

His Father In Heaven

by

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EXT. SPACE

The stars sparkle. TWO in particular twinkle more OBVIOUSLY.

STAR 1

What are you doing over there?
You're watching over that planet,
aren't you?

STAR 2

(teenage exasperation)
Nothing!

STAR 1 groans.

STAR 1

These are not playthings, Mister.
They're a big responsibility—

STAR 2

What's the big deal? You're always
away with your other planets. How
big a resp—

STAR 1

I'm omnipresent.

STAR 2

Heeyeah... You never let me do
anything.

Star 1 groans again.

STAR 1

What if something were to go wrong
Mr. Smart Guy—

STAR 2

Like when you burnt your beard on
that supernova?

STAR 1

I meant for that to happen...
(pause)

Anyway, you already have a job,
naming all of my creations—

STAR 2

It's boring.

STAR 1

'Boring?' This is serious work.

STAR 2
Seriously boring work.

STAR 1
SILENCE!

Silence.....

STAR 1 (cont'd)
Alright. You want "something" to do? I'll give you something to do.

The universe shifts on its axis. Now these two stars hover over the blue-green orb of Earth.

STAR 2
Isn't that Earth?

STAR 1
It's scheduled for demolition! It didn't work out. All of those people have become wicked and hard-hearted!

STAR 2
But, it looks beautiful.

STAR 1
I'll make a deal with you. If you can make them return to worshipping me, their one and only true God, Jehovah, make them righteous and God-fearing, I'll think about giving you more responsibility.

STAR 2
Well which is it? 'Worship you' or 'Righteous and God-fearing?'

STAR 1
They go hand-in-hand.

STAR 2
Righteous and God-fearing, huh?
Okay. How do I do that?

Star 1 doesn't really know.

STAR 1
Well... You... You have to go down there and... make them... righteous and God-fearing.

STAR 2

You mean as a bush or a column of
fire—

STAR 1

As one of them!

STAR 2

What? You've never done that.

STAR 1

You don't expect me to actually go
down there as one of them do you?

STAR 2

Why do I have to?

STAR 1

Because of my love for them, I'm
sending you—

STAR 2

(interrupting)

But, you're going to demolish—

STAR 1

(continuing)

I've got something else planned for
that space, anyway.

STAR 2

How much time do I get?

STAR 1

Hmmm...you've got...six days to
turn them back to me.

STAR 2

That doesn't sound very long.

STAR 1

Long enough for me to create the
place.

STAR 2

Wait a second.

Star 2 catches onto something.

STAR 2 (cont'd)

Six of their days or six of your
days?

Star 1 groans, foiled.

STAR 1
You got a better idea, Mr. Smart
Guy?

STAR 2
I dunno, a hundred years?

STAR 1
'A hundred years?'

STAR 2
That's better than 'six days.'

STAR 1
Ten years. That's it. Take it or
leave it.

STAR 2
Ten years?!

Star 1 starts whistling.

STAR 2 (CONT'D)
When do I start?

STAR 1
Right now. What are you waiting
for? They're not going to become
righteous on their own—

STAR 2
Okay, okay. But, why did they
become wicked and hard-hearted in
the first place—

STAR 1
(interrupting)
Get moving!

Suddenly Star 2 is whipped from the heavens and streaks to
the Earth in a sparkling arc.

STAR 1 (CONT'D)
Now, where did I put that galaxy?

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

JESUS, a nice Jewish boy of about thirty, is about to hammer
a nail into some timbers held up by his father JOSEPH, when
he's suddenly possessed by the being of Star 2. He falters,
missing the nail and they DROP THE TIMBER ON JOSEPH'S FOOT.

JOSEPH

Jesus!

Jesus, or Star 2, looks around at the rest of the crew as he rocks on his heels getting used to this new phenomenon of being in a human body. Joseph hops around on one foot.

Jesus studies the HAMMER IN HIS HAND. He looks at his father whose pain is subsiding.

JOSEPH (cont'd)

What'd you do that for?

JESUS

I need to go.

JOSEPH

What?

Joseph's brother, JEHOSEPHAT, shakes his head, overhearing them. Jesus tosses the HAMMER OVER HIS SHOULDER and onto Joseph's OTHER FOOT.

JOSEPH (cont'd)

Jesus!?!

Joseph grabs his foot and hops around. Jehosaphat joins him.

JESUS

I have to go.

Jesus turns and starts walking.

JOSEPH

Wait a second. Where are you going?

JESUS

I have to go and make people righteous and God-fearing. Bye.

JEHOSEPHAT

I always said, 'you better toughen your boy up.'

They watch as Jesus walks off the site. Joseph scowls at Jehosaphat, Jesus and his throbbing feet.

JOSEPH

He's not my boy.

Jehosaphat looks at him.

JOSEPH (cont'd)
Don't get me wrong. I love him
like a son... It's a long story.

EXT. TOWN

People are coursing by him on their separate ways through the town. Jesus blinks and studies all of the people around him. He waves at some people, trying to get their attention.

JESUS
Excuse me! People, can I have your
attention?

Someone drags a mule past him. No one stops.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You all have to be righteous and
God-fearing or God will destroy the
world with everlasting destruction!

A burly mason carrying some lumber approaches. Jesus tries to include him in his audience. The mason tries to sidestep.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You have to become righteous and
God-fearing!

Jesus steps in front of the mason.

JESUS (cont'd)
You have to learn to be better
people or you're all going to die!

The burly mason, without setting down his lumber, decks Jesus. Dropping him. People continue on their way.

CUT TO:

JESUS

Blinks and shakes his head, gathering his thoughts. He focuses on something directly above him. SATAN, looking remarkably like Jesus, or his YOUNGER BROTHER, is bent, standing over him.

SATAN
Wow, he really clocked you!

JESUS
What do you want?

Jesus scowls at him and struggles to his feet, dusts himself off and checks his jaw. It hurts.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Dad says I'm not supposed to talk to you.

Jesus starts to walk away. Satan looks offended.

SATAN

(mocking)

"Dad says I'm not supposed to talk to you." Can't I check on my big brother? ...It's a wonder more people don't hit you.

Jesus stops and glares at him. Satan mockingly puts up his dukes and dances around in front of Jesus. Jesus turns petulantly and continues to walk away.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - DAY

Jesus is standing beside a well. A ruckus is already in force. A tentative smile flits across his face as he holds up his hands trying to placate the crowd.

JESUS

People! You have to listen to me. If you don't stop being wicked and hard-hearted God will destroy the world and all of you with it!

Catcalls and boos answer him.

JESUS (cont'd)

Otherwise, God will throw fiery destruction upon you...

A cat flies at Jesus' head, making him duck, followed by refuse, dirt clods and other detritus. More boos and catcalls chase Jesus away from the well. Satan sits on a wall.

SATAN

Amateur.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

This time Jesus is wearing a SANDWICH BOARD written with a RAMBLING MESSAGE of repentance and destruction. A few of the words are crossed out and rewritten. He tries to slow down a group by blocking their way. A man looks up at Jesus. Jesus smiles at him. The man shakes his head sadly.

JESUS

My father says that he's going to
destroy the Earth unless you become
righteous and God-fearing.

The old man glances at him.

OLD MAN 1

What's "The Earth"?

...and shuffles away with the rest of the crowd. Jesus tries
to block another group of people. He reaches out to some of
them.

JESUS

Hello? Wicked people...?

ALLEY

Jesus runs "hell-bent" away from a now angry mob chasing and
throwing stuff at him. The SANDWICH BOARD slows him down,
TRIPPING HIM. He LOOKS BACK IN TERROR as they catch up.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Jesus is standing in the center of the village, preaching to
the crowd walking by. His SANDWICH BOARD has been SAWED IN
HALF. The bottom hangs down to his waist now, instead of
lower.

JESUS

(continuing)

—unless you become righteous and
God-fearing!

He gets in front of a matronly woman, trying to talk to her.
She decks Jesus, dropping him. People continue on their way.

CUT TO:

JESUS

Blinks and shakes his head, gathering his thoughts.

JESUS (cont'd)

That's not very righteous and God-
fearing.

EXT. TOWN CENTER - DAY

Another town. The SANDWICH BOARD looks much worse for wear.
But, he's added SHOULDER PADS and a MAKESHIFT HELMET from the
leftover pieces of the sandwich board.

The helmet looks like a wooden box on his head. On one side it says MEAN PEOPLE SUCK!

The town's people pass by him without paying attention. He tries to project. He looks around for any interest in vain. Satan, again is watching, looking down from a nearby veranda. Jesus glances up and he glowers at Satan. Jesus steps in the way of people walking by.

JESUS

Your one and only true God is
warning you to shape up...

A YOUNG WOMAN zigzags, trying to get around him, frustrated.

JESUS (cont'd)

...and become righteous and God-
fear—

The young woman decks Jesus, dropping him. People continue on their way.

CUT TO:

JESUS

Blinks and shakes his head and takes his helmet off.

SATAN

Come on, you can't expect them to
respond to "Repent," "Everlasting
destruction," "You have to be
better or my father will destroy
you."

Jesus looks up at Satan.

SATAN (CONT'D)

How long have you been doing this?

Satan tugs at the shoulder strap of the sandwich board for emphasis.

JESUS

Go ahead and gloat!

SATAN

What is it you're trying to do
here?

JESUS

I'm supposed to make them righteous
and God-fearing, or he'll destroy
the world.

SATAN

Why does he hate this planet so much? What'll that be, the fourth time?

Jesus gets up slowly and shrugs reluctantly.

SATAN (cont'd)

I could help you.

JESUS

That wouldn't be a good idea.

SATAN

You haven't even heard the idea!

JESUS

Any idea of yours is not a good idea.

Satan pretends to be offended.

SATAN

I'm not the one setting you up for failure. He is.

Jesus angrily takes the sandwich board off and throws it aside.

JESUS

Leave me alone! You're just going to try to ruin things anyway.

SATAN

First of all, it's my job. Second, if He really destroys the world, where does that leave me?

Jesus starts to get frustrated and mad at him.

JESUS

But, you were cast down... What do you mean "it's your job?"

SATAN

You've got a lot to learn.

Satan peers at Jesus. Jesus tries to return his gaze.

SATAN (CONT'D)

He gave it to me. If I don't do my job, who's he got to blame when things go wrong?

Jesus thinks... Satan stands up.

SATAN (CONT'D)
Fine, I can tell when I'm not
welcome. See ya' around brotha'.

He glances at Jesus' sad sandwich board.

SATAN (CONT'D)
Why's your sandwich board cut in
half?

JESUS
(embarrassed)
So I can run faster.

Satan chuckles, turns and walks away. Jesus watches Satan
disappear into the crowd.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Blame? Wait! What do you mean by
'blame?'

EXT. SEASHORE - DAY

Jesus is sitting on a rock, thinking. Seagulls harass the
day. Some women wash clothes in the water's edge. He
contemplates his surroundings and watches some fishermen
working nearby, hauling in a multitude of glittering and
flopping fish TRAPPED IN A NET.

He hears some scurrying and scuttling. He glances down and
spies a rat tail duck under some rocks at the edge of the
water. He grimaces. He looks around more carefully. He
sees and hears more activity of the rodent kind.

JESUS
Eew... Why do those things exist?

It gives him the willies. He stands up and walks into town
leaving his Quixotic sandwich board and helmet behind.

EXT. GALILEE

The town is bustling with activity. Whereas normally Jesus
would find the town's square and immediately start preaching,
now he's simply walking around, OBSERVING.

He looks at the town's people going about their routines.
Adults, old folks, children. Every so often, animals of
different sorts wander, scurry, are led or are prodded by.

Jesus starts to see the PEOPLE IN THEIR WORLD. He gradually finds the town square, built around a well, and pauses there to continue watching the activity. A few people glance at him. But, no one approaches him.

An OLD MAN, horribly hunched over, hobbles to the well, step by step. He PAINFULLY HAULS the BUCKET up from the well and drinks from it using the tethered cup. Jesus sneaks a peek at him. The old man sloppily and unsteadily drinks more water making noises and COUGHING CANTANKEROUSLY.

Jesus attempts to help the old man as he teeters backwards from drinking. But, he regains his balance at the last moment and finishes drinking and drops the bucket in the well. He turns and starts to hobble away. But, then he starts to fall over. Jesus watches him.

JESUS

Mister?

The old man starts coughing and making more noises as he teeters off his feet. Jesus moves over to him about to grab the old man to keep him from falling. The old man stabilizes.

JESUS HESITATES. The old man takes another step. And another step. And starts to lean in the OTHER DIRECTION. Jesus reaches out again but the old man stops.

JESUS HESITATES. The old man looks at him as if noticing him for the first time, and snarls at him. He puts another foot forward. And another one. And another. And starts LISTING RADICALLY. He starts to moan in response to his loss of balance. Jesus' eyes widen. The old man starts to flap an arm, falling over.

Jesus reaches out and GRABS THE OLD MAN. The old man GASPS! He STARES AT JESUS. Jesus STARES BACK.

OLD MAN 2

You!

JESUS

Me?

OLD MAN 2

Yes you...

JESUS

Yes me?

The old man stands up ramrod straight forgetting whatever had him horribly hunched over. He raises his arms, flexing his old biceps and marches in place a few times.

OLD MAN 2
You cured me!

JESUS
I cured you?

OLD MAN 2
You cured me!

JESUS
No I didn't.

OLD MAN 2
Yes you did!

JESUS
No. I don't think so...

OLD MAN 2
I was horribly diseased and
crippled but you LAID your HANDS on
me and cured me!

JESUS
No.

The old man starts to project his voice to people around them dramatically, getting their attention.

OLD MAN 2
Yes you did! IT'S A MIRACLE! HE
DID IT! He cured me!

People stop and look.

JESUS
I didn't do anything.

OLD MAN 2
Yes you did! He did it with his
HANDS!

A crowd starts to surround them. Jesus grabs the old man and hisses at him.

JESUS
Stop saying that!

OLD MAN 2
You did it again! He cured me!
It's a miracle! He did it!

The crowd has surrounded them. Jesus lets go of him.

OLD MAN 2 (cont'd)
He can do it for you too!

WOMAN 1
I have a goiter.

JESUS
No.

MAN 1
My foot hurts.

WOMAN 2
Heal me!

MAN 2
No. ME!

Jesus puts his hands up fending them off and THEY TOUCH JESUS.

WOMAN 1
Oh my god! It's true!

MAN 1
He cured me.

WOMAN 2
Me too!

MAN 2
Me three.

Jesus has a look of fright on his face. More people gather around and crowd in.

JESUS
I didn't do anything!

WOMAN 3
I have a painful period.

MAN 3
I have enormous bunions.

WOMAN 4
My breasts hurt.

MAN 4
It hurts when I pee.

WOMAN 5
My spleen is engorged.

OLD WOMAN 1
I'm blind!

MAN 5
My toof hursss.

OLD MAN 3
Me too.

MAN 6
Sciatica.

OLD MAN 3
Me too.

WOMAN 5
My husband's cheating on me.

OLD MAN 3
Me too.... I mean...

The sudden onslaught of ailing people terrifies Jesus. He wails in fear, shrinking back from the clamoring grabby hands.

JESUS
Get back!

The original old man who started this has quietly slipped through the throng and is leaving, with a sly smile on his face. Jesus now CAN'T BE SEEN FOR THE CROWD of hands and canes and crutches that are waving and shaking around him. Dust kicked up around him obscures him further.

JESUS (cont'd)
Please. Stop!

More people from the town approach Jesus. In the middle of the clamoring chaos he tries to wedge his way through the crowd, to get away from them. As he moves through the crowd, people grab at him, shouting various and obscure conditions, and are immediately cured, or feel better.

JESUS (cont'd)
Leave me alone.

He's desperate, literally pushing through the crowd. The weird, clamoring, greedy faces look like they're jeering at him as they make their desperate pleas.

Jesus breaks through the body of the crowd. Those on the edge can't exactly see where he is or what he's up to. This gives him the break he needs to put at least a little distance between himself and them. He looks around and rushes back the way he came. The crowd sticks with him.

OLD WOMAN 2

Is he a pervert?

MAN 7

Is he a thief?

OLD WOMAN 2

Are we gonna kill him?

MAN 7

Let's stone him.

WOMAN 3

He cured my lumbago!

MAN 3

He's a healer.

Jesus runs back to the water's edge with the crowd trotting behind him. He desperately looks around for an escape. People at the water's edge notice the tumult and become curious.

JESUS

Help.

Jesus has trapped himself with the water on one side and the crazy crowd on the other. As the crowd gets closer the noise from it is a SHRILL COMBINATION OF MORE CONDITIONS, AILMENTS, DISEASES, AND COMPLAINTS.

Nearby, a FORTY-ISH MAN is climbing off a ferry boat and turns to watch the commotion. At first the crowd stops short of the tide and HUSHES. Jesus steps backwards.

But, some of the more desperate in the crowd are not stopped. The CLAMORING starts again. They move forward. Jesus turns in panic. He notices a fishing boat in the distance.

JESUS (cont'd)

Help!

He starts running in that direction. The crowd murmurs in astonishment. The fishermen who are busy hauling up a net notice. JESUS is RUNNING ON THE SURFACE OF THE WATER.

JESUS (cont'd)
Help me! Help.

The crowd follows him into the water, but the water slows it down. A few intrepid swimmers take to full athletic strokes to catch up to Jesus.

The fishermen stop hauling their net. Jesus reaches the boat.

JESUS (cont'd)
Please help me! They're coming
after me. They're crazy.

He jumps on board. Jesus cowers behind the shoulders of the fishermen, JAMES, JOHN, PETER and THOMAS, looking at the crazy people wading out to them. They stare at him in astonishment.

JAMES
How did you do that?

Jesus stops and looks at the fishermen.

JESUS
...I don't know how to swim.

THEY STARE AT HIM. The crowd is still approaching. The fishermen and Jesus look out at them. JESUS PANICS.

JESUS (cont'd)
Please get me out of here!

JAMES
We have to pull the net in.

THOMAS
The sail's still up.

JESUS
NOW!

Suddenly the boat's sail UNTIES AND UNFURLS. A gust of wind blows in and FILLS THE SAIL knocking them off balance as the boat lurches forward. The mast GROANS as the sail pulls them forward and the net drags them down. The fishermen immediately try to furl the sail to be able to haul up the net.

JESUS (cont'd)
They're catching up.

Jesus stares in panic at the crazy crowd. He runs over to the stern and hand over hand hauls in the net while staring at his pursuers. The fishermen are shocked by his strength as he pulls in the net...FULL OF FISH!!!

The fishermen snap out of it and help him, but with much more difficulty. They get the net in allowing THE BOAT TO CRUISE AWAY WITH THE WIND. Jesus plops down on the deck, RELIEVED to be away from the crowd.

On the shore, THE FORTY-ISH MAN has watched the whole incident and turns away.

On the boat, the fishermen secure their gear and stow the fish as quickly as they can, all the while spying on this strange character they've hauled on board. James looks at him and the net he pull in and nods to Peter.

JAMES
This new guy would make a good fisherman.

INT. TAVERN

The forty-ish man, JUDAS ISCARIOT, walks in and sits at the bar. The TENDER brings out a jug of wine and a cup and nods at him.

JUDAS
Did you see that guy curing people?

TENDER
I've been in here the whole time.

JUDAS
You're a tavern owner. You know everything that goes on in this town. So who is he?

TENDER
Another traveling healer.

JUDAS
He looked a little new to the game.

TENDER
Gotta start somewhere.

Judas nods.

EXT. BOAT

Jesus is sitting with the fishermen. The fishermen smile at him nervously. They MOVE OFF AS A GROUP to one side.

THOMAS

Son of God? I doubt that.

JOHN

Righteous and God-fearing?

PETER

The guy's obviously crazy.

JAMES

Did you see him haul in that net? He's stronger than all four of us combined. Do you want to haul in the nets?

Jesus looks out nervously at the shore. The crowd is still out there, babbling expectantly.

JESUS

Can you drop me off over there?

Jesus points at the opposite shore. The fishermen look at each other.

JAMES

Well, we're not done with work yet.

Jesus is terrified.

JESUS

How much more work do you have to do?

JAMES

It's not even the middle of the day...

LATER

Jesus is pulling up A NET OF FISH ALL BY HIMSELF. He empties it into the hold. The fishermen sit around watching him do all the work. James moves over to Jesus.

JAMES (cont'd)

So. Where are you going, on the other shore?

Jesus keeps working.

JESUS

I dunno.

JAMES

You got a job?

JESUS

Uh, no.

JAMES

You got money?

JESUS

No. A little. Sort of...

James is proud of his new find and looks at the other guys nodding triumphantly.

PETER

Does this mean we have to pay him?

JAMES

What are you talking about? He's paying us for hauling him across the water.

The guys get it and James nods at them, cunningly.

EXT. DOCK

They're unloading the fish from the hold and distributing them into baskets for people who are buying them right at the dock. James is supervising the venture.

Jesus hops off the boat followed by Peter who climbs off. On the dock Peter tries to stretch and straighten up. He places a hand on his lower back, grimacing. Jesus notices.

JESUS

What's the matter?

PETER

This...back-breaking...hard work.

Jesus places his hands on Peter's shoulder.

JESUS

Your back's broken?

PETER

Nooo... It's not brok—

Suddenly Peter straightens up easily. He feels his back, checking. He turns his head, testing his neck. He takes several breaths, expanding his chest.

PETER (cont'd)
That's— That's odd.

JESUS
Oh-oh!

He looks at Jesus, with his hands still on his shoulder. Jesus retracts them apprehensively.

PETER
My back always hurts. Did you do that?

JESUS
I don't think so...

Peter holds a finger up, putting him on hold. He runs over to James.

PETER
I think we have a money-maker here.

JAMES
Agreed. This is the biggest haul we've ever made!

PETER
No. The new guy.

JAMES
Duh! That wasn't you hauling—

Peter drags James over to Jesus, interrupting him. Peter makes Jesus shake James' hand. James' eyes widen!

JAMES (CONT'D)
It's amazing!

James turns to the other fishermen. John and Thomas are nearest. He waves them over.

JAMES (CONT'D)
Touch him!

He indicates Jesus who looks almost forlorn, as the object of attention.

JOHN
Why—

James grabs his arm extending it toward Jesus, throwing John off balance as he clumsily grasps Jesus by the forearm AND IS INSTANTLY EXHILARATED. He gasps! Thomas reaches over and touches Jesus.

THOMAS

My hip!

JOHN

My toothache!

THOMAS

Mine too!

JESUS

Not again.

They stare at him, amazed. Jesus nods sheepishly.

EXT. EAST GALILEE

James and the rest have found a meadow where they've gathered a group of people. John and Peter are COLLECTING ADMISSIONS while James and Thomas assist Jesus, processing people waiting in line.

James grabs the next person up and shoves him towards Jesus. When Jesus touches them they're instantly cured of whatever ails them. Immediately Thomas grabs the person and shoves him on his way. And so on...

Jesus looks miserable, trapped.

INT. JAMES' HOUSE - NIGHT

The group has had dinner after a long day. The fishermen are exhausted. Jesus however still has energy. James and John are counting all the money they made.

JAMES

We have a total of four hundred fifty gold pieces, not counting the fish.

JOHN

I've never seen that much money.

Jesus is pacing about feeling his arms, distracting James.

JAMES

Aren't you tired?

JESUS
My arms...feel weird. And my back!

The fishermen smile at each other.

JESUS (cont'd)
Is this what you were talking
about?

He looks at Peter.

PETER
You did do a lot of work today.
It's catching up to you.

JESUS
What is?

Jesus swoons as his eyes flutter and then his head plops to the side. He drops on some pillows. The fishermen stand up in alarm. LOUD SNORING comes from Jesus as he's fallen fast asleep.

JOHN
Was he born yesterday?

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The fishermen and Jesus are riding a buggy on a dirt road. Jesus stretches.

JESUS
I slept so well last night.

THOMAS
We heard.

JESUS
What are we doing today?

JAMES
More healing and curing.

Jesus frowns.

JESUS
But, I don't want to do that.

James becomes cagey.

JAMES
Why not? The people need you.

JESUS

That was an accident. I'm supposed
to make people righteous and God—

THOMAS

(interrupting)
You told us.

JESUS

Are you righteous now and will you
worship God and not be wicked
anymore?

PETER

Sure.

JAMES

Whatever you say.

JESUS

That was easy. Now I have to tell
everyone else.

THOMAS

Everyone? Who's that?

JESUS

Everyone....

The fishermen look at each other.

EXT. CLEARING

James and John are taking admission this time. Thomas and Peter are assisting Jesus as a throng of people shove forward wanting cures and healing. The throng is frightening. They're HORRIBLY DEFORMED AND DISEASED.

Jesus is GRIMACING throughout the whole day as people are PUSHED AT HIM and he basically PUSHES THEM BACK, HEALING THEM in the process.

Peter gets some form of INSTANT LEPROSY on his skin. He freaks out and desperately taps Jesus on the shoulder. Finally Jesus glances at him. Peter points at his "boo-boo." Jesus lays his hands on Peter's arm and "wipes" the stuff away. Jesus then wipes his hands off on his tunic.

Peter is relieved; close call. They continue curing and healing. But, Jesus is miserable.

EXT. ROAD

Jesus and the fishermen are climbing onto their buggy as they leave. A crowd of people, cured and healthy are seeing them off. Now Jesus is smiling a little because at least it's a HAPPY CROWD.

JESUS

All of you have to stop being wicked and hard-hearted!

JAMES

Don't say that!

JESUS

You all need to be righteous and God-fearing.

The crowd groans and turns away from the buggy. It's a big crowd and an impressive display of sudden indifference.

PETER

Nice work there Nimrod.

THOMAS

You just take the fun out of everything, don'tcha'.

JOHN

They were still giving us money.

The crowd disperses quickly.

JESUS

But, it's true. They have to stop being wicked and hard-hearted. My father said so.

James prods the donkey pulling their buggy. They lurch forward.

JAMES

Give it a rest.

JESUS

What? What did I do?

EXT. CAPERNAUM - DAY

TITLE: A LONG TIME LATER

A large clearing holds a large group of people: a HAPPENING. At the end of the clearing a tent has been set up with a podium. The crowd is eager in anticipation. People shuffle and mill about waiting for the show to start. The mood is fairly upbeat and friendly... but superficial.

Judas Iscariot is walking amidst the crowd observing them closely. He looks a little wearier than before. He's a tough looking guy, clearly still capable of putting a hurt on someone. He finds a shaded area to station himself.

Jesus is being prepped by James behind the TENT CURTAIN. The crowd is murmuring. James is dressed much better now. His TUNICS are of a MUCH FINER QUALITY, as are those of the rest of the former fishermen. But, Jesus' tunic is MORE HUMBLE.

JAMES

Capernaum. Got it?

Jesus is not enthusiastic. James rubs Jesus' shoulders, charging him up.

JAMES (cont'd)

We were here eight months ago.
They love it when you remember the
name of their town. You ready?

JESUS

Yes. I'm ready.

JAMES

Make it happen! Show me the
shekels!

He shoves Jesus forward. Jesus walks out from behind the curtain. From his station Judas stretches to get a better look. Jesus smiles and raises his arms in salute.

JESUS

Hello Capernaum!

The crowd cheers boisterously. And then the first people are led up to him.

JESUS (cont'd)

Okay, what seems to be the problem?

The new assistants force the pilgrims into two clear lines and process them by Jesus. Very quickly Jesus heals and cures all who approach him.

WOMAN 6

My feet!

JESUS

Okay.

He lays his hands on her.

MAN 8

My back!

JESUS

Okay.

He lays his hands on him.

WOMAN 7

My eyes!

JESUS

Okay.

He lays his hands on her.

MAN 9

My bowels!

JESUS

Okay!

He lays his hands on him.

WOMAN 8

My hands!

JESUS

Okay!

He lays his hands on her.

MAN 10

My neck!

JESUS

Okay!

And so on. The hours drag on. JUDAS WATCHES, the whole time gradually getting closer to the stage. He looks around trying to calculate how many people are attending. He notices the assistants helping out, among them are Peter, Thomas, and John.

JUDAS

The Romans.

JESUS

What?

Jesus looks him over for an OBVIOUS DEFORMITY OR AILMENT and finds none.

LATER

The show's over. Jesus is back behind the curtain, seated, resting. The assistants are managing the last stragglng sycophants. Judas approaches them. Jesus looks up at him. Judas smiles and extends his hand.

JUDAS

Impressive display today.

JESUS

Oh, it's nothing.

JUDAS

Judas Iscariot.

Judas isn't sure if he felt or imagined something when he touched Jesus.

JESUS

Uh... Jesus Sonofjoseph...I suppose...or maybe it's Josephus—

Judas notices James. He nods at him.

JAMES

Do I know you?

JUDAS

I don't think so. Judas.

He turns back to Jesus.

JUDAS (cont'd)

I'm curious how it is you can do that?

JAMES

It's a special gift fella'. Now if you don't mind, we're kinda' busy.

James starts to usher Judas away.

JESUS

I didn't mean to.

Judas doesn't move.

JUDAS

What do you mean?

JESUS

Well my father sent me to make all of you wicked and hard-hearted people into righteous and God-fearing people. This healing stuff was an accident.

JUDAS

Your father?

JESUS

Yahweh.

JUDAS

Jehovah?!?

Jesus nods. James rolls his eyes. Judas nods.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

I see. And he sent you?

JAMES

I know you. You're that revolutionary—

Lightning fast, Judas clamps his hand over James' mouth startling both James and Jesus, and a few people around them. James continues to speak, muffled.

JUDAS

I prefer 'reform advocate.'

JESUS

What's a revo—

Judas shoots him a look and drops his hand.

JUDAS

Let's just say that I'm trying to change things too. Improve them.

Jesus smiles.

JAMES

We don't want you here.

Judas takes Jesus by the arm, blocking James from their conversation and starts strolling with him.

JUDAS

Can I ask you a question?

JESUS

Sure.

JUDAS

What exactly do you expect to get from this?

Jesus gapes at him.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

Why are you doing this?

JESUS

My father told me to.

JUDAS

If healing isn't your primary goal, and your father told you to... change people.

He gestures at James, the tent, etc.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Why are you doing this?

They've walked out to the meadow with James in tow.

JESUS

I didn't mean to do this either. It just kind'a took off.

Judas smiles at James knowingly. Judas continues strolling.

JESUS (cont'd)

I'm supposed to make everyone righteous and God-fear—

JUDAS

You mentioned that. Could I tag along with you guys and watch what you do?

JESUS

Do you know how to make wicked and hard-hearted people into righteous people?

Judas stops and dramatically ponders that question.

JUDAS

Wicked and hard-hearted? I might.

Jesus turns to James.

JESUS

Did you hear that James? Judas here may help me change people.

JAMES

Yeah great. I heard.

Judas smiles at James again. James scowls at Judas. Jesus notices. Judas smiles at Jesus.

INT. TAVERN - NIGHT

The fellowship of former fishermen, new assistants, Jesus and Judas sits eating at long tables spread out in a humble tavern. Serving girls are attending them with food and drink. Judas is sitting opposite Jesus with James adjacent to them.

JESUS

What are we building? Like what?

JUDAS

Like, bringing more people together or making plans for something else. Building something.

Jesus thinks about that.

JAMES

Look, buddy, we're not building anything. We're just traveling around... doing a... public service for... the people—

JUDAS

(interrupting)

That's generally what the public is—

JAMES

(interrupting)

And we don't need your trouble-making ways to mess things up.

JESUS

No wait. We are building something.

James looks at Jesus. Judas takes a bite of bread, triumphant.

JUDAS
(mouth full)
Whazhat?

JESUS
More righteous people who won't be
destroyed by my father?

JUDAS
Are you asking me or telling me?

JESUS
More righteous people who won't be
destroyed by my father!

He nods at Judas.

JUDAS
And, are you doing that?

JESUS
I dunno.

Judas finishes his meal and pushes the plates away from himself. He leans on his elbows.

JESUS (cont'd)
I've cured a lot of them.

Judas listens.

JESUS (cont'd)
I guess not.

JUDAS
How would you know? How are you
measuring your success?

JESUS
I...

Judas studies him.

JUDAS
Take the Romans for instance.

JAMES
Here we go.

JUDAS

Our nation has been under their control for 300 years.

JESUS

Really?

JUDAS

Aren't we God's chosen people?

JESUS

I guess so...

JUDAS

And yet the Romans rule over us and abuse us.

JESUS

Well, they're wicked and hard-hearted too—

JUDAS

If we were righteous we wouldn't be dealing with this problem. Would we?

JESUS

I suppose not.

JUDAS

So, maybe, if you make people, all of Israel, righteous, one way of knowing it would be that the Romans would go away. Right?

JESUS

I guess so.

JAMES

That doesn't make sense. The Romans are here because they're stronger. It has nothing to do with righteousness.

JUDAS

Why are they stronger than us, God's chosen people?

Judas stares at James.

JAMES

Because... I don't know.

Jesus looks at both of them.

JESUS

I have 10 years to do it.

(pause)

To make everyone righteous and God-fearing or my father will destroy the Earth.

Judas and James share a look.

JUDAS

We better get busy then.

EXT. TAVERN

Judas is smoking a pipe, looking at the stars. James approaches him.

JAMES

What do you want?

Judas turns to look at James. James is trying to keep the conversation quiet, between them. The rest of the fellowship is inside the tavern entertaining themselves. Judas smiles slyly at him.

JUDAS

You got a nice gig here.

James glowers at him.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Sure beats all that fishing.

JAMES

It's not like that.

JUDAS

It's not huh? Don't you think you've hidden from your duty long enough?

JAMES

Duty? What are you talking about?

JUDAS

You know there's talk in Rome of renaming Jerusalem?

James stops short, frowns.

JUDAS (cont'd)
Welcome to Caesarium!
(pause)
Sounds like a medical condition.

James is at a loss for words. Judas pats him on his shoulder and sends him back to the party.

EXT. RIVER - DAY

Jesus and company are pitching their tent by the river edge. Judas helps out. A few hundred yards downriver a mass baptism is underway. Jesus notices but is too busy helping with the tent to get a closer look.

A wild-haired prophet is baptizing a long line of people. JOHN, THE BAPTIST. He too notices the tent being erected as he stops in mid-baptism, the person spluttering underwater, and grunts at the close proximity.

Jesus' men put up the tent quickly. They hang signs that say BE HEALED, and TODAY ONLY. James grabs a few of the helpers.

JAMES
Okay. Spread the word!

The men disperse. At the baptism the line of people, both pre and post baptism, are craning their necks to see what is the ruckus.

The Baptist tries to continue baptizing without interruption. But, even his own assistants are distracted. The "word" spreads. Someone in the crowd mutters Jesus' name, followed by another person and another.

Now the baptism line collapses as the people start to wander away to see the tent. The Baptist tries to dunk an OLD WOMAN but she stops him.

OLD WOMAN 3
Easy there Goliath.

She disengages from him.

THE BAPTIST
Where are you going? You haven't
been reborn yet!

OLD WOMAN 3
That's the healer, ya dumb
Nephilim! That Jesus feller
everyone's talking about!

THE BAPTIST
Jesus? Healer?

Now The Baptist cranes his neck, perturbed. The first crowds are herded to the tent where Jesus is waiting. Judas observes the whole thing. And Jesus starts healing and curing.

He looks unhappy. He even looks back at Judas, frowning. Judas smiles at him.

Now people from the baptism arrive, some of them dripping wet. The murmur from the crowd grows quickly. It becomes a clamor. The "word spreaders" return having opened the faucet as it were. The Baptist watches most of his throng disperse.

THE BAPTIST (cont'd)
You're about to be baptized in the
Holy Spirit of God.
(pause)
You can't go now!
(pause)
Wait.

His voice booms against the river banks. But, everyone leaves. Even his assistants start to wander. But, The Baptist stops them.

THE BAPTIST (cont'd)
Oh no you don't!

They stop and look back at him, embarrassed. He frowns. It's pointless to hold them back when there's no one to assist.

THE BAPTIST (cont'd)
Oh fury!

The Baptist splashes through the water towards the healing tent. He arrives behind his group of people and looks over their heads, being much taller than them.

A sizable crowd has formed for Jesus. As usual he processes through the needy very quickly. Jesus is doing this as if he were dealing out playing cards or working an assembly line.

JESUS
Be healed.
(pause)
Be healed.
(pause)
Be healed.
(pause)
(MORE)

JESUS (cont'd)

Be healed.

(pause)

Be healed.

THE BAPTIST looms over him. Jesus gapes and then smiles broadly at him.

JESUS (cont'd)

Be he— Cousin! What are you doing here?

The Baptist angrily grabs Jesus by his tunic.

THE BAPTIST

This is my crowd. What are YOU doing here?

The crowd complains loudly and starts to tug at him for assaulting Jesus. He thrashes at some people and pushes some others aside. However he compromises by letting go of Jesus.

JESUS

I'm sorry. I'm just healing people.

He leans into Jesus.

THE BAPTIST

Healing? Who said you can—

The crowd starts complaining and clamoring again for Jesus to heal them. They actually drown out The Baptist. He REARS UP ANGRILY.

THE BAPTIST (cont'd)

Shut up! I'm commiserating with my cousin here.

That silences most of them. He turns back to Jesus.

THE BAPTIST (cont'd)

You better make this up to me.

Judas finds all of this very amusing.

CUT TO:

JESUS

...as he's dunked underwater by his cousin, The Baptist.

THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

I baptize you in God's Holy Spirit!

He makes a big show of baptizing Jesus, particularly as he heaves him out of the water spluttering and coughing. Those that Jesus healed are now being baptized as well. James is distracted by a dove flying overhead. He's hit on the head by bird shit.

JAMES

Damn pigeons.

EXT. MOUNT OF OLIVES - DAY

It's a dry and brushy mountainside and another happening with Jesus miserably stuck in the middle, curing and healing a huge crowd, probably the largest yet. Jesus shoves against the hordes of people who are attacking him to be healed of their ailments.

Judas is bored, with his chin in his hands and his elbows on his knees. He watches people recently healed and cured from the most amazing and stultifying infirmities simply leaving without thanking Jesus.

It becomes mesmerizing as wave after wave of ingrates assaults Jesus, buffeting him about only to disperse as quickly as they came. Judas shakes his head.

JUDAS

What can you expect from a country
made of rocks and olives?

Suddenly furious he stands up and marches over to Jesus in the middle of it all. He shoves his way through the crowd.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

Stop it! Stop it! STOP IT!

People notice him pushing his way through as he reaches Jesus, grabs him and forces him to stop touching people. He turns and faces the crowd.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Children of Abraham. Children of
Adam. Look at yourselves! Look at
yourselves!! You're pathetic.

The crowd stops. He studies all the faces in front of him in turn.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Ask not what you should get. Ask
what you should give. We are God's
chosen people.

(MORE)

JUDAS (cont'd)
We come from a blessed and noble
lineage. We are Israel!

The crowd cheers stupidly

JUDAS (CONT'D)
And now we're under the heel of the
Romans.

The crowd chokes and looks at each other.

JUDAS (cont'd)
You're getting your petty illnesses
and ailments healed.

Jesus watches Judas in action. It's impressive.

JUDAS (cont'd)
But, what about Israel?

The crowd cheers stupidly again.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
What about the disease that affects
all of us, that keeps us down,
underfoot!

The crowd chokes again.

JUDAS (cont'd)
Who's going to heal that?

Judas steps forward into the crowd to find a mound to climb to be able to look over more of the crowd. The crowd cowers. Jesus watches how Judas makes EYE CONTACT with everyone. He has their FULL ATTENTION. Judas is staring at everyone in turn and HE STARTS TO POINT AT THEM.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
You all know what is killing us.

Some people are literally covering their heads.

JUDAS (cont'd)
Our illness!
(pause)
The sickness that is killing all of
us. You, me, everyone.
(pause)
That disease is...

The crowd silences with a hush.

JUDAS (cont'd)
INDIFFERENCE!

A shriek escapes from the crowd.

OLD WOMAN 4
This is too frightening.

People start weeping. Some actually faint. Jesus is ASTOUNDED. He watches the whole thing very closely.

JUDAS
Indifference allows the Roman Empire to hold power over us.
(pause)
Abraham wasn't indifferent.

More assent and recrimination.

JUDAS (cont'd)
Indifference keeps us SUBJUGATED!
(pause)
Solomon wasn't indifferent.

More agreement and now some people actually pour dirt over their heads in lamentation.

JUDAS (cont'd)
Indifference is killing Israel!

The weakest of cheers is heard from one stupid corner.

JUDAS (cont'd)
David was not indifferent.

Jesus is aghast at the effect Judas has on the crowd. James' jaw drops open. Judas scans the crowd for anyone who isn't affected or listening. Actual weeping and gnashing of teeth has begun. The uproar becomes very loud.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
We need to take Jerusalem back.

Heads start to bow in shame throughout the crowd. Even John, Peter, Thomas and the other assistants are caught up by Judas' oratory.

JUDAS (cont'd)
We need to take all of Israel back.

Judas raises his hands and silences them before any cheering. The armbands on his forearms make him look very studly.

Jesus GASPS. Judas looks upon the crowd with the kindest and most inclusive expression possible.

JUDAS (cont'd)
Come together. Join me and the
resistance, together.

He studies everyone.

JUDAS (cont'd)
Form the Israel of Abraham, of
Isaac, of David, together.

Ahs come from the crowd.

JUDAS (cont'd)
We can rid ourselves of the Romans,
together.

There's a tense hush in the air.

JUDAS (cont'd)
Put aside your ailments and needs
and focus on the needs of Israel,
together!

He raises a fist as he says this. There's some cheering. Everyone's attention is on his fist. In a loud, deep voice he projects....

JUDAS (cont'd)
Only then will we be happy, as
God's chosen people...
(pause)
TOGETHER!

THE WHOLE CROWD ERUPTS IN APPLAUSE AND CELEBRATION.

JESUS
Oh he's good.

LATER

The happening has become a big recruitment rally. Judas is listening to a townie when John approaches.

JOHN
No sign of patrols.

Judas glances at him.

JUDAS
Good. Check on the others.

JOHN

Yes sir.

John goes away. Jesus is wandering around the crowd and for the first time in a long time he's NOT BEING CLAWED OR HARASSED OR PULLED. He observes whole families that have come out for the occasion. Although humble there's something very special in these tableaux.

He sees a father fluff his little boy's hair in a tender way. The little boy is playing with his father and shows him a stick he's found. Rather than take the stick the father squats down to get a better look at the stick in his son's pudgy hands.

Jesus seems to remember something fondly and then he remembers something less fondly. He glances heavenward. He starts to walk away.

LITTLE BOY

I'm hungry daddy.

FATHER

I know son. We'll see what we can find.

Jesus continues through the crowd. He spots a few other people who are obviously hungry. Suddenly his own stomach GROANS. He rubs it like an old man nearby doing the same thing. Jesus returns to where Judas is standing still talking to the townie.

JUDAS

The first step is spreading the word. A revolution has many weapons. Hearts and minds.

Jesus approaches them.

JESUS

Judas? Judas?

The townie nods and excuses himself. Judas nods at him and smiles. He turns to Jesus.

JUDAS

Yes?

JESUS

The people are getting hungry.

Jesus shrugs.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Me too.

Judas steps over to where Peter is standing.

JUDAS

What are you doing now?

PETER

Nothing.

JUDAS

Grab a couple of guys and search the crowd for bakers, fishermen, whatever.

PETER

Why?

JUDAS

People are getting hungry. We should feed them.

PETER

Why should we feed them?

Jesus has the same question. Judas has a sly smile on his face.

JUDAS

Food is the quickest way to show you care. Okay?

Judas is doing it again. He has the ability to mesmerize with his speech. Even though Peter is uncertain he's suddenly excited by the challenge.

JUDAS (cont'd)

You can do it!

PETER

Okay.

Peter goes off to find helpers. Again, Jesus is impressed.

JESUS

How are you going to feed everybody?

JUDAS

I dunno. It'll be a miracle.

Jesus watches him leave. As he turns he notices James standing next to him and he stops short. James watches Judas disappear.

JAMES

That guy's a troublemaker.

James turns away and leaves Jesus.

LATER

OF COURSE everyone's eating. Judas is watching, arms crossed, very pleased with himself. Jesus can't believe it. James doesn't like it. Jesus approaches Judas.

JUDAS

Did you eat?

JESUS

Yeah.

JUDAS

Good.

Judas grins at him.

JESUS

What happened here? I mean...what happened?

Judas is surprised too.

JESUS (CONT'D)

They were so...rowdy before. How did you....

JUDAS

I gave them what they really want. Not what they think they want.

JESUS

You did? What's that?

JUDAS

Their pride. They want to stop feeling helpless.

(pause)

Do you really think David, Moses, Abraham really stopped the sun or...split the ocean? No. They showed the people the way to their pride.

JESUS

Actually, they really did do those things.

Judas claps a hand on Jesus' shoulder.

JUDAS

Whatever you say.

JESUS

But, now what?

Judas smiles and jabs him in a shoulder.

JUDAS

Resistance.

JESUS

Ow.

JUDAS

But, now we'll see how many are really serious.

Judas smiles at him, Jesus rubs his shoulder.

EXT. MOUNT OF OLIVES - NIGHT

Most of the people have gone home. But, some are lingering, mostly men. Jesus is tired and yawns as he walks over the hillside. Jesus nears the tent which is still up. He spots Judas talking to a large group of men encircled around him. He approaches them.

JUDAS

The garrison will be on drills giving us a head start.

Judas notices Jesus approach them. He nods at him and then turns back to the group.

JUDAS (cont'd)

So, gather your things and we'll head out.

Jesus notices James sitting nearby, listening, with a frown on his face. He walks over to Judas. The group disperses and runs off to respective places.

JESUS

Where are you going?

JUDAS

We've got some work to do.

Some of the men have collected their things and already return. Jesus spots John, Peter and Thomas in the group with their things.

JESUS

Who's "we?"

Suddenly James leaps up and hurries to the tent. Judas follows him as does Jesus.

EXT. TENT

John, Peter and Thomas have broken open a treasure chest and are dividing their proceeds. James barges in, going directly to the chest and pushes them away. The separate piles of coins are on a table next to them.

JAMES

You're stealing. You broke into the chest.

Jesus and Judas arrive.

JOHN

We're leaving.

THOMAS

We don't have time to beg for the key, James.

PETER

We divided our shares as usual.

JESUS

Where are you going?

THOMAS

With Judas.

PETER

We're going to do something meaningful.

JAMES

This is meaningful. We're providing a service—

PETER

We're providing a circus.

JOHN

We're getting rid of the Romans.

James angrily turns to Judas pointing at him.

JAMES

This is your doing!

Judas points at all the money on the table.

JUDAS

And there's your money.

JESUS

But,...what about the tent? What do we do now?

JOHN

You and James can take it down.

They smile at them. James is livid. He glowers at Judas.

JUDAS

Hey. All I did was point out that they were wasting their time.

He holds his hands up. James LUNGES AT him. Judas catches his hands and deflects him, throwing him off balance and ONTO THE FLOOR. James scrambles to his feet, furious.

Jesus intercedes. Judas is ready to hand out some punches but James slows down, reconsiders.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

They're free men, James...for now at least. It's their decision.

They start to leave.

JESUS

Wait!

JOHN

Your shares are on the table.

The last one out is Judas. Jesus follows them a few paces. James remains at the tent.

JESUS

Does this mean you're not going to help me?

SATAN

Is this how you treat my gifts?

Jesus jumps, startled. He turns and scowls.

JESUS

Gifts?

Satan morphs into the OLD MAN Jesus first cured, smiling toothlessly. Then he turns back into himself.

JESUS (cont'd)

You! You tricked me!

SATAN

It wasn't working your way so I helped you get their attention!

(pause)

Now look at what you did.

JESUS

What I did? Judas stole them.

SATAN

How did he steal them? They're your helpers!

Jesus is upset, ashamed.

JESUS

He...talked to them...

Satan acts horrified.

SATAN

He talked to them? How horrible!

(awshucks)

He must be a pretty good talker.

JESUS

He is.

(pause)

Now what am I supposed to do?

SATAN

Oh, now you're asking me?

Jesus fumes in frustration. He glances between Satan and the departing men. Jesus starts to run after the men.

JESUS

Wait! Wait!

They stop and turn to look at Jesus run up to them.

JESUS (cont'd)

Don't leave me. You've got to help me make people not be wicked and hard-hearted.

THOMAS

What good is that going to do?

JESUS

What are you talking about? A lot of good.

PETER

Will it make us a nation again?

JOHN

Will it rid us of the Romans?

JESUS

It'll keep God from destroying everything.

JUDAS

Maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing.

Jesus is aghast!

JESUS

How can you say that?

JUDAS

'Maybe that wouldn't be such a bad thing.' Like that.

Jesus stares in consternation.

JESUS

You don't mean that.

He looks at each of them in turn. Judas smiles at Jesus, sympathetically.

JUDAS

If we can't fix all these problems what's the point in prolonging the suffering?

Judas stares at Jesus.

JUDAS (cont'd)
What's the point? Or is that part
of His plan too?

Jesus shrinks, very confronted by the question.

JESUS
Stay and help me make people
righteous and...

The other men chuckle at him. Judas laughs.

JUDAS
That's what we're going to do.
We're going to go make some men
'righteous.' Some, at least.

He smiles at him, pantomiming swordplay and turns away and continues walking. The men follow him. Jesus frowns.

LATER

James and Jesus are struggling to take the tent down. Jesus gets trapped underneath the muslin.

JESUS
Help... Help.

James is trying to help him, but his frustration is so much that he gives up and plops on the ground.

Jesus tries to beat his way out of the tent. Satan uncovers Jesus.

JESUS (cont'd)
Thank you, thank you.
(pause)
Thank—

Jesus sees that it's Satan again and scowls.

JESUS (cont'd)
—you!

Jesus pushes the rest of the tent away from himself and frowns at him. He walks over and sits next to James. James is too tired to react.

SATAN
I just led the horse to water.
It's not my fault you can't make it
drink!

JESUS

Horse? Drink? Can't you just say what you mean?

SATAN

It's an illustration. A metaphor. You should try it some time.

JESUS

Whatever.

SATAN

With that attitude you'll never make them righteous and God-fearing.

JESUS

I don't know what to do. My head hurts.

SATAN

Well. How'd Judas swipe your helpers?

JESUS

I already told you, he talked them into it.

SATAN

Can't you talk people into being righteous and God-fearing?

Jesus sags in frustration.

JESUS

I've talked and talked and talked and nothing.

SATAN

Then how did Judas get them to follow him?

JESUS

I don't know. He just did it.

SATAN

Maybe you should ask him.

JESUS

He's gone.

SATAN

Maybe you should find him.

JESUS
How am I going to find him?

SATAN
Maybe you should look for him.

JESUS
Where am I going to look for him—

James rears up in frustration—

JAMES
WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

—startling Jesus and Satan.

EXT. HILL - SUNRISE

Jesus wakes up cramped and cold. He looks around and sees the tent in a pile where it was left last night. He yawns and stretches and clears his head. He looks around. James is nowhere to be found.

JESUS
James?

He stands up, stamps his feet to regain warmth.

JESUS (cont'd)
James?

He looks all over. No James. Jesus sits down again. Depressed.

LATER

Jesus is loading the tent, rolling it up, wrapping it, tying it down, onto the cart they have for it. It's a lot of work for one man.

JESUS (cont'd)
Ow. That hurts!

He's tired and gets a SLIVER IN HIS HAND. He stops and studies it, trying to pick it out. He finally manages to extract it and he shakes out his hand.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Jesus is driving the cart, alone, bored. His head nods and he falls asleep. The donkey pulling the cart continues anyway.

EXT. TOWN

Jesus drives into town. He wakes up and when he realizes that he's in a town he becomes more wary of the people around him, a little furtive. But, no one pays attention to him.

He's torn between wanting to talk to someone and remaining anonymous. He's frustrated.

He rides through the town. He finds the center of the town, climbs off the cart and sits down at the well.

JESUS

(aside)

Are all towns designed the same way?

He gets a drink and then he waters the donkey, patting it affectionately.

JESUS (cont'd)

I shall call you 'donkey.'

He chuckles morosely to himself and at how far he's come. He sits back down. Elbows on knees, chin in palms, he watches the world go by, sitting on the well.

He sees a FATHER, a carpenter, TEACHING HIS SON how to cut wood properly. Jesus watches in boredom.

The carpenter gestures at the wood and the saw explaining. He indicates the teeth on the saw to his son. He shows him how to hold the saw and the wood. Then the carpenter cuts a piece while the boy watches. The excess piece falls away.

Then the carpenter hands the boy the saw, which looks large in his smaller hands. He shows the boy where he should cut now. The boy cuts the wood with more difficulty and slower than his father.

But, he does it.

The boy is overjoyed and the father is clearly proud of him. He tousles his hair and hugs the boy. The boy points out that his arm hurts, it's sore. The father laughs and indicates his own strong arms.

The two of them continue sawing wood.

Jesus looks away.

He spots a MOTHER AND DAUGHTER. The woman has a threshing basket next to a sack of wheat.

She gestures to the girl what she should do and then shows her. She doles out several handfuls of wheat from the sack into the basket.

She points out that the wind is blowing at them and in what direction. With the wind slightly behind her she starts to toss the wheat in the basket into the air, letting the wind take the chaff.

She asks the girl if she understands. The girl nods.

The woman pours the gleaned wheat into another basket and gets some more handfuls. Now she hands the basket to her daughter and watches her do it. The girl does it, perfectly. She has a knack for it.

The mother cheers and hugs her daughter. The little girl is happy.

Jesus looks away, bored.

EXT. RIVER

Jesus is sitting by the edge of the water watching fishing boats working. He watches people washing clothes. He watches seagulls looking for food. He's bored.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Jesus is driving along the road munching on some bread. The moon is out so he can see his way very clearly.

In the distance he sees a Roman garrison lit up with torches. He can hear some shouts or reports from the fort. It's a basic Roman fort made of sharpened timbers and adobe.

The road he's on is part of a fork. His part is converging with the other "tine" in the distance.

He comes across a man lying on the side of the road.

JESUS

Hello?

Jesus climbs down and approaches the man. He rustles him and then rolls him over.

JESUS (cont'd)

Hey Mister?

The body rolls over. The man's dead, his tunic is bloody. Jesus startles.

JESUS (cont'd)
Oh my. What happened?

He looks around the road and can see debris further ahead. He leaves the body, reluctantly and investigates further. He finds a bloody CLAYMORE, a short sword. He notices splotches of blood in the dirt that stand out thanks to the moonlight.

He ventures further. He finds some bloody discarded garments, wraps, tunics. He finds a spear. He sees someone stumbling on the road.

JESUS (cont'd)
Hello?

That person darts away into the brush beside the road.

JESUS (cont'd)
Wait!

He hears someone moaning. He turns around trying to find the origin of the cries. He searches on the other side of the road, in the brush. He spots a man dragging himself through the foliage.

JESUS (cont'd)
Wait!

The man tries to hurry, but he's badly hurt and can't. More moans. Jesus catches up to him and touches him to roll him over.

JESUS (cont'd)
Wait.

The man rolls over painfully and brandishes a claymore at Jesus, making him jump back. THE SWORD IS BLOODY. So is the man. Jesus gapes at him.

JESUS (cont'd)
Judas?!

Judas points the sword at him again and then drops it, realizing Jesus isn't a foe.

JESUS (cont'd)
What happened? You look hurt!

Judas rolls onto his side. He removes his bloody hand and shows Jesus an ARROW STICKING OUT of his gut.

JUDAS
(coarsely)
I'm thrilled to see you! Get it?
Thrilled?

He groans from another spasm of pain and coughs.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
Roman...garrison.
(pause)
Someone ratted us out.

He coughs and splutters.

JUDAS (cont'd)
It would have worked, too.

JESUS
What would?

JUDAS
Never mind. I'm not going to make
it. That damn Etruscan got me.

Jesus is frantic.

JUDAS (cont'd)
At least I got him too.
(pause)
He's down the road a bit.
(pause)
And then a little further down.

JESUS
I can heal you.

JUDAS
That's alright kid. I don't buy
that stuff. Maybe if I had
carbuncles, not a gut wound.

JESUS
No! I can help you.

JUDAS
Don't bother. Just hold my hand.
(full of self-pity)
It won't be long now....

JESUS
No!

He reaches into Judas' bloody tunic front. He lays his hands on the BLOODY WOUND. Judas groans into a scream as Jesus touches his stomach.

A LIGHT APPEARS in Jesus' hands and Judas' cry subsides into an EXCLAMATION OF SURPRISE as the pain vanishes. The arrow shaft drops off. Even the blood is gone, leaving only the sliced tunic.

Judas sits up. He opens his tunic and checks his stomach. NO WOUND. He's healed.

JUDAS

You... did it! You healed me!

Judas climbs to his feet, amazed. Jesus as well stands. Judas rubs his belly again. He stares at Jesus.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

I can't believe it.

Judas lunges at Jesus, surprising him with a bear hug.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you.

Judas steps back, holding Jesus by the shoulders. Jesus smiles from ear to ear.

JESUS

No one's ever thanked me...

Judas hugs him again.

JUDAS

Thank you.

(pause)

I can't believe it.

JESUS

You're welcome.

Judas releases Jesus.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Boy, am I glad I found you.

Judas smiles at that statement.

JUDAS

You can say that again.

JESUS
Boy, am I glad I found you.

Judas looks around, wary, remembering what just happened.

JUDAS
(whispered)
What are you doing here?

JESUS
I was...just driving by. Nothing.

JUDAS
We have to get outta' here.

Judas pauses and stares at him long and hard. Finally he nods and smiles at him, as if recalling something.

JUDAS (CONT'D)
I am your servant. You saved my life. I'm in your debt! Your mission is my mission.

JESUS
What about the Romans?

JUDAS
They'll have to wait. How else can I repay you?

JESUS
Do you really mean it?

Judas stares at him again, long and hard.

JUDAS
You want to "make the wicked and hard-hearted righteous and God-fearing?" I'll help you. That's my pledge to you for saving my life.

JESUS
Wow.

JUDAS
But,...

Jesus looks at him. Judas looks at him tentatively.

JUDAS (cont'd)
Let me figure out another way of doing it.

Jesus smiles sheepishly.

JESUS

Sure.

Judas studies his torn tunic.

JUDAS

What? You couldn't fix the threads?

Jesus is caught off guard.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Kidding.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

Scuffed and bruised, Peter, John, Thomas and some others are present.

THOMAS

Wait a second. One moment you're saying revolution! Over throw the Romans—

They shush him.

THOMAS (cont'd)

...now you're saying we should go back to healing? Make up your mind!

JUDAS

I have.

He turns dramatically towards Jesus.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Ever since he saved my life, his mission is my mission. So, we're going back into the healing business.

He turns back to the rest.

JUDAS (cont'd)

But, we're going to do things a little differently.

They all groan at him. Some drop their faces into their hands.

JUDAS (cont'd)

He says that his father, God, will destroy the Earth if we don't shape up and, to quote, "become righteous and God-fearing."

(pause)

I'm not sure I believe that.

He glances at Jesus with a smile.

JUDAS (cont'd)

But, I like the kid. And, we could all use a little more righteousness in this world.

(pause)

So if it starts here, with us, then so be it.

He looks at them. No one disagrees.

JUDAS (cont'd)

We have their attention, thanks to this "traveling show" you guys started. We just have to figure out how to get them to listen to his message long enough to get through to them.

Some of them nod to themselves.

JUDAS (cont'd)

I have an idea....

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

Another happening is in progress. They've drawn a large crowd. They've also converted the old tent into a long curtained fence: an enclosure. Some of the helpers take admissions as usual. But, they're not taking money.

PETER

Admission is free. Contributions are welcome. But, if you want to be seen by "Jesus, the Healer," you'll have to sit through a twenty minute presentation beforehand.

The person in line shrugs and nods and hands Peter some money. He smiles at the person and allows them in and starts his spiel with the next person.

INSIDE

Jesus is speaking to a group of people sitting on the ground. Judas watches from the side. Jesus is tentative as he speaks. He peeks at Judas to see if he's doing it right.

Judas has the presentation memorized, he may have written it, and his lips move as he follows along. Thomas is in front of the 'stage' holding cue cards for Jesus.

JESUS

In return I ask one promise from
all of you.

He glances at Judas. Judas nods and smiles back.

JESUS (cont'd)

You don't have to do it. It's up
to you.

He looks at everybody and sees that no one is distracted. Rather, they're all paying very close attention to him.

JESUS (cont'd)

I ask you all, to promise to do one
kind thing for someone you don't
know, someone you won't be
benefitting from in any direct way,
such as making money from them, or
getting work from them.

(pause)

In fact, I want you to look for
someone you don't know and do one
kindness for them.

(pause)

That's all.

He checks the crowd.

JESUS (cont'd)

Do you promise?

No one says anything. He checks with Judas. Judas nods at him and points with his chin at the first row. Jesus nods. He addresses one person directly.

JESUS (cont'd)

Will you do that?

He looks at others directly.

JESUS (cont'd)

Do you promise?

MAN 11

What do you mean by kindness?

Jesus tries to figure out how to answer that.

JESUS

Well, what do you think is a kindness?

MAN 11

Not hitting someone?

JESUS

I think that would just be not doing something mean.

The man kind of understands. The crowd scratches its collective head. Jesus throws a glance at Judas. Judas shrugs.

JESUS (cont'd)

Okay, uh, someone tell me a kindness someone did for you.

A WOMAN raises her hand.

WOMAN 10

I remember one time, a friend of mine let me get in line in front of her to buy fish.

She smiles proudly. Jesus frowns, confused.

JESUS

That sounds like it was a nice thing for you. But, it doesn't sound like a nice thing for the people in line behind you.

WOMAN 10

Who?

JESUS

The people in line behind your friend. The people who had been waiting longer than you. For fish.

WOMAN 10

What?

JESUS

That's a good start!

He glances at Judas. Judas feels his frustration.

MAN 11

I helped a woman kill a chicken
once.

(pause)

It was pretty feisty and she
couldn't get a good grip so I did
it for her.

(pause)

She repaid me with 'favors.'

He sits back smiling conceitedly, winking at Jesus. Jesus
stares at the man. Horrified. Judas stares in shock. Jesus
snaps out of it.

JESUS

Do some kind thing for someone you
don't know and...that's it.

(pause)

Alright. Who's first?

The crowd stands.

LATER

The crowd is leaving the enclosure as the next group waits to
go in.

MAN 11

That was great.

WOMAN 10

I feel brand new.

MAN 11

I don't get that kindness thing.
What does he want us to do?

WOMAN 10

I dunno.

INSIDE

Jesus is addressing the next group.

MAN 12

You mean like not sleeping with my
neighbor's wife? She's ugly
anyway.

Jesus glares.

THEN

WOMAN 11

Do you mean not cursing my mother-
in-law and wishing she would die?

Jesus stares at the dolts.

EXT. MEADOW - EVENING

Another group of recently cured and healed is leaving the scene. They seem happy and enthusiastic, fully engaged in conversations. Jesus and Judas standby watching the crowd leaving. They look at each other and smile at their success.

JESUS

I think it's working.

JUDAS

We'll see.

James approaches them slowly. They notice him. He looks a little bedraggled.

JESUS

James!

JUDAS

Where you been?

He's wary of Judas.

JAMES

Around. I thought you left to
defeat Rome.

JUDAS

Change in plans. What are you
doing now?

James thinks, he looks at his clothes, which seem beat up, and shrugs.

JAMES

I'm currently at liberty....

JESUS

You want to help us out again?

James squints at Judas.

JAMES

Maybe. What are you doing?

JESUS
We're making people righteous.

JUDAS
We're trying. Basically the same
thing you guys were doing but with
a small change.

James nods as if he figured.

JESUS
You wanna help us again?

JAMES
Sure.

He stares at Judas. Judas smiles at him.

JESUS
Well, I'm hungry.

JUDAS
Me too. Let's get some grub.

They start to move. The rest of the helpers are taking the
enclosure down.

JUDAS (cont'd)
You coming?

James looks at him and nods. He falls in step with Judas.

JAMES
I heard about an incident. Some
subversives were killed in a failed
attack.

JUDAS
It's a good thing for me Jesus came
along when he did.

Judas smiles at a surprised James. Judas continues walking.

JUDAS (cont'd)
If I ever learn who ratted us out,
though, I'll kill him.

James pauses before following them.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

People are bustling about. Pairs, couples, move about in
conversation. There's a BUZZ IN THE AIR.

TWO MEN.

MAN 13

I feel much better. You should do it.

MAN 14

How much is it?

MAN 13

It's free. But, he makes you make a promise.

MAN 14

About what?

MAN 13

I'm still not sure.

TWO WOMEN.

WOMAN 12

It's completely gone and I have more energy.

WOMAN 13

What are they called?

WOMAN 12

CHRISTOS.

WOMAN 13

Christos? What's that mean?

WOMAN 12

I think it's Greek for 'look, he's the one' or 'whoop, there he is!'

EXT. CAESAREA - DAY

Caesarea is a big city, by these standards. The hustle and bustle is obvious, but there also is a buzz. Throughout the crowds individuals are wearing necklaces, pendants, pins and other baubles that spell out "CHRISTOS." The word "CHRISTOS" is held in an almond-shaped outline.

Jesus, Judas and James are strolling along.

JESUS

What's a 'Christos?'

JUDAS
It sounds Greek. Like, 'the
chosen.'

One of the people walking by, wearing a Christos pin, stops
and notices Jesus. They tap their companion and point him
out.

CHRISTOS 1
Hey. You're the one.

Jesus, Judas, and James stare at the "fan."

JUDAS
What one?

CHRISTOS 1
He's the one who healed my goiter!

CHRISTOS 2
You're right, the Christos!

CHRISTOS 1
The One!

JESUS
The One?

JAMES
Which "one?"

The CHRISTOS look at them like they're dense. They chuckle.

CHRISTOS 1
The One!?

CHRISTOS 2
Duh.

CHRISTOS 1
Who heals people?

CHRISTOS 2
Yeah. The One who heals people?

CHRISTOS 1
Yeah.

Judas looks at Jesus.

JUDAS
You're the Christos!

JESUS

I am?

CHRISTOS 1 & 2

(in chorus)

Duh!

Jesus, Judas and James stare at each other. Other Christos notice the first two talking to them.

CHRISTOS 3

Whoop, there he is!

Judas catches on. He grabs Jesus by the arm and starts walking.

JUDAS

We gotta get out of here.

Judas flashes the first two Christos a quick smile.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Gotta go. Bye!

James tags along. As they rush through the crowd and spot more Christos more of them seem to recognize Jesus.

JUDAS (cont'd)

I think I underestimated you.

They make it to the inn and rush to their room.

INT. ROOM

John is relaxing in a chair by a window while Peter is napping. The three stumble into the room, rousing Peter and startling John.

The three plop down in respective seats.

JESUS

People are wearing pins and things.

John and Peter glance at Jesus.

JUDAS

Have you guys heard of 'Christos?'

JOHN

No.

Peter shakes his head. He rubs the sleep out of his eyes.

PETER

What are 'Christos?'

JUDAS

We just ran into a bunch of people wearing pins and necklaces with the word 'Christos' on them.

Judas points at Jesus.

JAMES

Apparently they're graduates of... our seminars.

PETER

Who started that?

JUDAS

Don't know. John?

JOHN

I've never heard of it.

Judas stands up and paces about.

JUDAS

We've hit a chord. People are identifying themselves as 'Christos.'

JAMES

Someone's making money off us.

JUDAS

I wonder how many of the Christos have kept their promises.

Jesus too would like to know.

JUDAS (cont'd)

I guess we could ask a bunch of them.

JAMES

At the next happening. We can ask the new ones how they've heard about us and who's selling these things.

JUDAS

Maybe we should add something to the promise.

JESUS

What if we tell them to be God-fearing?

JAMES

People don't want to hear that stuff! We're already asking them to be GOOD.

Judas is surprised by James' abruptness. He shoots him a look.

JAMES (cont'd)

I just think...

JESUS

But, I'm supposed to make the hard-hearted and wicked people righteous and—

JUDAS

(interrupting)

God-fearing. Jesus, what exactly does that mean? Why does God want us to fear him?

JESUS

He...well. He's the one and only true God. He's our heavenly father and he demands to be worshipped.

JUDAS

But, why fear?

Jesus stops, realizing he doesn't know the answer. He frowns.

JESUS

Well...otherwise they won't worship him.

Judas looks at Jesus. Jesus scratches his head.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY

The group has set up in a Roman amphitheater. The crowd is larger and taking their seats. Judas is on stage looking over the crowd. James walks by.

JUDAS

How'd you get this place?

JAMES
Judea's littered with them.
They're cheap too.

JUDAS
But, it's Roman.

JAMES
So's the money we paid them.

JUDAS
Whatever.

Jesus is strolling around the grounds getting a feeling for the people in attendance. He walks by the entrances. John, Peter, Thomas and several others are helping process the attendees.

THOMAS
Admission is free. Contributions
only. Thank you.

Each person gets half of a ticket, and the helpers keep the other half, to count attendance.

PETER
Where'd you hear about us?

WOMAN 14
A friend did it. She tripled her
income because of it.

THOMAS
Where'd you hear about us?

MAN 15
A friend.

John is talking to two men. He spots Jesus.

JOHN
These are two new guys helping us.
(pause)
This is Mark,
(pause)
And this is Luke.

Jesus shakes hands with them.

JESUS
Welcome, Mark, Luke. Thank you.

They nod good-naturedly.

JESUS (cont'd)
Don't we have any women helping us?

JOHN
Uh, no. Why would we?

JESUS
I dunno.

Judas and James arrive. Judas spots something.

JUDAS
Who are those guys?

Through the gates he points out vendors selling necklaces and pendants and pins to the attendees.

JAMES
They're working for us. If people are going to pay good money for this stuff we might as well get some of it.

Judas looks at James slyly.

JUDAS
Good work...

He looks around. The theater is filling up.

JUDAS (cont'd)
We better get ready. Jesus?

JESUS
Ready.

STAGE

Judas comes out on stage and addresses the crowd by raising his arms and getting their attention. The murmur of the crowd dies off.

JUDAS
Thank you everybody for coming today. Thank you.

His voice reverberates from the amphitheater and the backdrop.

JUDAS (cont'd)
We'd like to know how you heard about us.

(MORE)

JUDAS (cont'd)

So if no one's asked you, please take one of our helpers aside and tell them where you heard about this. We'd appreciate it.

(pause)

Well, the way we do this is Jesus comes out and gives a short presentation that we ask you to listen to, then he'll see each of you individually—

BACKSTAGE

Jesus is watching, waiting for his cue. James is with him.

JAMES

This is one of the biggest crowds we've ever had.

Jesus gulps nervously.

JAMES (cont'd)

Oh. Sorry.

Jesus takes some calming breaths.

JAMES (cont'd)

Go get 'em.

Jesus gets his cue and goes on stage. Judas comes backstage.

STAGE

The crowd cheers as Jesus comes out.

JESUS

Welcome, welcome. Thank you for coming!

The crowd cheers. Jesus smiles, encouraged.

JESUS (cont'd)

I'd like to change this part a little today.

(pause)

My job is to—

He peeks off-stage at Judas.

JESUS (cont'd)

—bring goodness and righteousness to you.

Judas smiles.

JESUS (cont'd)

That's why I do what I'm doing, and that's why I ask you to do this.

(pause)

I understand that people already have too much to deal with. They can barely keep the Mosaic Law. Observing the Ten Commandments can be kind of difficult.

People in the audience nod.

BACKSTAGE

Judas and James perk up, surprised.

JAMES

The Ten Commandments! What's he doing?

JUDAS

Quiet!

JESUS

Maybe they should be simplified.

Silence falls on the crowd.

JESUS (cont'd)

It could be just two commandments.

James looks horrified. Judas is truly intrigued.

JESUS (cont'd)

Love God with all your heart and spirit.

Jesus scrunches himself for emphasis, squeezing 'heart and spirit' out of himself.

JESUS (cont'd)

And love your neighbor as yourself.

JAMES

Two Commandments? What? And throw away the other seven?

JUDAS

Eight. Quiet. That's brilliant.

JAMES

Brilliant?

JUDAS

Of course. These two cover all ten.

JAMES

How? What about "you shouldn't kill your neighbor?"

JUDAS

It's not "you shouldn't kill your neighbor." It's "you SHALL NOT kill your neighbor." If you love God and you love your neighbor you won't kill him, will you?

JAMES

Well, what about the other ones? What are the other Commandments? Uh,...Fire, Wind, Water.

JUDAS

Those are the elements!

JAMES

"Don't spit in the wind!" "Don't pet sweaty things!..."

James looks to Judas for confirmation, which he doesn't get.

JAMES (cont'd)

"...Don't sweat petty things!"

Judas and James turn to the crowd as they 'Ah-ha,' beginning to understand, and then they start to applaud.

STAGE

JESUS

You no longer have to worry about all Ten Commandments if you remember these two.

He smiles and claps his hands together in completion.

JESUS (cont'd)

That's it.

(pause)

Oh, and if you can promise to do one kindness for someone you don't know, that's it.

The crowd applauds in eager agreement. A line of helpers has moved in front of the stage to help process the attendees.

JESUS (cont'd)
Do you promise?

The crowd cheers.

JESUS (cont'd)
Will you love your God with all
your heart and spirit and love your
neighbors?

The crowd cheers as well.

JESUS (cont'd)
Great. Then who's first?

The helpers direct the first row of attendees to stand and file down, to climb the stage and then lead out of the amphitheater after seeing Jesus. Jesus scans the people lining up.

JESUS (cont'd)
They're not as pathetic as the
earlier crowds used to be. Odd.

Jesus lays hands on all who pass by him.

INT. TAVERN

Jesus and company are relaxing after a long day. They're having dinner, or supper, in a back room at a long table. Jesus and Judas sit and talk, having finished their meals.

JESUS
Why would people start calling
themselves Christos and wearing
those things without being told?

JUDAS
People want to be part of
something, belong to something.

Jesus doesn't understand.

JUDAS (cont'd)
In this world, it's so easy to feel
alone, lonely, adrift in the vast
emptiness of it all.

Judas gets kind of wistful and it scares Jesus a little as he sort of recognizes what he's talking about.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Being part of something gives people a sense of meaning, of...I don't know, connectedness that grounds them, gives them roots.

JESUS

So, just belonging is what it's all about?

JUDAS

It's part of it. Belonging to anything can have that effect. I felt a little of that when I was a soldier of Judea,

(pause)

...for a little while.

(pause)

That's what going to Temple is. Don't you belong... to anything? Like your family.

(pause)

Where's your family?

Jesus looks around.

JESUS

All over.

Judas doesn't understand.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Well, my father is in heaven.

(pause)

The angels are all over.

(pause)

My younger brother is here. He was punished and cast down.

Judas has a mild scowl on his face.

JUDAS

I heard you were from Nazareth.

JESUS

Oh, them. That's not my family.

Judas scowls a little more genuinely.

JESUS (cont'd)

That's different. I mean I grew up with them, yeah. They're my Earthly family, an adopted family.

JUDAS

When was the last time you saw them?

Jesus shrugs.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Judas and Jesus are riding their cart.

JUDAS

Doesn't belonging to them give you a special feeling?

Jesus shrugs.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Don't they miss you?

Jesus shrugs.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Let's talk about something else?

Jesus nods enthusiastically.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

What gave you the idea to make two commandments?

JESUS

James said 'people can't even follow the Ten Commandments that are written down for them. How are they going to be righteous and God-fearing?'

Judas looks at him and thinks. They ride into Nazareth at night.

EXT. STREET

Judas and Jesus stop at a house and climb off the cart.

JESUS

This is it.

JUDAS

Well, go ahead.

Jesus knocks on the door. Noises can be heard from inside.

MARY

Who is it?

Jesus leans into the door.

JESUS

It's me, the son of God.

Judas is horrified.

JUDAS

You call yourself that?

MARY (O.S.)

Jesus?

The door opens. An overjoyed, older woman, MARY, beams at Jesus with her arms outstretched.

MARY (cont'd)

My baby!

Tears start flowing instantly. She rushes him and hugs him. Judas smiles, enjoying witnessing the reunion.

MARY (cont'd)

It's been so, so long! Let me look at you! We've been so worried about you ever since you left work.

She holds Jesus' face in her hands and beams at him, crying with joy.

JESUS

Hi Mary.

She hugs and kisses him again, and again. Finally... She catches her breath and looks at Judas.

MARY

Who's your friend?

JESUS

This is my friend Judas. He's helping me change the wicked and hard-hearted into righteous, God-fearing people.

Mary reaches out and hugs Judas. Then she steps aside, welcoming them into her home.

MARY

Come in. Come in. You must be hungry. Where have you come from?

JESUS

We were in Caesarea. Not too far.

MARY

Oh my, Caesarea? What brings you here?

(aside)

Girls, Honey? Jesus is here!

JUDAS

He told me he hadn't seen you in a long time and I thought we should pay a visit.

MARY

Wonderful! Wonderful! Come in.

They step inside. Mary closes the door and then leads them inside. Judas smiles at Jesus. Jesus seems totally clueless to the importance of the reunion. Judas motions him to go first and follows him, making a face at how WEIRD HE IS.

Three beautiful young women run out to meet them. They shriek when they see Jesus, and hug and kiss him. JOSEPH, an older man, comes out too and happily hugs Jesus and kisses him on the cheeks.

JOSEPH

Jesus! Where have you been?

JESUS

Hi Joseph.

Joseph shakes hands with Judas.

JOSEPH

Joseph. Welcome to our humble home and unusual family.

JUDAS

Judas. Pleasure. Thank you.

Mary sets places for them at the dinner table. The women introduce themselves to Judas.

MARY JR.

I'm Mary.

Judas shakes her hand and smiles.

ELIZABETH
I'm Elizabeth.

Judas shakes her hand and smiles.

DORCAS
I'm Dorcas.

Judas shakes her hand—

JUDAS
It's a pleasure!

—and smiles. He looks at Jesus. She's a knock-out.

JESUS
They're my sisters.

MARY
Sit, sit.

Mary brings out food. Jesus' sisters help her. Jesus sits down and motions for Judas to sit down. Judas, still stunned, sits opposite him.

MARY (cont'd)
Eat. Aren't you hungry.

JUDAS
Actually ma'am. We are. Well, I am.

JESUS
Yeah, me too.

JUDAS
This is a beautiful... home you have.

JOSEPH
Oh thank you. It's modest.

MARY
It beats living in a barn.

She and Joseph share a look. Judas smiles, not getting it.

LATER

Jesus' sisters are playing musical instruments and singing with beautiful voices. Even Mary and Joseph are backing them up. The song is a very cool, fun, folk song with a funky poly-rhythm.

Judas is tapping his foot and thoroughly enjoying himself. He looks at Jesus and sees that although he's not unhappy, he's not into the groove. Judas leans into Jesus and whispers in his ear.

JUDAS

Look at them! They're so happy to see you.

Jesus looks at his family anew.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Don't you miss them?

JESUS

I dunno. I guess so.

JUDAS

Don't you like them?

JESUS

I dunno. I guess so.

JUDAS

You guess so? Where are you from—

Judas stops. He remembers how Jesus will answer that. He leans in again, squinting at Jesus.

JUDAS (cont'd)

See. On this planet, humans who are KIND, like each other and miss each other and keep in touch with each other.

JESUS

Kind?

JUDAS

Yes! As in 'kindness'?

Jesus looks at him surprised, remembering his 'promise'.

JUDAS (cont'd)

My family doesn't play music when I visit.

Judas shakes his head, smiling in disbelief. Judas waves him away and returns to listening to the music. Dorcas is leading the sisters in song, strumming a lute.

DORCAS

Mi-chael, row your boat a-shore.
Ha-lle-lu-jah! Mi-chael row
your...

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Judas, Jesus and everyone walk out. Joseph and Judas finish a conversation.

JOSEPH

He was always a 'devout' kid. But,
that one day took the cake.
(pause)
It's good to know he's okay.

Joseph shrugs. Judas nods glancing at Jesus.

Judas and Jesus climb onto their cart to leave. Mary, Joseph, and Jesus' sisters wave goodbye to them. Judas happily waves at them, PARTICULARLY AT DORCAS. They prod their mule and ride away.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY

Jesus is on stage in full swing. It's another amphitheater and a different town.

JESUS

Two Commandments are much easier to
remember than ten, right?

A man stands in the crowd. He's clearly a priest judging from his 'raiments.' In fact there are several men, younger ones, with him, dressed alike in the crowd.

SADDUCEE

Who told you to shorten the Ten
Commandments?

The SADDUCEE points angrily at Jesus.

SADDUCEE (CONT'D)

By whose authority do you change
the Law?

JESUS

Excuse me?

Jesus is unprepared. He glances at Judas backstage. Judas shrugs. Jesus smiles at the priest.

JESUS (cont'd)
I did it myself.

The Sadducee is horrified.

SADDUCEE
You admit that you have no
authority!

Backstage...

JUDAS
Oh, oh.

JESUS
No, I asked for it. My father told
me to come down here and make all
of you hard-hearted and wicked
people righteous and God-fearing.

The crowd and Judas groan.

JUDAS
Not the 'Righteous and God-
fearing.'

SADDUCEE
You asked for it? And it was
granted to you?

Jesus nods innocently. The Sadducee turns to the assembled crowd.

SADDUCEE (cont'd)
This man is a heretic and will be
arrested for daring to change God's
law! I command you all to disperse
at once.

The people murmur.

SADDUCEE (cont'd)
Unless you too want to be arrested
as heretics as well!

The other Sadducee priests get up and start pushing people out of the amphitheater. They're none too nice about it either, some using their walking sticks to beat people.

SADDUCEE (cont'd)
Guards!

From the entrance, Judean soldiers appear.

JUDAS

Oh, oh.

Judas runs onstage and grabs Jesus by the scruff, dragging him off stage.

JUDAS (cont'd)

We gotta' get out of here. I should have known it was too good to be true.

James runs up to them.

JUDAS (CONT'D)

Tell everyone to meet at the Garden.

JAMES

What? Where?

JUDAS

The Garden! Gethsemane!

James has a cunning look on his face.

JAMES

Why?

JUDAS

Rabid rabbis!

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DUSK

Judas and Jesus run furtively from shade to shade.

JESUS

Why would they get mad at me for saying that my father sent me. Don't they believe in God?

JUDAS

That's what they say. They don't believe in you.

Jesus slows down in realization.

JESUS

They...they think I'm lying?

JUDAS

Basically. They're not known for being open-minded and progressive.

JESUS

Is that what He means by 'hard-hearted'?

Judas yanks on him to keep moving.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Judas and Jesus are less furtive now that they got away and it's nighttime. Jesus frowns and whines.

JESUS

I thought it was working.

JUDAS

We don't really know that. They could just be taking advantage of your healing powers, like before.

Judas hisses in frustration. Judas leads them down a ravine and under an aqueduct.

JESUS

Then how will I ever know when they're righteous?

JUDAS

I guess when someone surprises you... by doing some kindness for you.

They find a path. The path leads them to a grove.

EXT. GETHSEMANE

Judas and Jesus enter the garden. It's a small space, not really a garden. It's more of an unfinished project from years ago. He whistles like a bird and waits for a response. Someone whistles back and steps out of the darkness.

It's Thomas.

THOMAS

Who goes there?

JUDAS

It's me and Jesus.

THOMAS

Are you sure...

JUDAS

Is everyone here?

THOMAS
No. Some got caught.

JUDAS
Damn!

JESUS
Really?

THOMAS
I don't know for sure.

John and Peter step out of the darkness. A few more helpers appear as well.

JUDAS
Alright. Gather everyone together.

They huddle in a circle.

JOHN
What are we gonna' do now?

JUDAS
We can wait for a few hours before dawn and then head for Capernaum or head north.

JESUS
What do you mean?

JUDAS
Leave.

JESUS
Leave?

JUDAS
The Judaeen guard is looking for us.

JOHN
We should be fine if we travel at night.

THOMAS
I doubt that.

JESUS
What about my mission?

JUDAS

I'll stay with you. But, I don't think we can keep these guys here.

JESUS

But, it was working.

THOMAS

Heyeah.

Judas stares at Thomas, silencing him.

JESUS

Starting to at least...

Jesus sighs. He looks at Judas. Judas smiles at him compassionately.

JUDAS

Maybe it was. We'll just have to figure out some other way.

They hear some rustling. James appears, nervous and out of breath.

JAMES

Is everyone here?

JUDAS

You made it.

JAMES

Yeah. Is everyone here?

He sits down among them and can see for himself. HE SPOTS JESUS.

JUDAS

Not everybody.

JAMES

What are we going to do?

JUDAS

We're disbanding. It's probably for the best.

JESUS

Judas and I are going to stick together and try to figure out another way to carry out my mission.

JAMES

That's good.

JUDAS

Well, guys. Thanks for helping out. Sorry it had to end abruptly.

The helpers nod and mutter their acknowledgements.

JUDAS (cont'd)

Maybe we can keep in touch somehow and get everyone together once we figure out another idea.

PETER

Maybe we can meet once a month, have secret meetings and wear fezzes.

THOMAS

Right.

They hear more noise around them and see flashes of torches.

JUDAS

Everybody be quiet.

They freeze. James stands up.

JAMES

(loudly)
What is it?

Judas reaches for him and hisses at him.

SOLDIER 1 (O.S.)

Over here.

The fellowship scrambles frantically. Roman soldiers appear in the grove brandishing weapons.

SOLDIER 1 (CONT'D)

Stay where you are. You're all under arrest.

They try to run in the opposite direction but are blocked by approaching soldiers.

SOLDIER 1 (cont'd)

Where's the one called Jesus?

Jesus is startled and is about to answer. Judas claps his hand over Jesus' mouth. The soldiers get closer. Judas drops his hand.

SOLDIER 1 (cont'd)
Which one of you is Jesus.

Suddenly James lunges at Jesus, hugging him.

JAMES
Jesus, run. Run.

He lets go of Jesus and tries to push him on his way. The soldiers move toward him. JUDAS GLARES AT JAMES. HE CAN'T BELIEVE HIS TREACHERY. Judas rushes the nearest soldier, kneeling him in the groin and taking his sword.

He whips around and slashes at the soldiers and nicks James. One of the soldiers parries his slash and thrusts at him. Judas parries but is cut down by another soldier.

JESUS
JUDAS!!!

The helpers run away. The soldiers chase after the individuals. James retreats into the trees, holding his nick, and runs off.

Jesus runs to Judas and rolls him over. Judas smiles at him and dies. Some soldiers grab Jesus before he can heal him.

JESUS (cont'd)
Judas! No!!!

He hangs onto Judas' body, but the soldiers tug on him to let go.

In a SUDDEN FIT OF RAGE Jesus stands up throwing his arms into the air and bellows A PITEOUS CRY OF PAIN.

The SOLDIERS FLY INTO THE AIR, slamming into each other, or into the trees, dying instantly. James turns back and sees that.

JESUS (cont'd)
Noooo!!!!!!!!!!

Jesus drops to his knees beside Judas. He starts weeping. More soldiers appear. James takes off.

JAMES
Troublemaker.

The soldiers approach Jesus with swords and pikes drawn on him. They finally reach him and bind him quickly and roughly. They lead him away. He doesn't resist.

EXT. AMPHITHEATER - DAY

Another amphitheater, another happening. The crowd is mean and rowdy. There are banners and effigies throughout.

On stage, two men are presented by Roman soldiers.

On the left stands a bound and badly beaten Jesus. On the right stands an equally bound and badly beaten thug, BARABBAS.

A Roman governor walks out on stage to applause, PONTIUS PILATE. He raises his hands arrogantly acknowledging the cheers. When he reaches the center of the stage suddenly he picks up the pace and cuts diagonally to stage right.

PILATE
People of Jerusalem!

The crowd cheers. He jogs over to stage left, pumping the air with his arms.

PILATE (cont'd)
People of Jerusalem!

More cheers. He jogs backwards, spins and faces the crowd center stage.

PILATE (cont'd)
People of JE-RU-SA-LEMMMMM!!!!!!

The crowd erupts.

PILATE (cont'd)
Welcome. Welcome. Welcome to
today's—

He points at the crowd with both hands, outstretched, arm-banded.

PILATE (cont'd)
You Choose The Criminal!

The crowd cheers even more. He dances around the stage some more. There are several Sadducees in the crowd, whispering in the ears of people, lobbying.

JESUS
Wow, he's good.

PILATE

On your left, originally from the quiet little town of Bethelhem, currently from Nazareth, a petty heretic who displeased YOUR people by thinking himself greater than your laws... Jesus the Nazarene!!!

The crowd boos, catcalls, whistles, and jeers. He dances around some more.

PILATE (cont'd)

On your right, straight out of Corinth, he's a thrice convicted thief, brutalizer of women, offender of children and a multiple murderer. He evaded elite Roman investigators for the longest time ever, and now we've got him, Barabbas!!!!

The crowd boos, and catcalls etc.... Pilate motions for someone offstage. A soldier walks out carrying a pillow on which rests a crown of thorns.

PILATE (cont'd)

You know how this works. You pick the criminal and the winner gets to wear this tiara. Since they're gonna' die anyway, it doesn't matter that it's probably very painful. Consider it a final acknowledgement of their high stature...

(pause)

As a criminal.

The crowd cheers and laughs. More dancing.

PILATE (cont'd)

So which is it going to be? On your left Jesus the heretic? Or on your right Barabbas the murderer and scoundrel?

A pause and the crowd cheers and waves to the left, surprising Pilate.

PILATE (cont'd)

Your left, the heretic! People hate troublemakers.

JESUS

What? What's going on?

Satan is standing next to Jesus but no one else can see him.

SATAN

They're making an example out of you.

The soldier walks over to Jesus and places the crown of thorns on his head.

JESUS

Ow! That hurts.

Satan nods enthusiastically.

EXT. CALVARY - DUSK

Calvary is a hill used for executions. Graves litter the surrounding area as well as bones and SKULLS, picked dry by birds and bleached by the sun.

Three crosses stand on the hill. Jesus is ON THE LEFT.

He's been beaten and tortured. Someone's stabbed him in the side with something. He's in bad shape. However he's NOT NAILED to the cross by his hands and feet like the guy on the CENTRAL CROSS, who, by the way, they are taking down.

He looks around at the spectacle. A smattering of people are watching the goings on. They jeer and boo in a bored way. Roman soldiers mill about, executing the sentences.

Satan is standing next to Jesus' cross, resting his arm on his feet.

JESUS

That hurts.

SATAN

Sorry.

A vendor walks by carrying a wooden box with souvenirs, tiny crosses, effigies.

VENDOR

Souvenirs, souvenirs! Getcher Golgotha souvenirs! Calvary collectibles. Collect them all!

Jesus has to strain to look down. He keeps forgetting that moving causes him pain.

JESUS

Where's Judas? Why are they doing this?

SATAN

He's dead and you will be too.

Jesus recalls.

JESUS

I will? Why? What did I do?

Satan smiles. He steps away from the cross to look at Jesus.

SATAN

They don't like people telling them what to do, messing with their religions.

The evening is becoming stormy.

JESUS

But. Who'll help me?

GOD (O.S.)

Your time's up.

Satan scowls at the intrusion.

GOD (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I told you it takes more than just 'watching over a planet.'
Destruction works better.

SATAN

Destruction...

GOD (O.S.)

So, there's no reason for you to continue hanging there like a fool now. Come along and get out of the way so that I can destroy this place. Come on...

JESUS

But, I still have time left to complete my mission.

With his talking and moving Jesus looks like he's in extreme discomfort. Some people wince at the spectacle.

GOD (O.S.)

The deal was that you'd make them righteous and God-fearing otherwise I'd clear the area for something else. They're putting you to death. I think it's fair to say you haven't made them righteous or God-fearing. Come along.

JESUS

But, what about the Christos? What about the promises and the two Commandments? They were starting to listen—

SOMETHING DISTRACTS Jesus. A beat up old wooden CUP, tied to a LONG POLE is teetering next to his face. The cup is full of wine that sloshes and spills out.

He follows the pole down to see a ROMAN SOLDIER hoisting it up to him. Jesus' EYES WIDEN IN SURPRISE.

ROMAN SOLDIER

Drink! It's wine and myrrh.

Jesus gapes at him. The Roman soldier nods at him emphatically.

ROMAN SOLDIER (cont'd)

For the pain!

Jesus' jaw drops slowly.

ROMAN SOLDIER (cont'd)

Drink.

Suddenly Jesus smiles at the Roman soldier and shakes his head. The soldier frowns, slightly.

JESUS

No.

Tears well up in Jesus' eyes.

JESUS (cont'd)

But, thank you. Thank you very much.

The Roman soldier is taken aback. He lowers the cup, the whole time watching Jesus. Jesus smiles at him.

JESUS (cont'd)

Thank you.

Jesus looks up, still tearful.

GOD (O.S.)
(uncertain)
What now...?

The storm clouds roil closer to the hill.

JESUS
I win. You can't destroy them.

GOD (O.S.)
They're not worshipping me. You
didn't accomplish your mission—

JESUS
(interrupting)
You said "All of those people have
become hard-hearted and wicked."
It's not true. They're not all
hard-hearted and wicked.

GOD (O.S.)
So what? Most of them are hard-
hearted and—

JESUS
(interrupting)
Take this Roman soldier. You'd
think he's just a mean and ornery
'cus who wouldn't give a damn.

Jesus glances down at the Roman soldier.

JESUS (cont'd)
No offense.

He looks back up.

JESUS (CONT'D)
He's shown me more kindness and
righteousness in this one gesture
than anyone else has, and he did it
on his own.

GOD (O.S.)
Didn't he also just help nail you
to that thing?

SATAN
They tied him, they didn't nail him
to it.

GOD (O.S.)

Quiet.

JESUS

The more reason to be astonished by his compassion.

(pause)

You want them to be righteous? The righteous thing would be to give them another chance and let them learn.

GOD (O.S.)

They don't learn, they can't learn. I've tried telling them. I've tried showing them. The only thing I haven't done is MAKE THEM.

JESUS

Why not? You could have done that whenever you wanted.

GOD (O.S.)

That wouldn't be free will! My plan is based on their having free will to love and worship me—

JESUS

(interrupting)

Or you'll destroy them? Free will? You're looking at it!

GOD (O.S.)

Come along now...

JESUS

I'm glad you sent me down here. I've seen how they are, what it's like to be one of them. You have no idea what it's like for them on a day-to-day basis. You're too far away dealing with your other planets to understand. That's why you haven't been able to 'make them righteous and God-fearing'. You don't know how!

GOD (O.S.)

I know everything!

Thunder rolls across the sky.

JESUS

You knew they wouldn't listen to that 'righteous and God-fearing' stuff. If you haven't been able to change them, how was I supposed to do it in ten measly years? You set me up. Lucifer said it wouldn't work.

SATAN

Yep.

GOD (O.S.)

Don't say that name in my presence.

JESUS

Lucifer! Lucifer! Lucifer!

SATAN

Hello?

GOD (O.S.)

Silence.

Lightning strikes.

JESUS

Give me three thousand years.

GOD (O.S.)

Three thousand years?

JESUS

Yes!

GOD (O.S.)

One thousand years.

JESUS

Two thousand years!

God grumbles, thunder rumbles.

GOD (O.S.)

Fine. Two thousand years. But, if they're not righteous and God-fearing by that time I'll be back and I'll destroy them with all the fury of my—

JESUS

(interrupting)

Holy Wrath, yeah, yeah.

(MORE)

JESUS (cont'd)

Let's forget about the God-fearing
okay, and just shoot for righteous?
Some already fear you, whatever
good that is.

Silence. The clouds are like synapses processing thoughts.

GOD (O.S.)

Fine.

JESUS

I'll see you in two thousand years.

It starts to rain. The people start to disperse.

GOD (O.S.)

What are you going to do until
then, Mr. Smart Guy?

Jesus gazes out at the world and the wet little people in it.

JESUS

I'm not sure. But, I'm going to
start by watching over them.

God harrumphs at him and lightning dramatically strikes
nearby. Satan chuckles and looks up at Jesus, shaking his
head.

SATAN

Ya see how He is?

Jesus nods at his brother and then smiles at the world. With
that Jesus lays his head on his shoulder and LETS GO.

A serious rain comes down now. In the smattering of a crowd
are JOHN, THOMAS, PETER, and JAMES. They stare at Jesus on
the cross and gradually turn to leave.

JAMES lingers. He looks around and sees the soldiers
carrying away the nail hole ruined corpse from the center
cross. He nods to himself.

JAMES

With a little bit of this and that,
this would make a good book.

FADE OUT.

THE END

