

Jesus, The Anointed One (Yeshua HaMashiach)

The Original Stageplay



Cleveland O. McLeish

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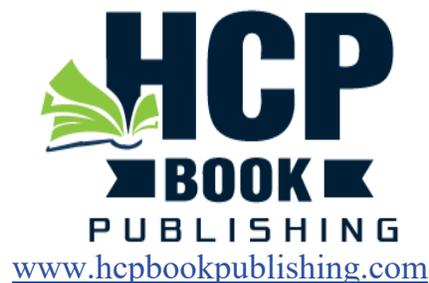


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Characters

Jesus

Phillip

Pastor

A Poet

Plus, A Supporting Cast (Most with speaking lines)

Setting

The FIRST ACT utilizes an empty stage. Various props will be needed, and much creativity can be applied to making this Act a complete, emotional, and visual success. I would use a smoke machine and lighting for scenes playing out from the past, and sound effects to maximize the effect of the other interactions that take place. I would also use a real, constructed cross for the end of Act I.

The SECOND ACT is a contemporary setting that should look like a park with benches, palms trees, etc. You can use a minimum of one bench, and be suggestive with the rest of the setting.

The THIRD ACT will revert to an empty stage with only a STOOL set up at the Center of the Stage.

The Story

This play is a remarkably profound examination of the specific scriptures that Jesus fulfilled during His life and ministry, based on Matthew's account. It is not written sequentially and does not follow a particular path, but highlights both the Written and the Living Word becoming One. The scriptures used are from the **Complete Jewish Bible**, using the original Hebrew Language for names and places.

It is written in three ACTS. The first Act is set in biblical times with Jesus at the center. His entire life in fragments passes before Him, and on many occasions, interacts with Him as He travels the path that was chosen for Him to walk.

The second Act is a more contemporary setting, examining from one man's perspective the true nature of the incarnation — God becoming flesh, God living in us by His Holy Spirit.

The third Act is the shortest of the three, that gives a profound challenge to all who will see this play, with a specific call not to be hearers of the Word only, but also doers. This play is emotionally driven but carries within it a fundamental message for all people today.

Play Details

Length: 60 Minutes

Cast: 3 Males, 1 Male/Female/Poet. Plus extras (Some with speaking parts).

Audience: Teens & Adults

Genre: Biblical and Contemporary Drama

ACT 1

The Past!



Setting: Empty Stage. There can be a few palm trees around.

LIGHTS UP

JESUS is standing CS, his head bowed, his hands bound with pieces of chord. He lifts his head for only a moment and stares at the audience. Then bows his head again.

VOICES (Male & Female): It is better that one man die for the people! Crucify him! If you release him, you are no friend of Caesars. Crucify him. Release Barabbas. Give us Barabbas. Let his blood be on us, and on our children. We want him dead. He is nothing but trouble. Blasphemer — calls himself God. Can a man be equal to God?! Imposter. Counterfeit. The world is better off without him. Crucify him.

Long pause — the voices decrease until there is just silence.

VOICE: The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and they will call him 'Immanuel.'

MARY enters holding a young child wrapped in swaddling clothes. She is rocking the baby in her arms, singing a sweet lullaby as she crosses the stage in front of Jesus. This is like a scene replaying from his past.

Jesus glances up, looks at Mary, and smiles.

JESUS: (whispers) Mother!

Mary continues to stroll across the stage, gleefully, and exits.

VOICE: And you, Beit-Lechem in the land of Y'hudah, are by no means the least among the rulers of Y'hudah: for from you will come a Ruler who will shepherd my people Isra'el.

A MAN enters, walks up to Jesus, and looks at him from head to toe with disdain.

MAN: Can anything good come from Nazareth? (pauses as if waiting for an answer) I say no.

Man spits at Jesus.

MAN: We know who you are — son of a mere carpenter. What gives you the right to try and elevate yourself as being equal with God. You are nothing!

Man scoffs at Jesus and exits.

Slight pause.

VOICE: Out of Egypt, I called my son.

JOSEPH and MARY enter carrying their YOUNG CHILD.

JOSEPH: Hurry, Mary. We must move with a sense of urgency. The Angel spared no words in instructing us to leave this place.

MARY: Why can't we go back home? Herod is dead.

JOSEPH: His son has taken his place. Is a son any different from his father?

MARY: But Egypt?

JOSEPH: I know this is right, Mary. I feel the same peace I felt when the angel told me to take you as my wife.

Pause.

MARY: I will follow you, dear husband, my priest.

They quickly exit.

Slight pause.

VOICE: A voice was heard in Ramah, sobbing and lamenting loudly. It was Rachel sobbing for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no longer alive.

SOUNDS of loud wailing can be heard, MOTHERS and FATHERS crying — Shuffling, Swords swiping, cutting flesh, destroying lives — feet marching — a massacre of epic proportions.

Then silence.

VOICE: The voice of someone crying out in the dessert, prepare the way of Adonai! Make straight paths for him.

JOHN enters wearing a robe of camel's hair. He looks disheveled, but strong. He points at Jesus with both hands, excitedly.

JOHN: (as if speaking to the Audience) This is Him. The One I told you about. He is greater than me. I am not even worthy to tie the sandals on his feet. He has come to take away the sins of the whole world. (to Audience) Follow him, not me. I must become less, He must increase.

John nods a matter of factly, bows at Jesus' feet, adjusts the lace on his sandals, and then leaves.

Slight pause.

Satan enters, walks menacingly around Jesus with a smirk on his face. He holds a rock to Jesus' face.

SATAN: If you are the Son of God, order these stones to become bread.

JESUS: (glares at him, weakly) It is written, man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of Adonai.

Satan sneers, slides to the other side of Jesus, pushes Jesus to the edge of the stage, and points out over the audience.

SATAN: If you are the Son of God, jump, for it is written, He will order his angels to be responsible for you. They will support you with their hands, so that you will not hurt your feet on stones.

JESUS: (gaining strength) It is also written, do not put Adonai your God to the test.

Satan's anger boils. He slides behind Jesus, points to the vast space before them.

SATAN: All this I will give you if you will bow down and worship me.

JESUS: Away with you Satan, for it is written, worship Adonai your God, and serve Him only.

There is a loud crack of thunder. Satan shivers and quickly makes his way through the exit.

SATAN: (O.S.) I will be back.

Slight pause.

TWO ANGELS appear and gently tap Jesus' shoulder in support and comfort.

ANOTHER ANGEL walks forward, unrolling a scroll that he/she reads from.

ANGEL: Land of Z'vulun and land of Naftali, toward the lake, beyond the Yarden, Galil-of-the-Goyim – the people living in darkness have seen a great light; upon those living in the region, in the shadow of death, light has dawned.

The Angels bow to Jesus and exit. Jesus smiles.

Several people with various illnesses appear onstage and crawl towards Jesus, touching the hem of his garments. The moment they touch his garment, a surge of strength enters their body causing them to stand up straight, dancing and running around Jesus with excitement. They kiss his hands and leave.

Slight Pause.

A SOLDIER comes on and strips Jesus of His outer garments. He presses down on his shoulder, and Jesus falls to his knees.

ANOTHER SOLDIER appears and hands the first soldier a WHIP. They both take turns to whip Jesus on his back.

VOICE: He himself took our weaknesses and bore our diseases.

They continue to beat him. The loud cries of women wailing in the background can be heard.

VOICE: To whom is the arm of Adonai revealed? For before him he grew up like a young plant, like a root out of dry ground. He was not well formed or especially handsome; we saw him, but his appearance did not attract us. People despised and avoided him, a man of pains, well acquainted with illness. Like someone from whom people turn their faces, he was despised; we did not value him.

A CROWN OF THORN is pressed onto Jesus' head.

VOICE: It was our diseases he bore, our pains from which he suffered; yet we regarded him as punished, stricken, and afflicted by God. But he was wounded because of our crimes, crushed because of our sins; the disciplining that makes us whole fell on him, and by His bruises, we are healed.

The SOLDIERS laugh at Jesus, they kick and punch him, and hit him in his head with a reed stick. There is no one to defend Jesus, no one to stand up for him. He faces this torment and punishment alone.

The Soldiers leave Jesus curled up on the ground, groaning in pain.

Slight pause.

A POET walks out, looks at Jesus, then addresses the audience.

POET: Was there not one who could help Him? He helped so many, but there was no help for him. It seems even His Father that He talked about so much had abandoned

Him in this very hour — this hour — one hour that would split time in two — one hour that would translate all of humanity from death to life — who would think that one man could accomplish so much on a cosmic scale in one hour. Yes, he was alone — but He knew this hour would come. His entire life on earth was lived in expectation for this hour — he knew the victory he would win for all humanity in this one hour. One hour is significant to God. He asked his disciples, could you not watch with me for one hour? Oh, for a single hour with Thee I spend — One hour is what He asks in return for all this — just one hour of your day with the Master, one hour with Your Father — sounds like a fair deal to me.

Poet looks at Jesus, then at the audience.

POET: It was not for Him to do, to die for us, but we could not pay for our own sins. When will we learn? We cannot pay the cost that sin desires. Typical humanity — to sin without considering the consequences. And when the consequences do come, we cry out to God for help. And He always comes and bears our burdens. What love! What undeniable compassion! What grace! He stood in our place — bearing the unbearable with joy in his heart. It fascinates me that the one who created us would be so willing to die for us even after we messed up. Who does that? *(pause)* He did.

Poet looks at Jesus one last time, shakes his head, and leaves.

Jesus slowly, painfully finds the strength to get back on his feet.

VOICE: Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will announce justice to the Gentiles. He will not fight or shout, no one will hear his voice in the streets; he will not snap off a broken reed or snuff out a smoldering wick until he has brought justice through to victory. In him the Gentiles will put their hope.

PILATE walks on and goes over to Jesus. He looks at him with pity.

PILATE: Why do you do nothing to save yourself? It's as if you want to die. Tell me who you are?

No response.

PILATE: Don't you understand? I have the power to set you free.

JESUS: You have no power over me, except what has been given to you by my Father.

PILATE: Who is your Father?

No response.

PILATE: It was your own people who brought you to me.

JESUS: My people! (Smiles) These people will keep on hearing but will never understand, and keep on seeing but never perceive, because the heart of this people has become dull – with their ears they hardly hear, and their eyes they have closed, so as not to see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart and do t'shuvah (repent), so that I could heal them.

Pilate sighs.

PILATE: Explain that to me! I understand none of it.

JESUS: I will open my mouth in parables. I will say what has been hidden since the creation of the universe.

Pause. Pilate is fascinated with Jesus.

PILATE: I have never met a man like you. But why do they want you dead?

JESUS: These people humor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is useless because they teach man-made rules as if they were doctrines.

PILATE: Worship? So, you are a king then? Only Kings demand worship!

Pause.

PILATE: Fine. I guess we will do this your way.

VOICES: Who is this? Please! Deliver us! He can't even deliver himself. Blessed is he who comes in the name of Adonai! You in the highest heavens! Please! Deliver us! Who will deliver him! Who is this! Yeshua, the prophet from Natzeret in the Galil. Nothing good ever comes from Natzeret. Crucify him! Crucify him! Crucify him!

PILATE: Do you hear that?

Slight pause.

PILATE: If you don't care about saving your own life, why should I?

Pilate walks away from Jesus and exits.

JESUS: Father, from the mouths of children and infants you have prepared praise for yourself. The very rock which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone! This has come from Adonai, and in your eyes, it is amazing.

MALE VOICE: It is time. Show my children the path to eternal life. It is the way they must walk in order to live.

A CROSS is brought to Jesus. He positions himself beneath the cross and starts to carry it offstage.

VOICE: The one who has never died, has not truly lived.

Jesus carries his cross offstage.

PILATE enters holding a piece of board with something written on it. He reads.

PILATE: This is Yeshua. The King of the Jews.

He stares at the sign for a moment, then summons one of his soldiers. He hands the sign to the SOLDIER. They both exit in different directions.

LIGHTS FADE