

# The Fullness of Time

The Original Stageplay



Cleveland O. McLeish

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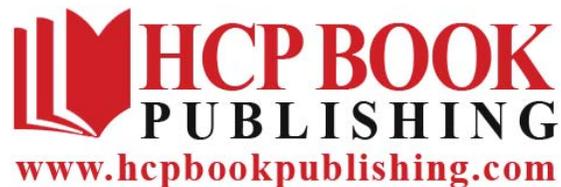
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## Characters

THOMAS

DAVID

PETER

JACOB

CAIAPHAS

YOUNG MAN

EXTRAS (Male & Female)

## Setting

An Old Market scene with stalls, merchandise, sellers, and buyers.

*(You are limited only by your imagination.)*

## The Story

This play examines the season and times when Jesus Christ was born into this world. In a small marketplace in Bethlehem, four friends gather to sell whatever merchandise they can get their hands on. It is a time of Roman rule, when Rome has united the world military-wise, while Greece has influenced the world culturally. There is one government, and predominantly one language, and much trouble.

Jacob has been slowly sinking away from the normal cycle of life to pursue knowledge in light of a series of dreams he has been having. He has calculated that the birth of the Messiah is very near, amidst the skepticism of his three friends, but none of them truly know just how accurate Jacob's predictions are.

## Play Details

**Cast:** 6 Males | Extras (Male & Female)

**Length:** 60 Minutes (5 Scenes)

**Genre:** Biblical Drama

# THE SCRIPT



## SCENE 1

### LIGHTS UP

*Outdoor market, afternoon. Old friends Thomas, David, Peter, and Jacob are standing in front of one of the stalls talking.*

**THOMAS:** *(smiles at the DAVID, PETER, and JACOB)* Beautiful day, isn't it?

**DAVID:** At least it's not as cold—

**JACOB:** What's so beautiful about it? Just a day like any other.

*The other three men are surprised at his reaction.*

**PETER:** What's wrong, Jacob? Have a fight with your wife?

**JACOB:** No, I didn't have a fight with my wife. I'm just tired of the way we live.

**DAVID:** The way we live? We eat. We sleep. We go to the marketplace, where we solve all the problems of the empire.

**JACOB:** You make light of it. But what do we have? Absolutely nothing.

**THOMAS:** You must have gotten up on the wrong side of the bed.

**JACOB:** What's it to you? And for your information, I always get up on the right side of the bed. Never the left.

**DAVID:** You believe in that—that superstition? That you can't get up on the left side of the bed?

**PETER:** It's bad luck.

**DAVID:** What's bad luck?

**PETER:** Getting up on the left side of the bed.

**THOMAS:** A ridiculous superstition. That's all.

**PETER:** You think so, do you? Well, let me tell you about my brother-in-law. One day he was in a hurry and didn't scoot over on the bed. You know what happened?

**THOMAS:** Yeah, he got up on the left side.

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**PETER:** (*Giving THOMAS a disgusted look*) He fell and broke his ankle, that's what happened.

**THOMAS:** That's ridiculous.

**JACOB:** As I was saying before all this nonsense came up—

**DAVID:** What were you saying, Jacob?

**JACOB:** Don't you see anything wrong with the way we live?

**DAVID:** Well, it would be nice not to have to worry about where the next meal is coming from?

**THOMAS:** That's just the way it is. Nothing we can do about it?

**JACOB:** I'm not suggesting anything. I'm telling you. We shouldn't have to live the way we do.

**THOMAS:** We're alive. The four of us have our health.

**PETER:** Let's listen to what Jacob has to say.

**THOMAS:** (*Shrugs*) So go on, Jacob.

**JACOB:** Soldiers patrol the streets. Pushing or kicking us out of the way if we don't move fast enough.

**DAVID:** That's just the way it is, Jacob.

**JACOB:** The way it is. Do you think it was always that way?

**PETER:** So far as I can remember.

**JACOB:** You're not thinking, Peter. Do you suppose it was that way back in the time of the ancients?

**PETER:** The ancients? Who are we talking about here?

**JACOB:** People like the prophets. People like Moses who wasn't afraid to lead his people to the promised land.

**DAVID:** To the promised land. Some promised land, if you asked me.

**JACOB:** That's what I'm saying, David. The nobility treats us like vermin. Do you think they even consider us human beings?

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**THOMAS:** Of course, they don't.

**PETER:** They chop off people's heads for no reason. Just because they're in a bad mood.

**DAVID:** And look at the taxes. It's almost impossible for most families to make it through the year. The farmers have to give Caesar Augustus so much grain, so many goats or cows, they hardly have enough to sustain themselves till the following year.

**THOMAS:** And since we're talking about things like this, look at the hovels we live in compared to the nobility.

**JACOB:** Like night and day.

**PETER:** And look how Herod lives.

**DAVID:** Herod? Nothing like Augustus and his marble palaces.

**THOMAS:** And people's morals. We've become completely ungodly. Living together in sin. The wealthy men having concubines instead of wives.

**PETER:** And the risk we're taking right now. Think about that.

**JACOB:** What risk, Peter?

**PETER:** What if Herod's men or the emperor's men heard us talking? What do you think would happen?

**THOMAS:** Well, I for one am not afraid to express my opinion.

**PETER:** But we *are* being foolhardy. Any of the people in the market could be the king's spies.

*Pause.*

**THOMAS:** What can we do, but enjoy life until our time comes? Absolutely nothing.

**JACOB:** Maybe there is something.

**DAVID:** What are you going to do, Jacob? Start a revolution?

**JACOB:** Nothing like that. Just pray, maybe.

**DAVID:** Pray? For what?

**JACOB:** You know the prophecies as well as I do.

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**DAVID:** Psh!

**THOMAS:** What prophecies?

**JACOB:** I'm talking about the Son of God.

**THOMAS:** We're all children of God.

**JACOB:** I'm talking about the Savior, the Messiah.

**DAVID:** Do you believe that old tale?

**JACOB:** Of course, I believe it. It's been prophesied by—

**PETER:** It's nothing more than a myth.

**JACOB:** It's no myth, Peter. All you need is faith. The Savior will be born.

**DAVID:** But when? After we're long dead and gone?

**JACOB:** Or maybe tomorrow or the next day.

**PETER:** Maybe never.

**THOMAS:** Brothers, I must go check on my wife. She is due to give birth any day now. I need a good midwife.

**JACOB:** Seems a lot of babies are being born in Bethlehem these days.

**PETER:** And they grow fast too. My son is already one year old. Can you believe that? It's been one year since I circumcised him. Feels like yesterday.

**DAVID:** I feel old. All my children are grown.

*David, Peter, and Thomas turn to look at Jacob.*

**JACOB:** Please, not now!

*The three shrugs, and walk away.*

**DAVID:** *(speaks softly to Thomas)* You think his wife will ever return?

**THOMAS:** Nope!

**JACOB:** I can hear you.

**LIGHTS OUT**

## SCENE 2

### LIGHTS UP

*Outdoor market, evening.*

*Thomas is making a sale.*

*Jacob is busy looking over some scrolls, making comparisons and scribbling notes at his stall. He misses a few customers in the interim.*

**THOMAS:** *(walking over)* You are missing quite a few sales. Any particular reason why?

**JACOB:** I had a dream last night.

**THOMAS:** Another dream. What was it this time? Parting of the Red Sea?

**JACOB:** It was a proclamation of sorts. I could not see the man talking, but he was bigger than the average man.

**THOMAS:** Alien, perhaps?

**JACOB:** Maybe I should keep my thoughts to myself. Avoid being made fun of.

**THOMAS:** Cmon. Talk.

**JACOB:** In a minute.

**THOMAS:** You know if the Roman's catch you with these scrolls, you are going to be in big trouble.

**JACOB:** I have to return these to the temple by sundown.

**THOMAS:** And how did you get them from the temple? Peasants are not allowed within those walls.

**JACOB:** *(smiling)* It's always good to know somebody, who knows somebody.

*Jacob finds a piece of papyrus and reads from it.*

**JACOB:** This is what I heard in my dream. "But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under law."

*Pause.*

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*Jacob maintains eye contact with Thomas, waiting for a response. Thomas looks confused.*

**THOMAS:** And – what does that mean?

**JACOB:** I believe it is speaking to the timing of the coming Messiah. What is the single most irritating system we exist under today?

**THOMAS:** The law, of course.

**JACOB:** Exactly.

**THOMAS:** It is also the most financially lucrative system for marketplace dwellers like you and me.

**JACOB:** Life is more than money.

**THOMAS:** You say that now because you have been relieved of your responsibility.

*Jacob looks sad.*

**JACOB:** My wife will return when she is ready. We probably needed a break from each other anyway.

**THOMAS:** Or, maybe your obsession with all this Messiah stuff is just not healthy for you and those you associate with.

**JACOB:** I did offer to keep my obsession to myself.

*Thomas has a customer. He goes over to attend to them.*

*Peter appears, goes over to Jacob.*

**PETER:** I am all out of fleece. Can you believe it? Something is changing. I have never sold so much merchandise in my entire career.

**JACOB:** You call this a career?

**PETER:** Do you have a better word for it?

**JACOB:** Survival comes to mind.

**PETER:** Embrace who you are my brother.

*Thomas comes over.*

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**THOMAS:** Your celebration will be short-lived when the Romans come to collect their tax.

*Peter's countenance falls.*

**THOMAS:** *(slaps Peter on the back)* Not to worry. If Jacob is right, the Messiah is coming to make all things right.

**PETER:** We are still talking about that?

*Jacobs shots Thomas a disapproving look.*

**PETER:** Is that why your stall is covered in scrolls, Jacob? Did you steal them?

**JACOB:** Don't you feel it?

**THOMAS:** Feel what?

*Jacob points to a few people standing around, seemingly joyful and more happy than usual.*

**JACOB:** There is great anticipation among the Jews, despite the Roman rule. We should be groveling in self-pity, but instead, there is joy.

**THOMAS:** I don't feel anything.

**PETER:** I don't feel anything, but I smell something.

**THOMAS:** What?

**PETER:** Roman pigs.

*Everyone takes their position at their stalls.*

*Jacob attempts to scrape up all his paperwork and put them away. He doesn't get through hiding it all before CAIAPHAS marches on with TWO SOLDIERS behind him.*

*CAIAPHAS shoves a few people out of the way and stops at Jacob's stall. Jacob is holding a scroll in his hand. Caiaphas extends his hand to Jacob. Jacob hands him the scroll. Caiaphas reads what is written on the scroll.*

**CAIAPHAS:** *(looking incredulously at Jacob)* What is this?

**JACOB:** Some reading material I got from the temple, sir.

*(Pause)*