

# **The Final Journey**

The Original Stageplay



**Cleveland O. McLeish**

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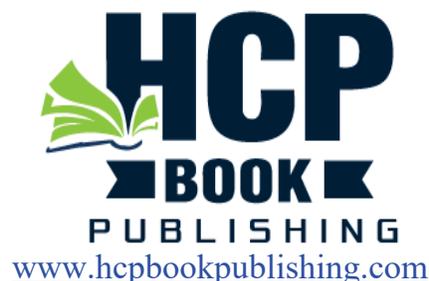
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## Characters

Jesus	-	33-year-old Male
Pharisee	-	45-year-old Male
Scribe	-	38-year-old Male
Matthew	-	31-year-old Male, Disciple of Jesus
Peter	-	36-year-old Male, Disciple of Jesus
James-		31-year-old Male, Disciple of Jesus
Judas	-	38-year-old Male, Disciple of Jesus   Treasurer   Betrayer
Young Man	-	29-year-old rich Male. (small speaking role)
Mother	-	50+ year old Female   Wife of Zebedee   Mother of James & John
Zacchaeus	-	40+ year old Male   Called out of a tree
Blind Beggar	-	30+ year old Male   Blind from birth   Healed by Jesus
Mary	-	31-year-old Female   Sister to Martha & Lazarus   Friend of Jesus
Martha	-	34-year-old Female   Sister to Mary & Lazarus   Friend of Jesus
Simon	-	39-year-old Male   Jesus had a meal at his house.
Lazarus	-	36-year-old Male   Brother to Mary and Martha   Friend of Jesus
Chief Priest	-	44-year-old Male   Highest Spiritual authority of the day
Caiaphas	-	55-year-old Male
Thomas	-	42-year-old Male   Disciple of Jesus   Doubtful
Phillip	-	33-year-old Male   Disciple of Jesus
Soldier	-	26-year-old Male
Salome	-	27-year-old Female   One of the woman who went to Jesus tomb
Extras (Some with speaking roles)		
Children (Some with speaking roles)		

## Setting

The stage is bare except for a few palm trees and rocks. This is the typical biblical outdoor setting, which will represent many different areas where Jesus walked or stopped on his final journey.

Stage right could depict a mountainside.

Stage left could represent the inner or outer courts of a temple.

## **The Story**

“The Final Journey” follows the biblical account of Jesus’ final days on earth in chronological order. We see glimpses of his love and fellowship with his disciples, his heart towards the people who followed him and the conflict that existed between him and the religious leaders of the day.

The Final Journey should never be forgotten, and we should never cease to tell it.

## **Play Details**

**Length:** 70-90 Minutes

**Cast:** 17 males, 4 females, plus extras (some with speaking roles | some children).

**Audience:** Teens & Adults

**Genre:** Biblical Drama

# The Script



## SCENE 1

### LIGHTS UP

*ENTER Jesus. He wears his usual smile and emulates with love. Some of his Disciples are with him, and a small gathering begins to grow as he makes his way across the stage.*

*A Pharisee enters from the opposite direction and meets him at Center Stage.*

**PHARISEE:** Rabbi, I have a question for you.

**JESUS:** Go ahead.

**PHARISEE:** Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?

*Jesus looks around at those gathered around him.*

**JESUS:** Haven't you read, that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female and said 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?' So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.

**PHARISEE:** Why then, did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?

**JESUS:** Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.

*The Pharisee is dumb folded. He sinks back into the small crowd.*

*MATTHEW whispers to Jesus.*

**MATTHEW:** If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.

**JESUS:** Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.

*A woman brings her children towards Jesus. Peter and John stand between her and Jesus. Jesus raises his hand for them to allow her to bring the children to him.*

*Jesus sits on a rock and takes each child on each leg.*

**JESUS:** Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like this little child will never enter it.

*Jesus lays his hand on their little heads, blesses them, and gives them back to their mother.*

*A Young Man dressed in fine purple runs up to Jesus, and bows at his feet.*

**YOUNG MAN:** Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?

**JESUS:** Why do you call me good? No one is good — except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.’

**YOUNG MAN:** Teacher, all these I have kept since I was a boy.

**JESUS:** One thing you lack. Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.

**YOUNG MAN:** Sell everything?

**JESUS:** Yes.

*The countenance of the young man fell. He slowly gets to his feet. He gazes into the eyes of Jesus whose countenance reveals his love, but the young man is sad. He reluctantly walks away.*

**JESUS:** How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

**JOHN:** Who then can be saved?

**JESUS:** With man this is impossible, but not with God. All things are possible with God.

**PETER:** We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?

**JESUS:** I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

**PETER:** Where do we go from here?

*The crowd is slowly beginning to disperse. Jesus leads his disciples to a far side of the stage.*

**JESUS:** We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn me to death and will hand me over to the Gentiles, who will mock me, spit on me, flog me, and kill me. But three days later, I will rise.

**PETER:** What is the meaning of all this?

*THE MOTHER OF ZEBEDEE'S sons, James and John enter.*

*They see her and run to her hugging her tightly.*

**MOTHER:** I am glad I got to see you one more time before you left. I packed some unleavened bread for your journey.

**JAMES:** *(takes the bag and straps it on his shoulder)* Thank you, Mother. Come and meet Jesus.

*James leads his mother to Jesus. James is holding her left hand, John her right.*

**MOTHER:** My Lord.

*She kneels before him.*

**JESUS:** What is it you want?

**MOTHER:** Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right hand and the other at your left in your kingdom.

*Pause. Jesus doesn't respond.*

**JOHN:** Teacher, would you do for us whatever we ask?

**JESUS:** What do you want me to do for you?

**JAMES:** Exactly as our mother as requested. Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.

**JESUS:** You don't know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?

**JAMES & JOHN:** We can.

**JESUS:** You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared before the beginning of time.

**PETER:** Why would you two ask for such a thing? What about the rest of us?

**MATTHEW:** We all deserve a place by the master's side.

*Jesus lifts his hand and the bickering stops.*

**JESUS:** You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give my life as a ransom for many.

*Jesus looks up towards the heaven...*

**LIGHTS FADE**

## SCENE 2

### LIGHTS UP

*A tree erected somewhere on the stage that is strong enough for someone to climb.*

*A small crowd is already gathered on the stage. There are young, old, middle aged from all race, classes, and genders.*

*PHARISEE and SCRIBE stand to the side watching the proceedings.*

**PHARISEE:** This could easily turn into a rebellion against the Roman Government.

**SCRIBE:** But can we convince the officials?

**PHARISEE:** How subtle this false prophet is to be able to incite rebellion with such perfect precision. He has not made one mistake. His character is consistent. All we have are lies and heresies.

**SCRIBE:** He is consistent. The people love him.

**PHARISEE:** Well, love can turn to hate in a single moment.

**SCRIBE:** And with the right motivation.

**PHARISEE:** We need to put a stop to this. He is bound to make a mistake at some point or the other. When he does, we will make our move against him.

**SCRIBE:** Here he comes.

*JESUS enters being closely followed by his disciples and a small crowd. Some are reaching through the crowd to touch his garment.*

*Jesus stops at the tree and looks up. ZACCHAEUS is in the tree looking down at him.*

**JESUS:** Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.

*Zacchaeus is shocked, People grumble among themselves. He jumps from the tree and leads Jesus to the far side of the stage where there is a small table. He gives water to Jesus and the disciples.*

*A Blind Beggar enters and sits at the other side of the stage.*

**PHARISEE:** He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.

**ZACCHAEUS:** Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.

**JESUS:** Today salvation has come to your house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

*Jesus embraces Zacchaeus who begins to weep. Jesus releases him. Zacchaeus moves about the stage pulling things of value from his bag and giving it away.*

**BEGGAR:** (*begins to shout*) JESUS, Son of David. Have mercy on me.

*Jesus turns to see who is calling him.*

**BEGGAR:** (*shouts even more*) JESUS, Son of David. Have mercy on me.

**PETER:** Master, it is only a beggar. Someone should silence him.

*Jesus silences Peter.*

**BEGGAR:** JESUS, Son of David. Have mercy on me.

*A man jabs the beggar with a stick to silence him.*

**BEGGAR:** (*shouts even more*) Jesus, Son of David. Have mercy on me.

**JESUS:** Bring him to me.

*Peter and John go for the beggar. They help him to his feet.*

**BEGGAR:** Where are you taking me?

**PETER:** Relax and cheer up. On your feet. He's calling you.

*The Beggar cast his cloak aside and stand firmly on his feet. They bring him to Jesus.*

**JESUS:** I am Jesus. What do you want me to do for you?

**BEGGAR:** Rabbi, I want to see.

*Pause.*

**JESUS:** Go! Your faith has healed you.

*The Beggar's eyes begun to flutter wildly, until they are once again settled. This time the world around him is full of light. He begins to laugh and celebrate. Others celebrate with him. Jesus embraces him, and he leaves filled with jubilee and touching everyone he passes.*

**PHARISEE:** How is he able to do these things?

*Jesus exits. The Disciples and crowd follow.*

*The Pharisee and Scribe move to the center of the stage.*

**PHARISEE:** We must put a stop to this now.

**SCRIBE:** What do you have in mind?

**PHARISEE:** Whatever we do, must be done quickly. It is almost time for the Passover. Many will be going to Jerusalem to for ceremonial cleansing. Post a notice. Anyone seeing Jesus must report it. I want him arrested.

**SCRIBE:** On what charge?

**PHARISEE:** Does it matter? If we don't put a stop to this, it will spiral out of control. Is that what you want?

**SCRIBE:** John's influence did not wither behind prison walls.

*Pause.*

**PHARISEE:** Then we need to find a way to kill this Jesus of Nazareth.

*Pause.*

**LIGHTS OUT**

**LIGHTS UP**

*Jesus stands alone at Center stage.*

*MARY, the sister of Lazarus runs to meet him. She falls at his feet. Martha enters but stays a short distance away.*

**MARY:** Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

*A small crowd begins to gather closer to Martha.*

**JESUS:** Where have you laid him?

**MARY:** Come and see.

*Jesus begins to weep.*

**MEMBER OF THE CROWD:** See how he loved him. Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?

*Mary takes his hand and leads him a little way from the crowd pointing offstage.*

**MARY:** There.

**JESUS:** Get someone to roll away the stone.

*Martha comes closer.*

**MARTHA:** But, Lord, by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.

**JESUS:** Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?

*Martha nods and exits the stage for a beat. She comes back pulling her head covering across her mouth.*

*Jesus looks up towards heaven.*

**JESUS:** Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.

*Jesus looks offstage in the direction of the tomb.*

**JESUS:** *(in a loud voice)* Lazarus, come out!

*Everyone waits in silent anticipation to see what would happen. No one expected a man who could cause the blind to see, to also be able to raise a man from the dead.*

*Lazarus steps out.*

*His feet and hands are wrapped with strips of linen, and he has a cloth around his face.*

*Martha and Mary's hand cover their mouth in awe and shock.*

**JESUS:** Take off the grave clothes and let him go.

**LIGHTS OUT**

### SCENE 3

#### LIGHTS UP

*There should be a dinner table at Center Stage.*

*Jesus sits at the head of the table with Simeon, their host. Some of his disciples sit around the table with him. They are having a meal.*

**SIMON:** I have received word that there are some in the temple looking for you.

**JESUS:** In time they will find what they are looking for. Now, I am enjoying this fine meal with good friends.

**Martha comes on with a pot and pours them some water.**

**MARTHA:** How is the meal?

**JESUS:** You have outdone yourself again, Martha.

*Lazarus enters.*

*Jesus immediately goes to greet him.*

**JESUS:** Lazarus, my friend.

*They embrace.*

**JESUS:** How have you been doing?

**LAZARUS:** It's been challenging avoiding all the eyes, questions, and attention surrounding my present existence.

**JESUS:** People will always question what they don't understand. But live your life to the glory of God. That is what matters.

*Jesus offers Lazarus a seat at the table.*

*Mary appears. The room seems to quiet down and the focus changes as she walks towards Jesus with a pint of pure nard.*

*She kneels at Jesus' feet. He readjusts himself to face her.*

*Mary pours the perfume on his feet and then wipes them with her hair. The smell of the perfume engulfs the room. Some of the disciples look discontented.*

**JUDAS:** Such waste!

**JESUS:** Pardon!

**JUDAS:** Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.

**JESUS:** Leave her alone, Judas. It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.

*Jesus smiles at Mary.*

**JESUS:** You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.

*Jesus lifts Mary to her feet. He hugs her.*

*Pharisee and Scribe appear at the far corner of the stage.*

**PHARISEE:** So this man Lazarus was really dead?

**SCRIBE:** Four days in the tomb.

**PHARISEE:** Then how is he here now....talking, eating, drinking, living as if he was never dead.

**SCRIBE:** Jesus raised him from the dead.

**PHARISEE:** Allegedly. Something impossible for any man to do.

**SCRIBE:** He is claiming to be more than a man.

**PHARISEE:** I know what he claims to be.

*Pause.*

**PHARISEE:** We must find a way to put that man Lazarus back in his tomb. His presence is not helping our cause.

**SCRIBE:** We may have found a weak link among his followers. One they call Judas Iscariot.

*Pause.*

**PHARISEE:** Find out all you can about this Judas. Then set up a meeting.

*A smile appears on the face of the Pharisee.*

**LIGHTS FADE**