be with us much longer. Then, he said, "One of you is about to betray me."*

**MARLA:** *When you first heard those words, John, who did you suspect?*

**JOHN:** *Myself.*

**MARLA:** *You didn't suspect Judas?*

**JOHN:** *No. Judas has always acted a bit peculiar. But we trusted him with our money.*

**MARLA:** *How did you discover that Judas was the betrayer?*

**JOHN:** *I asked the Master, "Lord, is it I?" He said, "The one who dips his bread in the bowl with me is the one." And then, Judas dipped his bread in the bowl of sop just at the moment Jesus did.*

**MARLA:** *What was the reaction of the disciples?*

**JOHN:** *Surprise. And, relief.*

**MARLA:** *Relief?*

**JOHN:** *That it wasn't any of the rest of us. We all thought we could have betrayed Jesus.*

**MARLA:** *So, there were no actions, no words, no indicators displayed by Judas that would point to him specifically as the betrayer?*

**JOHN:** *No.*

**MARLA:** *No further questions.*

**DRAKE:** *John, were you present in the Garden a few hours after the Last supper?*

**JOHN:** *Yes. I was there with Peter and James.*

**DRAKE:** *What were you doing?*

**JOHN:** *We were supposed to be praying. But, we fell asleep.*

**DRAKE:** *And what awakened you?*

**JOHN:** *Soldiers. Voices in the night. Swords and torches.*

**DRAKE:** *Was Judas with these soldiers?*

**JOHN:** *(Painfully recalling the events.)*

*Yes. At first, I didn't understand why he was with them and then I recalled the words of the Master. Judas came up to Jesus and kissed him on the cheek. And then, the soldiers took Jesus away.*

**DRAKE:** *So there is no doubt in your mind that Judas betrayed Jesus into the hands of the arresting soldiers?*

**JOHN:** *No. But, it didn't matter at the time. All I could think of was how I had fallen asleep, how I had betrayed my Master in my own way.*

**DRAKE:** *John, were you present at the crucifixion?*

**JOHN:** *Yes.*

**DRAKE:** *You saw Jesus die on the cross?*

**JOHN:** *Yes. I was there with his mother, Mary. I watched him suffer and die. I heard his words as God turned his back on his own son. But I also heard him say, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do."*

**DRAKE:** *But, this statement did not change the fact that Jesus died on the cross as a direct result of the betrayal of Judas, did it?*

**JOHN:** *No. But it really doesn't matter, does it? I mean, Jesus died on the cross but he rose again. He is alive and that's all that matters.*

**DRAKE:** *No further questions.*

**SCENE 7 -- ABBADON**

**MARLA:** *Your honor, the defense would like to call Ms. Abbadon to the stand.*

*(A woman dressed in very loud, bright clothing, makes her way to the stand. She is very nervous and energetic.)*

**ABBADON:** *My name is Abbadon. But you can call me Abby.*

**MARLA:** *I prefer Ms. Abbadon. Would you tell the ladies and gentlemen of the jury what your profession is?*

**ABBADON:** *Well, you might call me an influencer. An encourager.*

**MARLA:** *I see, Ms. Abbadon. Do you know a man named Judas Iscariot?*

**ABBADON:** *Judas Iscariot. Yeah, I seem to remember that fellow. Loved money. Boy, did he love money. (Laughs raucously.)*

**MARLA:** *Can you outline for the jury under what circumstances you met Mr. Judas Iscariot?*

**ABBADON:** *Do you mind if I smoke?*

**JUDGE:** *We don't allow cigarettes in here.*

**ABBADON:** *I wasn't talking about cigarettes.*

*(She laughs hysterically.) When did I first meet Judas Iscariot? Well.. it was shortly after he joined up with well, you know, that person.*

**MARLA:** *And what person is that Ms. Abbadon?*

**ABBADON:** *Well, you know, that person. You know, the one with the initials J.C. (Ms. Abbadon grimaces as if in great pain at the mere thought of the name.)*

**MARLA:** *You mean Jesus Christ?*

**ABBADON:** *(She winces and shrugs and acts as if he is in great pain.) Please! Watch your language. Yes, I met Mr. Judas Iscariot shortly after he joined up with that fellow. You see, I found out he loved money. So I encouraged him in that direction.*

**MARLA:** *You found out he loved money? How did you encourage him and in what direction did you encourage him?*

**ABBADON:** *Well, I noticed that he liked to count the coins. He liked to look at them, play with them, you might say. You could tell by the look on his face and the way that he acted that he loved money. You see, that's how I work. I watch a person and I listen to the things that come out of their mouth. When you do that, you find out what they really love most in this life. So, once I discovered his true love, I sort of whispered in his ear.*

**MARLA:** *Just what did you whisper in his ear, Ms. Abbadon?*

**ABBADON:** *Well, I made suggestions about what he could do with the money. How it could be better spent and used.*

**MARLA:** *Did he listen to you, Ms. Abbadon?*

**ABBADON:** *Obviously, he did. He ended up with thirty pieces of silver.*

**MARLA:** *I see, Ms. Abbadon. So you were very involved in influencing Mr. Judas Iscariot to increase his love for money? I think that's very obvious to the jury. When did you last meet Mr. Judas Iscariot?*

**ABBADON:** *Well, it was when he was sitting around that table with that man in the upper room. Right before he ran out the door. I could tell there for a moment that he was getting a conscience, you know. So my boss told me to nudge him and remind him that he had a mission to do and he had thirty pieces of silver waiting for him.*

**MARLA:** *You're referring, of course, to the last supper?*

**ABBADON:** *Yeah, that's what they call it. His (she says with emphasis) last meal right before he walked to the cross. (She laughs.)*

**MARLA:** *Ms. Abbadon, are you self employed or do you work for an employer?*

**ABBADON:** *I work for an employer, but let me tell you I'm high in the organization. You might say I'm the number two person.*

**MARLA:** *Who do you work for Ms. Abbadon? Who is the "boss" you referred to earlier?*

**ABBADON:** *Mr. S.*

**MARLA:** *Mr. S? Could you be more specific?*

**ABBADON:** *Lucifer, Bezelebub, The Prince of Darkness, The Dragon, The Beast. He has so many names. Isn't it wonderful? But, most people just call him plain old Satan.*

*(The courtroom erupts into babbling and incoherencies. Mr. Drake stands up and shouts, objection. Judge Williams bangs his gavel and demands order in the court.)*

**JUDGE:** *Objection on what grounds?*

**DRAKE:** *Well, on the grounds, uh . . .*

**JUDGE:** *Unless you have a specific objection, I will allow this line of questioning, counselor. You may be seated.*

**MARLA:** *Ms. Abbadon, do you ever read the Bible?*

**ABBADON:** *(Sneering.) Do you ever run a razor across your throat for fun? Of course I don't read it! But, humans do.*

**MARLA:** *I refer to Luke 22:3.*

**DRAKE:** *I object, your honor. Counsel for the defense has not entered this manuscript as evidence.*

**MARLA:** *Why does the prosecution object?*

**DRAKE:** *Because, it is a work of fiction.*

**MARLA:** *I suggest we allow the jury to decide the validity of this document as it is the only transcript available of the events which occurred.*

**JUDGE:** *I will allow scripture to be admitted as evidence for the defense. But, I would like to instruct the jury that this evidence is hearsay.*

*(Marla goes to her briefcase and takes out a Bible.)*

**MARLA:** *As I was saying, Luke 22:3 says, and I quote, "Then Satan entered Judas, surnamed Iscariot, who was numbered among the twelve. So he went his way and conferred with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him." What is exactly meant by entered?*

**ABBADON:** *Listen fancy lady, you leave a door open into the bank and some robber will come along and gladly take the money.*

**MARLA:** *I have no further questions, your honor.*

**DRAKE:** *Ms. Abbadon, you say that you are rather high in your organization. How high are you?*

**ABBADON:** *I told you, I'm number two.*

**DRAKE:** *Ms. Abbadon, do you really expect this jury to believe that you are in the employ of Satan? Are you really a demon?*

**ABBADON:** *Hey, you said it man. If you choose not believe me, then that's the way we prefer it. We like to be subtle. Oh, by the*

*way, I'm a real demon, not the kind of demon you had in mind when you called your two year old son a demon last week.*

*(Laughter is heard in the courtroom.)*

**DRAKE:** *Well, that was just a figure of speech. Be that as it may, Ms. Abbadon, whether your claim is true or not, just how powerful are you?*

**ABBADON:** *Pretty powerful, man.*

**DRAKE:** *Could you be more specific. For instance, could you work a miracle?*

**ABBADON:** *Naw, we leave that up to the other side.*

**DRAKE:** *Could you, for instance, light a cigarette with your finger?*

*(There is laughter in the courtroom.)*

**ABBADON:** *Listen man, where I live it ain't hot, yet. It's where I'm going that's gonna be hot. Unless we win this battle with the other side. You understand what I'm saying, man?*

**DRAKE:** *So let me get this straight. You claim to have no real special powers other than the ability of persuasion and influence. You also claim that you are the second most powerful individual in your organization, underneath . . . Satan only. So tell me Ms. Abbadon. Did you make Judas Iscariot betray Jesus Christ?*

**ABBADON:** *Yeah, I persuaded him.*

**DRAKE:** *You don't understand the question, Ms. Abbadon. Did you make him, did you force him to betray Jesus Christ?*

**ABBADON:** *Well, if you want to mince words, no. You see, we can't make anybody do anything. You humans choose to do good and you choose to do evil. When you choose to do evil, we just intensify it with our whispers and our influence and our persuasion. Then we sit in the corner and giggle.*

*(She laughs maniacally.)*

*Sometimes, it makes that other fellow cry. Poor Baby!*

**DRAKE:** *We won't even get into the issue here of demon possession, Ms. Abbadon, but let me ask you. Did you possess the body of Judas Iscariot?*

**ABBADON:** *Not personally. It could have been one of the others on my team. I just don't know. . .*

**DRAKE:** *So, Ms. Abbadon, what you're telling me is that human beings do wrong because they choose to, not because they're made to by the devil.*

**MARLA:** *I object, your honor. The prosecution is asking the witness to give an opinion without stating proper expertise.*

**JUDGE:** *Sustained.*

**DRAKE:** *Ms. Abbadon, I refer to your earlier testimony that your boss entered into Judas Iscariot and helped him complete this betrayal. Did he do that before or after Judas Iscariot had decided to betray Jesus Christ.*

**MARLA:** *Objection your honor. On the same grounds as before.*

**JUDGE:** *Mr. Drake, you will not direct questioning at the witness which will ask her . . . or it . . . to give opinions without the proper foundation.*

**DRAKE:** *Then allow me to refer to the Bible the defense entered into evidence, if I may. John 13:2 and I quote "And supper being ended, the devil having put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son to betray him."*

*The devil put it in his heart. Put it in his heart. An interesting turn of words. It does not say the devil twisted his arm, or took over his mind, or overcame his will. He put it in his heart, his very soul, his very being. He gave Judas a choice. Ms. Abbadon, did you force Judas Iscariot to betray Jesus Christ or did he choose to?*

**ABBADON:** *Look, I could of used any of them, you know. They all had their weaknesses. That Peter, now he was a hot headed one. I worked real hard on him in the courtyard and man, did we get some hot results. And that John, the Beloved (She spits the name.) and his brother James almost got too ambitious. But, Judas baby, he had a special weakness. Money and power. He was the easiest to use. No, I didn't make him do anything. The Devil didn't make him do it! He chose to.*

**DRAKE:** *No further questions.*

**MARLA:** *(As Drake passes by her.) At least I got you to read the Bible.*

**SCENE 8 -- PETER, PART 2**

**MARLA:** *I would like to recall Peter to the witness stand.*

*(Peter returns to the stand.)*

**JUDGE:** *I will remind the witness that he is still under oath.*

**MARLA:** *Peter, what happened when you pulled your sword in the garden?*

**PETER:** *I was angry. I tried to get to Judas. I tried to protect my Master.*

**MARLA:** *Didn't you cut off a soldier's ear?*

**PETER:** *Yes. If he hadn't have moved, it would have been his head!*

**MARLA:** *So, this soldier left the garden minus one ear.*

**PETER:** *No. Jesus healed him.*

**MARLA:** *Jesus healed the man that arrested him? Interesting. Tell me, Peter, when Jesus said that one of you would betray him, who did you think it would be?*

**DRAKE:** *Objection, your honor. Who Peter believed would betray Jesus is irrelevant.*

**MARLA:** *Your honor, this question is used for impeachment. This witness has testified as if he always knew Judas to be the betrayer yet I believe his answers will show differently.*

**JUDGE:** *Overruled. The witness will answer the question.*

**PETER:** *I thought it would be me.*

**MARLA:** *Why?*

**PETER:** *Just before the feast, Jesus said that before the night was over I would deny Him three times.*

**MARLA:** *And did you?*

**PETER:** *Yes.*

**MARLA:** *Peter, how can you sit here as a follower of Jesus after going through that experience? I mean, you denied your Master publicly. What makes you different from Judas?*

**PETER:** *I have thought about that a lot. Judas lost all hope. He looked within himself for forgiveness when he felt remorse and found none. So, he killed himself. I looked outside myself. It took me a while to realize it, but I have always had and will always have hope in my Master and Savior, Jesus Christ.*

*Why did he heal that soldier's ear? Because he loved him without question, without reservation. If Jesus could love a man who had come to arrest him in spite of his sins, why couldn't he love me in spite of my weaknesses?*

*You see, later, when I saw Jesus beside the ocean sitting around the campfire, he asked me if I loved Him. Three times he asked me. Once for each denial. And then, He told me to "Feed my sheep." He forgave me.*

**MARLA:** *Forgave you? How can this man ever forgive someone for such an act?*

**PETER:** *He has forgiven us all.*

**MARLA:** *Then, I ask you, Peter, as a follower of Christ, a man who must extend the same forgiveness to all that Christ did for us; Do you believe that Judas Iscariot is above forgiveness? Do you believe that Jesus Christ would forgive him for his actions?*

**PETER:** *I don't know what judgment Jesus has reserved for Judas. Judas' judgment is out of my hands. But, I must forgive him.*

**MARLA:** *No further questions.*

**JUDGE:** *The witness may step down.*

**MARLA:** *The defense rests.*

**JUDGE:** *Rebuttal, Mr. Drake?*

**DRAKE:** *No, your honor.*

**JUDGE:** *Very well. We will take a ten minute recess and return for closing arguments.*

**SCENE 9 -- RECESS AND CLOSING REMARKS**

**DRAKE:** *(Wanders over to Marla's table and picks up the Bible.)*  
*Marla, better get your resume in order.*

**MARLA:** *Don't be so sure, John.*

**DRAKE:** *Wake up, Marla. You're losing in a big way. You have no case. No case, at all. Do you think that jury has any sympathy for Judas Iscariot? If you do, you're dreaming.*

**MARLA:** *It's not over yet.*

**DRAKE:** *There is nothing you could say in your summation that would change anyone's mind. Judas is guilty and you know it. Face it, you lost.*

**MARLA:** *No, I haven't lost. I've won a few very important battles. You've read the Bible for the first time in your life. Why, you're even holding it right there in your hot little hands. Who would have thought they'd see John Drake, attorney at law reading a Bible.*

**DRAKE:** *(Slams the Bible down.) It's not what it looks like.*

**MARLA:** *And who would have thought that John Drake would actually be admitting that Jesus was a wonderful teacher? A healer? A suffering servant? John, sometimes I think that all that transpires in a court room is illusion, smoke and mirrors. But, today, you have had to grapple with truth. And, as this book says, the truth will set you free. No, I haven't lost. Not yet. Let's just say I wouldn't count on voting against my partnership until the trial is over. You're looking at the newest full partner in the firm.*

**DRAKE:** *You may think you've won a battle, but you've lost the war. You don't have a chance, Marla. Forget it!*

**MARLA:** *You promised if I could win this case, you would vote for me to become the newest partner and you would respect my Christian beliefs! The key is right there in the Bible. If you had taken time to read it; to really read it from start to finish then you would realize how I'm going to win. Take it home with you. It's yours. Partner.*

*(The Judge returns to his bench and raps the gavel.)*

**JUDGE:** *Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you will now hear closing statements by each of the attorneys in this case. After hearing those arguments, you must decide whether, based*

*on the evidence, you believe, beyond a reasonable doubt that Judas Iscariot is guilty as charged. Proceed, Mr. Drake.*

**DRAKE:** *Ladies and gentlemen of the jury. You have seen paraded before you here today, a vast array of witnesses, concerning the events of the last week of the life of Jesus Christ. At the center of this last week is one man. Judas Iscariot. We have seen the in this testimony Judas Iscariot was a man obsessed with his position as treasurer of the group of disciples. We've heard the testimony of how Judas Iscariot had an angry outburst at the woman who washed Jesus' feet and the waste of the money poured there.*

*We can all sit here and lament everyday about the death of Jesus Christ. But there is an inconclusive element, a fact that cannot be ignored. Judas Iscariot alone went to the Jewish authorities, conspired with them to hand over Jesus Christ into their hands, knew that Jesus would face the death penalty because of the accusation of blasphemy. Judas betrayed his own master with a kiss. Judas Iscariot is guilty for conspiring to murder Jesus Christ. The facts say it, and there is no way to escape the facts.*

*Your duty as jurors is to assure that justice is done and that the right thing is done. To find guilty the one who gave over Jesus to be killed. Jesus Christ, (He pauses for effect and glances briefly at Marla.)*

*Jesus Christ was as good a man as ever lived on this earth, kind to children, one who loved and helped others. We must not let his death go unpunished.*

**MARLA:** *There can be no arguing that Judas Iscariot is probably one of the most despised characters in all of history. There is no argument against his involvement in the death of Jesus Christ. Rather, what we are talking about here today is intent. For in order to be guilty, you must find that Judas intended the consequences of his actions. The prosecution has outlined a very compelling argument, that Judas Iscariot did willfully and with malice plot to have his master murdered by crucifixion. What I have tried to demonstrate is that Judas Iscariot was human. As a human he was subject to external forces beyond his control, namely that of Satan himself.*

*(She pauses for effect.)*

*So, there can be no denying that Judas is guilty. Guilty of plotting to murder his master and savior, Jesus Christ.*

*(The court room buzzes with surprise.)*

*Of course, you look surprised. I'm supposed to be defending this man. I'm a Christian. I'm supposed to hate Judas Iscariot and all that he stands for because his actions led to the death of my*

*savior, Jesus Christ. And yet, I'm supposed to be able to forgive him. How can I, the defense attorney stand before you and admit his guilt and yet ask you to absolve him. Unfortunately, I cannot do that. The ultimate fate of Judas Iscariot is not in our hands, but in the hands of God. Yet, you as jurors have been asked to consider his fate.*

*I have some interesting documents here before me that I would like to share with the jury. Ah.. Mr. Joseph Smith, yes you, the jurist in the back row. According to some sworn testimony, you are a deacon in a Southern Baptist church. You're a born again believer of Jesus Christ. Yet, I have here on good faith that you are spotted every Saturday night in a local bar, where you get quite drunk.*

**DRAKE:** *I object, your honor. This has nothing to do with summation or argument of this case.*

**MARLA:** *Your honor, the law gives great latitude in closing statements. If I might proceed, I can tie this together.*

**JUDGE:** *Very well, proceed.*

**MARLA:** *Ah.. Evelyn Jones. Yes, the lady in the center. You're president of the WMU in your church and you're in charge of the flower committee and yet I have here on good testimony that you enjoy spreading gossip and you're not above making up some of it if it isn't juicy enough.*

*Franklin. Franklin Bierce. Yes, you in the front row, sir. It says here that you are a Sunday school teacher in your church, a department director, a born again Christian and you sing in the choir. Why, that's quite lovely. And yet, I have it on good testimony, right here, that during the week you cheat customers out of their money in your business by charging more than you should.*

*Sidney. Sidney Creek, yes, there in the middle. You're a Christian also. And yet, right here it says that last week you made fun of Jesus and denied being a Christian.*

*Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I could go on. I have a piece of paper for each and every one of you. For you see, if you were able to look very closely at the expression on the face of the traitor, Judas Iscariot, you may see a reflection of your own face. When Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ, we all did. Each and every one of you is just as guilty of putting Jesus Christ on the cross, as Judas Iscariot. Our only hope and our only consolation is that Jesus Christ died to forgive us from our sins. If any of you are not above forgiveness, then neither is Judas Iscariot. But we should not try to forgive Judas, we should seek forgiveness for ourselves and we should try to stop betraying Jesus Christ everyday.*

*Your honor, I think I have clearly demonstrated that members of the jury are just as guilty of betraying Jesus Christ, as Judas Iscariot was. Therefore, I do not believe that they are unbiased to rule in this case. I suggest to you that no suitable jurors can be found. I request that you declare a mistrial and that this case be dismissed.*

**JUDGE:** *After reviewing these affidavits, I can see that there would be no jury that could honestly pass judgment in this case. Case dismissed.*

*(Marla and Drake pack up their books. As Drake is leaving his table, he looks back at the Bible which is the only book left on the table. He pauses, makes eye contact with Marla and then scoops up the book, holding it under his arm as he leaves the stage.)*

# CROSSTALK

A ONE ACT PLAY  
BY  
BRUCE HENNIGAN

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**CROSSTALK  
(OR, THE REAL LAST  
TEMPTATION OF JESUS  
CHRIST)**

**A ONE ACT PLAY**

**BY  
BRUCE HENNIGAN**

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APPROX. TIME 15 MINUTES**

**SUMMARY: This is a contemporary restaging of the crucifixion with the emphasis on what Satan might have said to Jesus to get him to come down off the cross. WARNING: There is very powerful dialogue that fits the true nature of Satan. Some audiences might be slightly offended to learn that Satan can be so brutal!**

**STAGING:**

**There are two ways to stage this play. The simplest way is to do the play with actors in costume with no props. The more complex way is to include the props, such as the whip, robe, etc. as well as the cross. In order to simplify matters, I would suggest putting a false rock facade at the front of the stage so that the actor portraying Jesus does not actually go up with the cross. This allows the actor to lay so the side and the cross, when raised is actually empty.**

**CAST:**

**SATAN  
JESUS IN PERSON, AND JESUS IN VOICE OVER**

**TWO ROMAN SOLDIERS  
ROMAN CENTURION  
JOHN AND MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS  
A CROWD OF 4 - 6 PEOPLE**

**PROPS:**

*Cross  
Whip  
Flask of Wine  
Sponge  
Reed  
Fold up lawn chair  
Small ice chest  
Small folding table  
Canned cola  
Hammer and spikes*

**THE PLAY BEGINS WITH THE FOLLOWING ACTION:**

*A man, dressed in contemporary, casual clothing walks onto stage. He wears a pair of blue jeans, sneakers, and a floral print "Hawaiian shirt". He may or may not wear a cap or straw hat. He wears sunglasses. He is carrying a foldout beach chair, a small ice chest and a folding table.*

*He walks onto stage from stage left, crossing stage to stop stage right. He sets down the ice chest and table. He unfolds the chair and prepares it for sitting. He unfolds the table and places it to the chair's left. He then opens the ice chest and removes a canned drink. He pops the top on the drink and sits in the chair with an audible sigh. He stretches, relaxing, his gaze directed toward the audience. He sits up, removes his sunglasses and talks.*

**SATAN:** *What a gorgeous, wonderful, exhilarating day! Look at that sun. What a scorcher it is going to be! Not a cloud in sight! Yes, a wonderful day. In fact, the best day of my life! That's why I like to come here. You just can't beat a day like today.*

*(He glances down at his watch.)*

**It's show time!**

*(From stage left we hear the approach of footsteps and the crack of a whip. People dressed in black robes hurry across to center stage, looking back from where they came. They are whispering. Some are crying. A Roman centurion appears, regal and stately leading Jesus*

*as he carries his cross. Jesus is beaten, haggard, wearing a crown of thorns. Another Roman soldier follows, whipping Jesus with a cat of nine tails.*

**SATAN** stands up, setting down his drink and crosses to the people. They do not notice him. He steps up beside the soldier with the whip.)

**SATAN:** Why don't you hit him . . . (he delivers the next phrase as if he were asking for a singer to sing one more time, drawing out the word) **ONE MORE TIME!**

**SOLDIER:** (The soldier nods, not acknowledging the presence of the SATAN and hits Jesus once more.)

**SATAN:** Ah, I love the smell of blood in the morning! You humans amaze me. You're so disgusting sometimes. And, I love it! (He crosses to the Roman Centurion, examining him closely.)

**SATAN:** Well, what are you waiting for? An engraved invitation. Crucify him!

**CENTURION:** (The centurion motions to the soldier and he lays the cross on the ground. He hurls Jesus atop the cross and removes a hammer and spikes from his belt. SATAN hurries over, rubbing his hands in anticipation and bends over the soldier.)

**SATAN:** (Looking at audience.) This is my favorite part! (Looking back at Roman Soldier) Don't be squeamish! Give it a good belt. That's it! Hit him again, harder, harder. Oh how I love blood sports!

(SATAN steps back as the cross is raised. The soldiers stand back at attention, the crowd milling in the background. SATAN ignores them and stands facing the audience, the cross between him and the audience and delivers the rest of the play.)

**SATAN:** Yoo hoo. Hey, you up there? Yes, you. It's me again. I'm back. You know, (delivered like the Tonight Show as SATAN delivers a golf swing) Heeeeeere's Satan!

*You don't look so good. In fact, you look worse than you did the last time we met face to face. You remember. In the wilderness. I tried to warn you. But, no, you wouldn't listen!*

*And now, look at you. Nailed to a tree. Out here in the hot sun with all these people staring at you. You should have listened to me. You coulda been somebody. You coulda been a contender! (He laughs maniacally.)*

*Well, let's see what we can do about it. You know, you don't have to stay up there. All you got to do is say the word, . . . no, just THINK the word and the armies of heaven will come to your rescue. They would crush these pitiful humans like a bunch of ants.*

*Yes, I said pitiful. Just look at them. Standing around weeping and screaming. The poor things. And, just a minute ago they were yelling "Crucify him." So fickle. And you want to die for them. What a waste. They'll never change, and you know it. You've seen it all. And, to tell, the truth, I've seen some of it, too. That's why I am here. Now. To try and talk some sense into you. I was going to greet you in the Garden of Gethsemane, but there were those pesky angels flying around like a swarm of mosquitoes.*

*But, here....here, you're on your own, buddy. Left high and dry. No one's shoulder to lean on. Except, of course, mine. I'll make you a deal. You just curse these pitiful human insects down here and we'll get you down off of that cross and into a nice, warm bath in no time.*

**JESUS:** *Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*

**SATAN:** *(Holding his hands to his ears.) NO, NO, NO! Now you've gone and done it. You've forgiven them all! What is wrong with you! Can't you see what they've done to you? Are you blind? You're hanging from a cross! How in the world can you possibly forgive them?*

*Oh, I guess you're going to blame me? Right? Wrong, buster! Remember, they made the choice in the garden. All I did was . . . educate them. All I've ever been is an encourager. And, for that I get such bad press.*

*(SATAN rubs his chin in thought and crosses to the table. He gets his can and sips, walking back over to the cross. He takes off his hat, rubs his forehead and tosses the hat into his chair.)*

**SATAN:** *Sure is a hot day in the old town today! That sun makes it as hot as, . . . well, you know where. (Laughs hysterically and sips his drink.) Bet you haven't had anything to eat or drink in quite some time. Must be pretty thirsty.*

*What's this, you ask? Why it's a wonderful beverage. Called cola. From the cola nut. Cool, refreshing, thirst quenching. Wouldn't you just love a taste?*

**JESUS:** I thirst.

**SATAN:** (Makes a fist and pulls it toward him in a victory sign.) YES! Now, that's more like it. (He walks over to the centurion and speaks into his ear.) Why don't you give him something to wet his whistle, soldier boy.

**SOLDIER:** (Soldier reaches for a wine flask.)

**SATAN:** NO, not the wine. Give him something that'll taste terrible. Like . . . vinegar.

**CENTURION:** (The centurion points to a container and the other soldier moistens a sponge and lifts it on a reed.)

**SATAN:** See how you like that. Why don't you perform another miracle. Change the vinegar into wine. Show the boys a good time. (He laughs.) I told you, you wouldn't make it. You're weakening. After all, you're only HUMAN. (He laughs) Oh, sometimes I amaze myself.

*Listen, I got you with the thirst business and I'll just keep after it until you give in, so give it up! Hop on down from that cross and let's you and I plan the future of this cute, little planet. Just think of the things we could do together.*

(SATAN stops as he sees two people approach. They are John and Mary.)

**SATAN:** OH, my heart is breaking in two. Will you look at these two people. Have you ever seen such a sorrowful sight? John, the beloved (He says it like he has a bad taste in his mouth.) Well, there's no accounting for taste. And, your sweet, little mother, Mary.

*Just look at this, Jesus. What is wrong with this picture? I can tell you. You are not in it. What in the world are these two people, the dearest people in all the world, going to do without you? They NEED you. Face it. Joseph is dead. So who is going to take care of poor Mary? And John can't let you out of his sight. He'll be lost without you. Who is going to look after them when you're dead and gone?*

**JESUS:**      *Dear woman, here is your son. John, here is your mother.*

**SATAN:**      *(Tosses can aside angrily.) Give me a break! Any more of this fawning sentimentality and I'm going to puke. And it won't be pea soup, either. I can't believe you! After the way they treated you, you still won't condemn them. What about these two poor wretches on either side of you? Common thieves. The lowest of the low. Vermin. Not worthy of your attention. Why, I wouldn't give them the time of day and here you are keeping their good company.*

*How can you possibly care anything for humanity when you are surrounded by such pitiful excuses for men? (Pauses.) Don't look at him like that. What is wrong with you? They both hate your guts. Can't you see. (Pause.) Wait, don't listen to that one. He's lying to you. He's delirious from the heat. He doesn't know what he is saying, claiming he deserves punishment and you don't. Don't listen to . . .*

**JESUS:**      *I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise.*

**SATAN:**      *No, no, no, no, no! (He paces around the stage quickly, pounding his fists against his thighs.) You! (He speaks to one of the soldiers) Make fun of him. NOW! And, you (he crosses to the crowd) remember he claimed to be the king of the Jews. Remember! Just moments ago, you wanted to crucify him. Where is your bloodlust? Your passion? Let's get with the program, people. Let's live up to your potential.*

*(The crowd reacts shouting: IF YOU ARE THE KING OF THE JEWS, COME DOWN FROM THE CROSS, and, IF YOU ARE ELIJAH, PROPHECY. )*

**SATAN:**      *That's more like it. Let him have it. You want to suffer, then so be it. Here they are. The people you want to die for. I can tell you they betrayed you now and they'll keep on betraying you. And you know it! Because, I'll be there all the way.*

*Look at them. See any love in their faces? They're just animals! Thirsting for your blood. All of them. Especially that one that sat at the table with you. The one that betrayed you with a kiss. (All in the crowd fall silent.)*

**SATAN: Tell me, Jesus, what did it feel like to be betrayed by a kiss? What did it feel like to have one of your closest friends turn against you. And what did it feel like when Peter, your Rock, cursed you around the campfire?**

*(Looks around the stage and shrugs.) Just where are they, anyway? Where are all your friends? Where are all your followers who vowed to stand by you to the death? WHERE is God? Huh? Can you feel him? Can you see him?*

*You're human, Jesus. Right now, you're more human than you have ever been. You know why? Because you are about to die. When you were God did you ever imagine what it would be like to die? And not only that, but you are going to die alone. No one here loves you. No one here has volunteered to die in your place. Look up. Tell me, Jesus Christ, Son of Man, can you still see God?*

**JESUS: My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?**

**SATAN: Yes, yes. That's it! He has forsaken you. He has turned his back on you. He broke all of his promises. He left you here to die alone. How does it feel, Jesus? How does it feel?**

*(SATAN shakes his head silently, deep in thought.)*

*How sad. Look, now that God has turned his back on you, there's only one person that can help you. ME. And, kind, compassionate soul that I am, I'm going to make you an offer you can't refuse.*

*Now, we both know that death is only temporary. Of course, that's easy for me to say. I'll never have to die. But, you will. So why don't we make a deal. Just give it all up, right now and I'll welcome you with open arms.*

*Just think back to all the good times you had. Wouldn't you like to be able to roam the earth with me? We could be pals. Buddies. Picture the headlines: "Satan and Jesus Take the World by Storm." I can give it all back to you. Forget all this mission of love garbage. You don't have to finish what you set out to do. Just come with me. .*

**JESUS: It is finished.**

**SATAN: (Sounding worried.) Yeah, it is finished. It's a done deal. You have my word on it. I'll take care of you. Just hop**

*on down, now. Give me your soul, Jesus, and we'll live happily ever after. Don't worry about these silly, helpless, sheep.*

*(He stops, his face getting worried.) What did I say? Why are you looking at them that way? They're sheep, I tell you. Stupid, brainless sheep.*

*(He hurries over and stands in front of the crowd, as if trying to block Jesus' view.) What did I say? Sheep? What's wrong with sheep? Unless, of course, you think of me as the wolf. Ha, Ha. Look, Jesus, why don't you just ignore these people here and pay attention to me. No, don't look at the guards. They're Romans for crying out loud! They hate you!.*

*Wait a minute! Sheep. Yeah, I never should of said that word. You like being a shepherd don't you? Wasn't there a parable you told? Looking for the lost sheep. Leaving the 99 behind to go look for the one? Well, that's pretty stupid, if you ask me. I could eat all 99 of them before you get back.*

*Did I say I could eat them? Just a slip of the tongue. I would never do that. And you would make a good shepherd. Just let me help you find them. We can look for them together. Yeah, that's the ticket. Just you and me, babe. Wait, wait, .... don't look up there. He's not there, I told you. He turned his back, remember. No....*

**JESUS:** *Father, into YOUR hands I commit my spirit.*

**SATAN:** *NOOOOOOO! (He falls to his knees, his hands over his ears as thunder sounds and wind blows. All becomes quiet and Satan slowly rises to his feet.) You may think you've won this round, buddy. But, as the saying goes, it ain't over til it's over. You still have to get out of that tomb. And, who is going to believe you, anyway? Rise from the grave? Ha! That'll never sell in this crowd. Your believers are scattered to the four winds. You're dead. It's over, Jesus. It's over. No one will ever believe you are the Son of God.*

**CENTURION:** *Surely, this man was the Son of God.*

**SATAN:** *(Looks at the centurion.) Oh, shut up! (He stalks off stage leaving people frozen at the foot of the cross.)*