

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

2025 PASSION PLAY INTRODUCTION

I'd like to thank you for attending The Great Passion Play.

You are about to experience a dramatic reenactment of the last days of the life of Jesus Christ on earth, including his crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension into heaven.

This is the "Greatest Story Ever Told." Jesus' death is the greatest act of love and sacrifice that the world has ever known. And His resurrection is the greatest moment in all of history.

Because of this, The Great Passion Play is devoted to remaining true and faithful to the Biblical Account. The script of the Play is taken from and inspired by the Bible. It's comprised of passages throughout the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John as well as Isaiah, Psalms, Hosea, and 1 Corinthians.

As we gather on this hillside from all walks, journeys, and stages of life, we need to look reverently upon this production, see the love of Christ, and remember that we're all equally culpable for Jesus's death. No one people group was or is solely responsible. It was the sins of the world—our sins—that put him on the cross. But Jesus didn't stay dead. As it's written in 1 Corinthians 15, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" And it continues, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Our prayer tonight is that the One who created the world, who hung the moon and the stars, who has woven His love into creation through the sacrifice of His Son, would speak to you, your families, and all who've gathered here.

Join us now as we step back in time to the city of Jerusalem under the rule of Tiberius Caesar in Rome.

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ACT I—SCENE 1: RAISING OF LAZARUS

VOICEOVER of Isaiah 9:2 in Hebrew transitioning to English:

“The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.”

JAMES: Martha, the Master is here.

MARTHA: My Lord, if only you'd been here, my brother would still be alive. *(Pauses as if sorry for being vindictive)* Even now, though he has died, I know God will give you anything you ask for.

JESUS: Your brother will rise again.

MARTHA: *(Not seeing the requested miracle in His reply)* I know he will rise again, in the resurrection on the last day.

JESUS: I AM the Resurrection. I AM the Life. Whoever believes in me, even though he dies, will live. And whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Martha, do you believe this?

MARTHA: I do Lord. I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God come to the world.

MARY L.: Lord, if you had been here my brother wouldn't have died.

JESUS: Oh, Mary ...*(Jesus wept)*..... Let's go to him.

JOANNA: See? He did love him.

MARY CLEO: He opened blind eyes; He could've healed Lazarus.

JESUS: Take the stone away!

(Nate & Thad open the tomb)

MARTHA: Lord, he's been here four days.

JESUS: Didn't I tell you that if you believe, you will see God's glory?

Father, I give thanks because you hear me. I know you always hear. I say it so those present will know You have sent Me Lazarus, come forth!

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[LAZARUS emerges.]

MARY L.: He lives!

(Crowd sounds praising God for miracle)

MARTHA: Lazarus! *(running to Lazarus, then turning back to Jesus)* Oh, Jesus!

JESUS: Remove the grave clothes; and let him go.

WITNESSING MOURNER: We must tell the High Priests about this act of God. *(He goes down steps, thru gate 1, runs across to High Priest).*

MARTHA: Lazarus! *(running to Lazarus, then turning back to Jesus)* Oh, Jesus!

JESUS: Remove the grave clothes; and let him go.

WITNESSING MOURNER: We must tell the High Priests about this act of God. *(He goes down steps, thru gate 1, runs across to High Priest).*

ACT I—SCENE 2: GUARDS AT CITY GATES & WITNESSING MOURNER

ROMAN 1: *(on the ground)* Who goes there?

PILGRIM/WITNESS 1: Only a traveler from afar who comes to Jerusalem to celebrate the great feast.

ROMAN 2: *(on the top of the wall)* It's just another pilgrim! The city is already overflowing with them.

ROMAN 1: *(on the ground)* Come down from there. We'd better get back to our post, Pilate is due to return any time now. You'll be getting us both in trouble.

[Sheep run across set]

WITNESSING MOURNER: Good Masters, I have just come from Bethany where I was mourning the death of Lazarus and consoling his family. Many of you knew him and some here attended his burial four days ago. The man, Jesus, from Nazareth in Galilee, came and stood before the tomb and called upon God and RAISED LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD!

(CROWD Noise with following voices overlapping)

PRIEST 2: What?! What are you talking about?!

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PRIEST 3: Impossible! Why did you even come here?!

PRIEST 1: It can't be true!

PRIEST 2: Never!

WITNESSING MOURNER: He was dead; now He lives!

PRIEST 1: Guard, remove this man (*emphatically*).

ANNAS: (*Interrupting*) Wait, (*Approaching the WITNESS*) You were there, and you believe this? [*MOURNER nods agreement*]

CAIAPHAS: Annas, that he believes it is all that matters, true or not. (*To the MOURNER*) Thank you; you may go.

JOSEPH: Caiaphas, this man has done many miracles.

PRIEST 2: Yes, Joseph, he has. And what are we going to do about it?

PRIEST 3: What can we do? It's a sign!

PRIEST 1: A sign of what? If He continues, everyone will believe in Him, Him! And declare Him as King! Then, the Romans will strip us of our privileges, and disperse our nation!

NICODEMUS: I do not believe He has proclaimed Himself as King.

[ANNAS stands & all are quiet.]

ANNAS: His followers do say it, and He doesn't discourage it. Nicodemus, though we've often disagreed, I have always respected you. You have believed in His... miracles; do you believe in Him? Is He your Messiah?

CAIAPHAS: Do none of you know or see the real issue at hand? It's better that One should die for all rather than the whole nation to perish. If we don't act, the Romans will. He must be arrested, apart from His crowd, so we may question Him. You may go.

[PRIESTS disperse.

CAIAPHAS & ANNAS proceed out of Sanhedrin with GUARDS 1 & 2.]

CAIAPHAS: (*Pausing & turning to GUARD 2*) Let it out that anyone who cooperates in His capture will be rewarded.

ACT I—SCENE 3: PILATE ARRIVES

PILATE: Claudia, it's good to see you here.

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CLAUDIA: It's good to see you, too! How was your tour of inspection?

PILATE: It went well? When did you arrive from Caesarea?

CLAUDIA: Only a few hours ago. It went as well as can be expected. It was just long and lonely.

PILATE: In that case, I'll be sure to travel back with you.

(Herod and his entourage is coming down the Via)

CENTURION: Pilate, there are rumors that this holy man of the Jews...Messiah I believe they call him. There are rumors he's coming here.

PILATE: Longinus, it is more than rumor. It's fact. What is more, Herod my old enemy is also here for their Jewish Passover. But enough of this for now, let us go in.

ACT I—SCENE 4A: DAY SCENE—JUDAS INSERT

MALCUS: *(To JUDAS)* Friend! Welcome to the festival! We are looking for information on where to find Jesus of Nazareth; do you know Him?

JUDAS: I know of Him. And I know of you, Malchus, servant of the high priest. What do you want with Him?

MALCUS: The high priests want to talk to Him. They need to know where they can find Him apart from the crowd.

JUDAS: To arrest Him, I suppose?

MALCUS: They'd be very grateful for help; a hefty wage is hard to come by these days!

JUDAS: The high priests would be good friends to have... It could be to my advantage.

MALCUS: Can you help, then?

JUDAS: I'll ... I'll see what I can do.

ACT I—SCENE 4B: BARABBAS INSERT

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Day scene resumes... Barabbas sneaks in from Gate #2 and steals garment:

MERCHANT: (Scream; voice of the PROCLAIMER) Stop! He stole my cloak! Thief!
[CLAUDIA enters after scream] [Roman 2 near Marketplace]

[CENTURION]: Arrest him!

[Two Roman guards catch Barabbas in front of Pilate's Porch.]

ROMAN 2: Think you can steal and get away with it?

ROMAN 1: Wait! I know this man (*realizing who is*), this man is Barabbas. He's wanted for rebellion and murder!

ROMAN 2: I'm sure Pilate will be pleased we've caught you at last.

ROMAN 1: Yes! No one can stand against the might of Rome.

ACT I—SCENE 4C: PROCLAIMER & JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM

PROCLAIMER: Jesus is coming, it is Jesus the prophet, and Lazarus is with Him.

[CHILDREN proclaiming; CROWD meets JESUS at Gate #1 and swells around Him as He proceeds on donkey. As soon as He dismounts, CHILDREN run to Him and surround Him as He approaches the Temple JUDAS rejoins the APOSTLE group. Layered voices: Who is this? ---Who is coming? ---It is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee! --- It is the man who raised Lazarus from the dead!]

CROWD: *Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is He who comes in The Name of the Lord! Save us now! It is the man who raised Lazarus from the dead! Let us through! We must see him. (Children's voices and other voices as well layered, with mention of Lazarus as well)*

PRIEST 1: Master, Reprimand your disciples!

JESUS: If my disciples keep silent, the very stones will cry out!

(Children Heard Rejoicing)

JESUS: Blessed are you my children. *[He notices the girl who cannot walk...a 5-10 year old girl]* Little girl with the cane.

LITTLE GIRL: Do you mean me?

JESUS: Can you not walk without the cane?

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LITTLE GIRL: No, I can't.

JESUS: Would you like God to heal you?

LITTLE GIRL: Oh, yes!

JESUS: Then you do not need the cane. Throw it away and walk to me.

LITTLE GIRL: (Hesitant at first) Are you sure?

JESUS: Come to me.

MARY MAGDALENE: Aw, Look! She walks unaided!

JESUS: Let the little children come to me! I tell you the truth, unless you humble yourself and receive the Kingdom of God like a child, you will not enter in.

*[CHILDREN'S voices crying, "I love you, Jesus,"
"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord," and "Hosanna!"]*

PRIEST 1: *(Looking first at NICODEMUS and JOSEPH, then addressing JESUS)*
Teacher, are you listening to what the children are saying?

JESUS: Yes, have you read what is written in the Psalm of David? "Out of the mouths of children, you make perfect praise."

[PRIEST 1: leaves for Sanhedrin.]

JESUS: Whoever receives a child like this receives me. But if someone causes one of these children to stumble, it would be better for him to have a millstone tied to him and be thrown into the sea! Don't ever look down on the children; their angels always behold the face of My Father in heaven.

*[A BLIND MAN has approached from stage right and
JOANNA has brought him forward.]*

JOANNA: Jesus, this man is blind.

PRIEST 4: I know him; he comes to the temple every day.

BLIND MAN: Jesus, our Son of David, have mercy on me! I want to see!

JESUS: As you have believed, *(He touches him)* so be it to you.

BLIND MAN: I see! I can see! Blessed be our God and Father! I can see!

SMALL GIRL: Don't go anywhere Jesus, I'll be right back!

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PRIEST 3: You have healed a drunken sinner! A drunken sinner!

JESUS: Who among you, having one hundred sheep and losing one, won't leave the ninety-nine in the open field and search for the lost one until he finds it? When he's found it, he rejoices over that one more than the ninety-nine that didn't go astray! In the same way, there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than for ninety-nine righteous who don't need to repent!
[Mary Laz. & Martha exit to prepare for anointing scene]

ACT I—SCENE 4D: SANHEDRIN UNREST INSERT

PRIEST 1: Caiaphas, the Nazarene has come to the feast with His disciples and Lazarus. He is disrupting the commerce at the Temple, and His followers are hailing him as King! Our guards could not risk a riot...Pilate was watching.

CAIAPHAS: Pilate heard them proclaim Him King?

PRIEST 1: They cried, "Hosanna" and called Him the "Son of David." He might not understand.

ANNAS: He will understand! We can make sure of that, and use Pilate to solve this matter.

CAIAPHAS: The Nazarene is teaching at the Temple?

PRIEST 1: Yes, and working miracles!

CAIAPHAS: Then, ask questions that guide his teaching toward Rome. Perhaps he will say something Pilate will act upon.

ANNAS: If he even hesitates to answer, his followers will think he is afraid. If he cannot answer a question, he will lose their respect. That is what we want, to turn the crowd. Understand? We will come shortly.

ACT I—SCENE 4E: JESUS TEACHES & DAY SCENE RESUMES

MOTHER: This all reminds me of the tremendous joy Simeon and Anna had when they first saw Jesus. Joseph and I brought Jesus to this Temple to present him to the Lord.

MARY MAGDALENE: What did they say to you?

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MOTHER: Oh Mary Magdalene, I won't ever forget how Simeon took Jesus in his arms and praised God saying, "My eyes have seen your salvation: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel."

MARY MAGDALENE: Oh, I remember you said that Anna never left the Temple. She worshipped God night and day.

MOTHER: Yes, Anna told us that through this child, God would rescue Israel and set Jerusalem free.

MARY MAGDALENE: This must be what she saw.

MOTHER MARY: Or maybe there was something more.

SMALL GIRL: *(Returning, leading her DEAF & DUMB FATHER to JESUS,)* Excuse me Jesus, my dad can't hear your stories, he's deaf and can't talk. Will you heal him?

JESUS: Yes, my child. Yes. *(Placing His hand on the little girl and speaking to her)* Father, loose his tongue. Open his ears.

DEAF MUTE: Ohhh! Ohhh! Praise God! He's heard my cry!

SMALL GIRL: Thank you Jesus!

[CROWD reaction!]

PRIEST 2: On what authority do you act? And who gave you the authority to perform these miracles?

JESUS: To answer, let me tell you a story. A landowner planted a vineyard; He built a tower, a winepress, and a wall all around it. Then, he rented it to some farmers and went away on a long journey.

When the harvest came, he sent his servants to collect his portion. But the tenants took his servants and beat them, even killing one and stoning another. The owner sent others, but they were treated the same. At last, he sent his own son to them, thinking, "They will respect my son." But when the tenants saw the son they said, "We should kill the Son and take the inheritance for ourselves."

So they took him, dragged him out of the vineyard, and killed him.

(Turning to PRIEST 2)

When the owner returns, what then will he do?

He will destroy those wicked men and give the vineyard to others!

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PRIEST 2: God forbid!

PRIEST 3: May this never be!

JESUS: (*Turning to Nicodemus*) Then what does the Scripture mean when it says, "The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone?"

HEALING OF DEAD CHILD

FATHER: We've come to see Jesus; our child has just died, and we heard He raised Lazarus of Bethany from the dead.

LAZARUS: Yes, have faith! I am Lazarus of Bethany. I was dead, and now I'm alive!
(*Turning toward JESUS*) Jesus! This family needs your help!

MOTHER: Help us, please!

JESUS: (*Taking dead CHILD*) Father! Glorify Your Name!

ASIDE WITH PRIESTS

PRIEST 1: (*To Annas and Caiaphas*) See?! The whole world is going after him.
Enough with these questions, we must act.

CAIAPHAS: We can't arrest him here and now. The people would riot.

ANNAS: For now, just question him.

PRIEST 1: (*Stepping forward as JESUS moves toward Temple*) Master! You are a teacher come from God; your miracles are proof of that, and you speak truth plainly without respect of persons. Will you tell us, then, is it lawful for us to pay the tribute to Caesar?

JESUS: You are hypocrites. Why do you try to trap me? Show me the tribute coin.
Whose name on this coin?

CROWD: Caesar's!

JESUS: Whose image?!

CROWD: Caesar's!

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JESUS: Then give back to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, but to God what is God's.

ASIDE WITH MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS, AND MARY MAGDALENE

MOTHER MARY: I felt like this when Jesus was 12.

MARY MAGDALENE: You felt like what?

MOTHER MARY: Joseph and I were afraid because we had lost Jesus during the Passover. We searched for him for three days, only to find him here at the Temple, sitting among the teachers...listening...asking questions. We didn't understand why he didn't tell us where he was. He just said, "Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be about my Father's business?"

PRIEST 2: Master, of all the commandments, which one is the greatest?

JESUS: Do you still test me? The greatest commandment is this, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One, and you shall love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength" The second is like it, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets come from these commandments.

JOSEPH: You have answered well.

[WIDOW drops in her two coins.]

JESUS: (*Speaking to JOSEPH, watching the WIDOW*) Joseph, you're not far from the Kingdom of God.

JESUS: Do you see this widow? She's given more than anyone today!

PRIEST 4: She's only put in two copper coins!

JESUS: That was everything she had to live on. The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses: Do what they say, but not as they do. They don't practice what they preach.

Beware of these scribes and Pharisees. All they do is done to be seen of others! But Whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted!

WOE to you scribes & Pharisees, hypocrites! You make long prayers for appearance while, in secret, you devour widow's houses! You lock the Kingdom of Heaven from the people who would enter, and don't enter yourselves!

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Woe to you scribes & Pharisees, hypocrites! You pay attention to the smallest details of the law, but you ignore the most important - JUSTICE, MERCY, & FAITH!

You clean the outside of the cup, but you leave the inside full of filth! Fools and blind! You must first clean the inside for the outside to be clean! You are like whitewashed tombs; beautiful on the outside, but the inside is full of corruption!

How will you escape the fires of hell?

"Father, glorify Your name."

O, Jerusalem, I am sending you prophets, sages, and teachers! Some of them you will kill and crucify! Others you will flog and hound from city to city!

O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem! I lament for you!

Scripture says: My House shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. Be gone! Be gone all of you!

(JESUS cleanses the temple)

Behold, your house is left desolate! You shall see me no more until you have said, "Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!"

[Thunder effect]--Consider Voice of God from John 12:28--"I have glorified my name, and I will glorify it again."

This voice was for your sake, not mine. Whoever sees me, sees Him who sent me. I've not come to judge the world but to save the world. I don't speak on my own authority: what the Father has said to me is what I speak to you.

The light is among you still...but not for long. Walk while you have the light so that darkness may not overtake you. Those who walk in the dark, don't know where they're going. While you have the light, trust in the light, that you may become children of light.

For now is the hour of judgment of this world! Now shall the prince of this world be cast out! The hour draws near for the Son of Man to be glorified. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all people unto me.

CHILDREN: *(Surrounding JESUS)* Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!

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CROWD: *(Reaction.)*

ACT I—SCENE 4F: JOSEPH AND NICODEMUS

JOSEPH: Nicodemus, as far as the high priests are concerned, Jesus might as well have said, "You won't see Me until you hail Me as King!"

NICODEMUS: I know, Joseph. I don't understand Him, but, I sense God all around Him.

JOSEPH: Powerful words. Truthful.

NICODEMUS: Puzzling. When I first met him, he said that the Son of Man must be lifted up just as Moses had lifted up the snake in the wilderness.

JOSEPH: Yes, the children of Israel had sinned against God while wandering in the wilderness and venomous snakes came among them, and God told Moses to fashion a bronze snake and put it on a pole.

NICODEMUS: God said, "If anyone was bitten, they could simply look at the snake on the pole and by faith they would live." But, I still don't understand what he means...that the Son of Man must be lifted up just like that.

JOSEPH: Where's he going with all of this?

NICODEMUS: I can't tell. He once told me, "The wind blows where it will," and "You do not know where it's going."

JOSEPH: Nicodemus, let's hope the wind knows where it's going.

ACT I—SCENE 5: ANOINTING SCENE

MARTHA: I give thanks to the Lord.

MARY LAZ: It's true; His faithful love endures forever.

JOHN: Yes, we have so much to be thankful for.

LAZARUS: He is my salvation. I will not die, but I'll live and proclaim what my God has done.

(Disciples & Jesus walk to Simon's house)

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NATHANIEL: (*Excitedly*) Did you see the Look on that man's face when he opened his eyes and could see!

THADDAEUS: And who wasn't holding his breath when Jesus raised that child from the dead!

ANDREW: (*Speaking to JESUS*) It was a great day, Master.

SIMON: And what a welcome when we came!

JUDAS: (*Skeptically*) Well, I have a bad feeling about this whole thing.

JAMES: Why do you have a bad feeling? You saw how the crowd reacted.

JUDAS: (*Wondering*) It's the priests I'm worried about.

[The other DISCIPLES balk.]

ANDREW: (*Walking over to JUDAS and slapping him on the shoulder.*) Judas, There's nothing to worry about.

JUDAS: (*Coming in house*) This is wasteful. That oil could have been sold for 300 pieces of silver; and given to the poor.

JESUS: Judas! Why must you make trouble for this woman? [*Judas backs away*]

It's a fine thing she's done for me. The poor will always be among you, but you will not always have me. Wherever in all the world the Gospel is proclaimed, what this woman has done will be told as her memorial. When Mary poured this oil on my body, it was her way of preparing me, for burial.

LAZARUS: (*Standing and placing a hand on Jesus shoulder*) For burial, Lord?

PETER: (*To JUDAS as he is leaving*) Where are you off to?

JUDAS: (*Turning as he is leaving*) I have some friends to see, some business to attend to.

ACT II—SCENE 1: JUDAS PLOTTING

JUDAS: (*To Sanhedrin GUARD at porch*) I am here to see the high priest concerning Jesus of Nazareth.

MALCHUS: (*going to CAIAPHAS & ANNAS*) A man to see you about the Nazarene.

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JUDAS: I am Judas of Kerioth, a long-time disciple of Jesus, the one you are looking for. Why is it you are seeking to arrest Him?

ANNAS: At the first, we only wished to meet with Him. The Sanhedrin is divided as to what He teaches and what He says of Himself. Caiaphas and I felt that, if He could meet with them, the differences could be settled.

CAIAPHAS: He's a powerful teacher and could be a good leader if His youthful zeal could be tempered.

ANNAS: He teaches peace, even towards Rome. This could be a great advantage to our nation, considering our circumstances.

CAIAPHAS: However, many of his followers are as confused as our own Sanhedrin. If Caesar were to learn they cry, "Hosanna" to their King, it would be disastrous to our nation; we don't want that, and we believe he doesn't either.

ANNAS: And we are confident we could end this division if we could only bring him before the Sanhedrin.

JUDAS: But he's openly denounced you!

ANNAS: He cries for holiness. We don't resent that.

CAIAPHAS: But it has made it difficult for us. That is why it's necessary to arrest him before it goes too far. We can't afford a riot.

JUDAS: I can help you. It won't be easy. And it will cost you.

ANNAS: We understand and appreciate your position. We can certainly help with something to carry you through.

CAIAPHAS: (*Counting out coins & putting them in bag*) Here, thirty silver coins enough?

JUDAS: It is enough ... it is; and this needs to be kept quiet.

CAIAPHAS: I will instruct the Temple guard. Go to them when the time is right. No crowd, no riot. We want it kept quiet as well.

ACT II—SCENE 2: LAST SUPPER

PETER: (*As soon as he knows it's his turn*) You, my Lord? Washing my feet?

JESUS: You do not understand, but one day you will.

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PETER: I will never let You wash my feet!

JESUS: If I don't wash you, you'll have nothing with me.

PETER: Then Lord, not my feet only! Wash my hands and head as well!

JESUS: You have been washed, only your feet were not. *(Rising, addressing all)* Now, you are clean, though not every one of you. Do you know what I have done? You call me "Teacher" and "Lord," indeed that is who I am. Since, then, your Lord has washed your feet, you should wash each other's feet. I have done this as an example, you must do the same.

JESUS: Now, I must tell you something before it happens, so you'll believe in me when it does. It's written, "He who eats with me has lifted his heel against me." *(Pause)* I say now, in truth, one of you here with me shall betray me.

JAMES: *(After pause)* Which of us? Is it me?

NATHANIEL: Could it be me?

THADDEUS: Or me?

SIMON: Is it me?

PETER: *[stands and beckons to John]* John, ask him who he means.

JOHN: Who is it, Lord?

JESUS: *(To JOHN, alone)* It's the one I will give this piece of bread.

JUDAS: Lord! Is it me?

JESUS: You've said it. Now, quickly, do what you are set to do!

JESUS: *(Blessing the bread)* Blessed are You, Lord God, King of the World. Who has given this bread to eat. Take, each of you, and eat all of it. This is my body, broken for you. *(Blessing the cup)* Blessed are You, Lord God, King of the World, our Father, Who has giving THIS cup to drink. Take, all of you, and drink from it. It is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, poured out for the forgiveness of sin. Whenever you do this, remember me.

I will only be with you a little while longer, and where I am going, you cannot come. So, I give you this new command; love one another as I have loved you. If you do this, everyone will know you are—my disciples.

PETER: Where are you going, Lord?

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JESUS: Peter, you can't go with me now, but you will follow, later.

PETER: But why can't I go now? I will lay down my own life for you.

JESUS: Would you, Peter? Truly, I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will have denied me three times. Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God and in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house, and I am going to prepare a place for you. Then, I will come back to take you to be with me. You already know the Way to where I am going.

THOMAS: Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how do we know the way?

JESUS: I Am the Way and the Truth and the Life. No one can come to the Father, unless they come through me.

PHILIP: Lord, if we could see the Father, it would be enough.

JESUS: Philip, do you not know Me, after so long? He that sees Me, sees the Father. The Father lives in me and does His works. Truly, anyone who believes in Me will do these same works and also greater works because I go to the Father.

Peace I leave with you; I give you My peace I have told you these things before they happen, so that when you see them, you will believe. I cannot talk much longer with you. The prince of this world is coming, and he has nothing in me, but the world must be shown that I obey and love the Father.

Arise, we must be going. Yes, we must be going.

[DISCIPLES leave upper room & gather outside in groups of three or four, as Jesus continues teaching as they walk toward Gate # 1]

ACT II—SCENE 3: I AM THE VINE

JESUS: I am the Vine, you are the branches. If you abide in me, and I in you, you will bear much fruit. Without me, you can do nothing. If you abide in me and my words abide in you, you shall ask whatever you want, and it shall be done for you. If you bear much fruit, you will prove to be my disciples and My Father will be glorified. As the Father has loved me, I have loved you.

This, then, is my command, that you love one another in the same way. There is no greater love than a man laying down his own life for his friends. And, you are my friends...follow this command.

Now, I am going away to Him who sent me, and sorrow fills your hearts because I told you. Nevertheless, it is better for you if I go, then, the Comforter will come to you. He will guide you into all truth.

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

In a little while, you will not see me. A little while longer and you will see me again. You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices, but your sorrow will be turned to joy.

I've told you these things so you will have peace. In the world, you will have trouble, but take heart, I have overcome the world.

ACT II—SCENE 4: GATHER A CROWD

[PRIEST 2 & SANHEDRIN GUARDS appear from Temple doors and come to steps at center.]

PRIEST 2: (To GUARD 2) Go get Malchus. Make sure Caiaphas is informed. We will need to know where to bring Him and how.

PRIEST 2: Secure a Roman detachment for the arrest.

PRIEST 2: (To GUARD 4) Gather some men, our crowd. We need enough to deter any ideas about resistance, but be quiet; we must not take the chance of alerting the city, YET. We must be sure we have enough show of support to put fear into the Nazarene's followers.

ANNAS: (To *MALCHUS*) When you take Him, bind Him and bring Him here first, as well as any of His followers who would stand up for Him. We must prevent them from gathering resistance.

CAIAPHAS: Do not let Judas know our plans I will go to the Sanhedrin. We will convene and have the Nazarene to Pilate by morning.

ACT II—SCENE 5: GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

JESUS: (To the eight, taking, *PETER*, *JAMES* & *JOHN* aside, says to them) PETER, JAMES & JOHN your presence is a comfort to me. Sit here, while I go over there to pray.
(*Moves off by Himself*)

Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup away from me, yet, let your will, not mine, be done.

JESUS: (Touching *PETER*) Simon, why are you sleeping?

PETER: I only closed my eyes for a moment.

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

JESUS: Pray that you will not enter into temptation...the Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

[JESUS goes off alone, again]

JESUS: Father, if there is another way, let this cup pass from me. It is written of me, "I have come to do your will." And I will...I will do your will.

JESUS: Oh Father, My Father, if I must drink this cup, so be it, Let your will be Done in me, let Your will be done.

ACT II—SCENE 6: ARREST SCENE

JESUS: *(To the THREE)* Are you still sleeping? Look, the hour has come; the Son of Man is betrayed to sinful men. My betrayer is upon us. Let us go to meet him.

JUDAS: The one I kiss is your man. Seize him....Master! *(JUDAS embraces JESUS with kiss of greeting.)*

JESUS: Friend, do what you are here to do.

JESUS: JUDAS, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss? *(To PRIEST 2)* Who is it you want?

PRIEST 2: *(Coming up by JUDAS, who has moved back toward the bridge)* Jesus of Nazareth.

JESUS: I am. I AM HE!

JESUS: *(Stepping closer to them)* Do you take me for a bandit that you have come with swords and cudgels to arrest me?

PETER: Lord, shall we use our swords?

JESUS: No, Peter! You must let them have their way!

[Peter cuts off Malchus's ear] [Malchus screams]

JESUS: Put up your sword!

PETER: But my Lord!

JESUS: All who take up the sword, die by the sword.

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

PETER: But how are we to protect you?

JESUS: Do you suppose that I could not appeal to my Father who would at once send to my aid more than twelve legions of angels?!

PETER: Then do it Lord! Save yourself and save us!

JESUS: This is the cup my Father has given me. Shall I not drink it?

JOHN: Lord, save yourself!

JESUS: But how shall the Scripture be fulfilled which says, "This must be." If I am the man you want, let these others go!

PRIEST 2: No, hold them all!

MALCHUS: Stop! Release them. (*MALCHUS ties JESUS' hands.*)

PETER: Lord!

JESUS: Peter, this has all happened to fulfill what the Prophets wrote.

GUARD 2: We have orders to arrest you and take you to the high priest. Will you come peacefully?

JESUS: Yes. This is your moment, the hour when darkness reigns.

ACT III—SCENE 1: PETER'S DENIAL

PRIEST 2: We have taken Him.

ANNAS: How many of His followers did you take?

PRIEST 2: There were only a few; we could've taken them, but Malchus released them.

ANNAS: (*To MALCHUS*) You released His followers?

MALCHUS: There were only a few, and they will not do anything; Jesus told them not to.

ANNAS: And why is it you believed Him? Word will get out now; you should have followed orders.

MALCHUS: One of Jesus' disciples began to attack, cutting off my ear. (*Removing helmet so all can see*) Jesus stopped him and...healed me. They will not fight.

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

ANNAS: Indeed.... I see.

SERVANT WOMAN: (*Letting PETER in*) Are you one of this man's disciples?

PETER: Woman, I do not know Him. (*Goes to JOHN.*)

SERVANT WOMAN: Come inside then.

PETER: I'll just stay out here.

ANNAS: Jesus of Nazareth, your disciples openly hail you as King. You don't discourage this; on the contrary, you have publicly defended them. What have you told them in private? Can you explain this "Kingdom of Heaven" You preach?

JESUS: I have spoken openly in the synagogues and Temple courts where all Jews come to be taught. Why are you asking me when you could ask the ones who have heard me?

[GUARD 2 steps up.]

GUARD 2: (*Slaps JESUS*) Is that the way to answer the high priest!

JESUS: If I am wrong, show the evidence. If not, then why am I punished?

ANNAS: If you won't tell us, we will hear... witnesses!

[ANNAS leaves for a moment.]

GUARD 3: (*To PETER*) Aren't you the one that attacked Malchus in the garden tonight?

PETER: You are mistaken.

SERVANT WOMAN: You must be! You are a Galilean! You're accent gives you away. You must be one of his disciples.

PETER: Do you think I know every preacher in Galilee! I don't know him! I swear it!

SERVANT WOMAN: Why so defensive? Do you feel guilty?

PETER: Are you trying to get me killed? I swear I do not know Him!

[Rooster crows]

PETER: (*Looking at Jesus*) Oh, no! Oh, my Lord, no, NO!

(ECHOING AND SPECTACULAR AUDIO EFFECTS)

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

SERVANT WOMAN: He is one of them. One of that man's disciples!

JESUS: Before the rooster crows, you will have denied me three times...

PETER: *(As he is leaving)* What have I done!

ACT III—SCENE 2: SANHEDRIN TRIAL

CAIAPHAS: Annas has questioned him and He wouldn't cooperate. We will hear testimony from those who have heard Him firsthand.

PRIEST 3: *(Rises and is acknowledged by CAIAPHAS)* We were in the synagogue on the Sabbath, as is our custom. Jesus of Nazareth was also present, and before us all, he healed a man whose hand was deformed.

CAIAPHAS: In the synagogue, on the Sabbath?

PRIEST 3: Yes! He has made it a point to call healing and deliverance His "work." Therefore, He "works" on the Sabbath!

JOSEPH: If there was a miracle, it had to be the hand of God!

PRIEST 3: God? God? Have you forgotten that Satan does signs and wonders?

PRIEST 4: He heals and delivers in the name of demons!

PRIEST 3: Even the prince of demons!

JOSEPH: And you heard Him call upon Satan?

PRIEST 3: Of course not!

JOSEPH: Then why did you say it?

[Agitated Crowd noises]

CAIAPHAS: Order! Order! You must wait to be recognized before speaking!

SCRIBE: Then call witnesses!

PRIEST 4: Jesus of Nazareth has not only taught in outlying synagogues, he's spoken openly in our own Temple courts. Many of you here were present when he threatened to tear down our Temple!

[PRIESTS nod & acknowledge it as truth.]

WITNESS 1: *(Stepping up & being recognized)* I heard Him say, "I will throw down this Temple made with human hands. And, in three days I'll build another not made with hands."

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

WITNESS 2: He said, "I can pull down the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days."

WITNESS 1: That's what he said!

NICODEMUS: *(Stepping up & being recognized)* Is this supposed to be reliable testimony? He said He would 'build another Temple not made with hands," clearly symbolic, and that was from three years ago! If that was so serious, it should've been addressed then, not now. I've followed this man's ministry for these three years. I believe He's a man of integrity, honoring God Whom He calls His Father. Indeed, God's the Father of us all!

CAIAPHAS: *(Getting an idea from NICODEMUS' last line, silences all and steps up to NICODEMUS)* Honoring God in truth is the heart of our religion. *(Turning to JESUS)* Do you have anything to say concerning what has been...witnessed?

CAIAPHAS: *(Looking at NICODEMUS)* Then, in the Name of Almighty God, *(Turning to Jesus)* I place you under oath. Are You the Christ, the Son of God?

JESUS: I AM! And you will see the Son of Man seated on the right hand of God and coming with the clouds of heaven.

ANNAS: Blasphemy! *(and more commotion among the priests)*

PRIEST 1: He has claimed to be God!

CAIAPHAS: *(To GUARD 2)* Take Him to Pilate, then go and gather a crowd, our crowd, and have them there at daybreak.

JOSEPH: A time for prayer, my friend?

NICODEMUS: Joseph, a time for miracles.

ACT III—SCENE 3: RETURN OF THE SILVER

JUDAS: I must see the high priest!

SERVANT WOMAN: Who are you and why have you come?

ANNAS: It's all right. *(To Judas)* Why have you come? Everything went well, just as expected.

JUDAS: Expected? Then, why was He condemned? Whose "expectations" were met in that? Not mine, and if they were yours all along, then I was lied to!

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

CAIAPHIAS: We didn't know where the questioning would go or what direction His explanation would take...

JUDAS: (*Interrupting*) Explanation! You still expect me to believe you were trying to reconcile the two sides?

ANNAS: He said He was the Christ; the Son of God, before the whole council! That was the end of any explanation!

CAIAPHAS: Pilate will condemn just one, instead of all, and our place will be safe!

JUDAS: You mean your "profit" will be safe!

ANNAS: You accuse us? With the silver still in your hands?

JUDAS: Silver? Silver? (*Breaking down*) in my blood-covered hands! Innocent blood! Innocent blood, I tell you!

CAIAPHAS: He is not innocent to us. If you believe He is, that's your problem.

ACT III—SCENE 4A: PILATE PRIVATE TRIAL

PILATE: You are of the Sanhedrin? I have been expecting you. What of the prisoner?

PRIEST 1: (*From the ground @ porch steps*) One Jesus of Nazareth, a self-proclaimed teacher who subverts the traditions of our nation. He has gained a radical following; you witnessed it **five days ago** when He came to this festival.

PILATE: If He breaks your traditions, judge Him yourselves, by your Law.

PRIEST 2: It's come to more than that. He has proclaimed Himself our Messiah, our King.

PILATE: Are you the king of the Jews?

JESUS: The words are yours.

PILATE: The words are mine. Yes, indeed they are. (*To Claudia*) What an extraordinary reply. (*Now to priests*) What charge do you bring against him?

PRIEST 1: We believe He's a danger to the peace of Rome as well as our own nation.

PRIEST 2: His followers are encouraged against Rome in matters of taxes and rule.

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

PRIEST 1: His crimes are worthy of death by our Law and by Rome's.

PILATE: **DEATH?** You wish to put this man to death over those matters you've accounted?

PRIEST 2: That is our desire, his teaching has caused discontentment among the people all through Judea. It started in Galilee and has spread as far as this city.

PILATE: Is this man then a Galilean?

PRIEST 2: Yes, he is your Excellency *(realizing he has made a mistake)*.

PILATE: Why did you bring him to me then?

PRIEST 2: For trial, your Excellency.

PILATE: For trial? But is he not under Herod's jurisdiction? ...*(They debate among themselves)*... Answer my question!

PRIEST 2: This man is under Herod's jurisdiction, but...

PILATE: Herod is here in Jerusalem at this very time! Take him to Herod. Don't trouble me further. I **(have no time) (don't have time)** for such foolishness.

ACT III—SCENE 4B: JESUS TRIED BY HEROD

HEROD: What is this? What do we see **here**? Do we see John the Baptist here? Salome, Herodias, look this is John the Baptist. He's risen from the dead.

[LAUGHTER]

PRIEST 2: Your Excellency.

HEROD: Silence! No one must speak. We must examine this man more closely. Are you John come back from the grave to haunt us? No, **no, no**...this is not John, we know that. *(almost laughing with amusement)*. This is the man called Jesus.

Thank you for bringing him to us. We are greatly pleased to meet him at long last. So, you are Jesus of Nazareth. We hear that you perform miracles...that you heal the sick and the lame...that you make the blind see. The deaf hear. The dead live again!

[LAUGHTER]

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

Is all of this true? As you are a Galilean and under my jurisdiction, we are indeed very interested in seeing these miracles performed in our presence.

Salome, wouldn't you like to see a miracle performed?

SALOME: Yes! Oh yes! [*SALOME clothes Jesus with purple mantle.*]

HEROD: Oh, and you Herodias?

HERODIAS: Very well.

HEROD: You see we are not alone in our curiosity. So, perform for us! Entertain us with your miracles.

[Crowd voices of affirmation]

What's wrong? Why is he not doing anything?

Wait, I have it. Is there water in that jug?

HEROD SERVANT: Yes, Excellency!

HEROD: Well, then bring it to us. Set it there in front of him. Now, step back! Change this water into wine for us. Can you do that? Well, we're waiting! (*waits a moment for Jesus*) You, taste it!.....Well?

WITNESS 2/TASTER: Excellency, it's still water!

HEROD: AHHH! Send him back to Pilate.

ACT III—SCENE 4C: JESUS BEFORE PILATE PRIVATELY

PILATE: Centurion! What's your report?

LONGINUS: Herod is returning him to us.

PILATE: So then, Herod seeks my friendship; I'll be forced to judge this man myself. Longinus, you've been in the city these last few days; what have you seen and heard?

LONGINUS: The crowd thinks He is sent by God, their "Messiah." But I've not heard Him claim to be King. In addition, I heard Him tell the priests to pay what Caesar required. I think the priests don't care for their Law as much as they envy His popularity.

PILATE: (*To JESUS*) I ask again: Are You the King of the Jews?

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

JESUS: Is that your own idea, or have others suggested it to you?

PILATE: What kind of answer is that? You speak in riddles. Am I a Jew that I should be concerned with such matters? No, your own nation and their chief priests have brought you before me. I repeat: what in the world have you done?

JESUS: My Kingdom doesn't belong to this world. If it did, my followers would fight to save me from arrest. No, my kingdom is from another place.

PILATE: You are a King, then!

JESUS: King is your word. My task is to bear witness to the truth.

PILATE: Truth? What is truth?

JESUS: I know all who are not deaf to truth listen to my voice. For this was I born, for this did I come into the world.

CLAUDIA: Are you troubled by this?

PILATE: (*Sitting down on judgment seat*) Angry is more like it! I hate being used as a pawn by those I am supposed to rule! They expect me to join with them!

CLAUDIA: You can't! Pilate, please! Surely you don't believe them! Jesus is innocent!

PILATE: I believe the charges are false. Claudia, why are you acting this way? Is there something more? You believe he's innocent; do you believe in Him?

CLAUDIA: I have seen Him in my dreams, quiet and strong... suffering. Can you free Him? You must free Him!

PILATE: I can't judge him guilty; that's... the truth. It's custom to release a prisoner, at the feast. I'll release the Nazarene.

ACT III—SCENE 5: IT IS TIME!

CAIAPHAS: Is everything set then?

PRIEST 1: Yes, Caiaphas, there will be a mob gathering at Pilate's porch shortly. Word of punishment for His followers is out, and our guard will be watching the crowd.

ANNAS: Pilate will release a prisoner for the feast, and Jesus' followers may cry out for Him. Who else stands condemned?

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

PRIEST 2: There are three, one Gastas, another Dysmas, and Barabbas. Of the three, Barabbas is the most known. He has ties with the Zealots and our own guard.

ANNAS: Then spread the word to ask for him.

CAIAPHAS: It is time.

ACT III—SCENE 6: PILATE PUBLIC TRIAL

PILATE: This man, Jesus, has been brought to me by your own chief priests and charged with rebellion against the authority of Rome. I've questioned Him and found no grounds for the charges against Him certainly nothing worthy of death. As is custom at this feast, I will release Him to you.

PRIEST 1: If you want to release someone, then give us Barabbas!

PILATE: Barabbas? Would you have me release a murderer into your very midst. Centurion, have Barabbas brought forth (*to the Centurion*). Quickly! (*to Claudia*) I shall show them what type of man they would release.

CROWD: (*Cries louder*)

PILATE: (*To Crowd*) Then, if I release Barabbas, who stands condemned, I'll also release Jesus, un-condemned!

CROWD: (*Various cries,*) "No!" "He must not be released!" Etc.

PILATE: But why? What's He guilty of?
[*BARABBUS is brought out.*]

CROWD: (*Roars louder*)

ANNAS: By our Law, He has committed blasphemy by claiming to be the Son of God. And, according to our Law, He must be put to death!

PILATE: (*To Barabbas*) Look at this man! He's a thief! A murderer! Now which would you have me release to you? Barabbas? Or Jesus called Messiah?

PRIEST 2: Release Barabbas (*Voices rise crying out for BARABBAS.*)

PILATE: Speak to me! Don't you know I have the power to release you, or have you crucified?

JESUS: You would have no power over me if it hadn't been given you from above.

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

PILATE: *(To the Roman with JESUS)* Remove him. *(To the ROMAN with BARABBAS)* Release Barabbas. *(To CENTURION)* Have Him flogged; humiliate Him; perhaps that will satisfy them.

[JESUS is brought to the flogging post.]

LONGINUS: Lysimus, now!

5 pairs of hits, break, and then 3 pairs of hits.

LONGINUS: Hold!

(Roman laughter)

MOTHER MARY, MARY MAGDALENE, AND JOHN SCENE

RECORD WITH JESUS VOICE AS WELL IN FIRST PERSON ISAIAH 50:6

JOHN: The prophet Isaiah wrote of this:

(JESUS FIRST PERSON) "He/I will offer his/my back to those who beat him/me...

MOTHER MARY/*(JESUS FIRST PERSON:* his/my cheek to those who pull out his/my beard...

MARY MAGDALENE: He/I will not hide his face from mocking and spitting.

JOHN: Sovereign Lord, help him. ~~Let him not be disgraced (this is the rest of the verse, but doesn't fit.)~~

*The lines below can still happen,
but the above needs to be the featured dialogue in the scene.*

ROMAN 1: We crown you King of the Jews!

ROMAN 2: Hail O great and mighty king!

[Roman laughter]

PILATE: Enough! Behold your king!! He's been flogged, beaten, ridiculed, spit on. What more do you want!

CROWD: Crucify him! *(etc.)*

PILATE: Crucify him? Bring water! I am washing my hands. My hands are clean of this innocent man's blood.

Let it be recorded that it is on the eve of your Jewish Passover, it is the 6th hour as I sit here on my tribunal, my seat of judgment. Behold here is your King, the man called Jesus. I ask you one last and final time, what would you have me do with him?

PRIEST 2: Crucify him, Pilate! Crucify Him!

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

PILATE: Crucify Him yourselves! I hold no charge against Him. I would release him.

CROWD: (*Cries louder.*)

CAIAPHAS: Anyone who makes Himself a King defies Caesar! You cannot release Him!

PILATE: Should I crucify Your King?

CROWD: (*Cries for Caesar*) We have no King but Caesar! We have no King but Caesar! Caesar! Caesar!

PILATE: Then away with Him!

ACT III—SCENE 7A: CARRY THE CROSS

PRIEST 1: Do you see what is written there?

GUARD 2: King of the Jews?

PRIEST 2: You must tell the high priest; Go!

PILATE: What is it, Caiaphas?

CAIAPHAS: Pilate, the charges on His cross read, "King of the Jews." Many of the people are reading it; it should say that He only "claimed" to be the King of the Jews.

PILATE: What I have written, I have written.

ACT III—SCENE 7B: DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM

JESUS: Daughters of Jerusalem! Do not weep for me. No, weep for yourselves and your children, for the days are surely coming, when they will start saying to the mountains: Fall on us. And to the hills, cover us. And if these things are done when the wood is green, what will happen when it's dry?

ACT III—SCENE 7C: SIMON OF CYRENE

LONGINUS: He's too weak to go on by himself. You! Help him carry the cross.

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

SIMON OF CYRENE: Remember though...I am innocent.

JESUS: Simon, help me finish what I have been sent to do.

SIMON of Cyrene: How do you know my name?

JOHN: Please help him! Lord, why are you letting this happen?

MOTHER: Yes, there must be another way.

JESUS: No, this is the only way. See! I will make all things new.

ACT III—SCENE 8A: CRUCIFIXION

LONGINUS: (*To SCRIBE*) (2:45) Record this: Three crucified at nine o'clock this morning, Gastas and Dysmas for theft and rebellion, and one Jesus, King of the Jews! Nail him to the cross.

NICODEMUS: (3:00-3:05) It's like He told me.... Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness...

(*NAIL, NAIL.*)

MOTHER MARY: (3:15) so the Son of Man must be lifted up...

(*NAIL, NAIL.*)

NICODEMUS: (3:22) This is what he meant.

(*NAIL, NAIL, NAIL.*)

JOHN: (3:28-48) For God so loves the world that He has given His Only Begotten Son... (Record as well He has given His One and Ony Son for redundancy)

JESUS: (4:01) Father, forgive them! They do not know what they do!

GASTAS: (4:05) Are You not the Messiah? Save yourself...and us!

DYSMAS: (4:17) Have you no fear of God? You are under the same sentence as He, for it is plain justice. We are paying the price for our misdeeds, but this man has done nothing wrong. Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom!

JESUS: (4:40) I tell you the truth. Today, you will be with me in Paradise.

PRIEST 1: (4:56) You said you were The Son of God; if You are, come down from the cross!

PRIEST 2: Are You, our King? Come down, and then we will believe!

PRIEST 3: (5:07) He has saved others; why can't He save himself?

PRIEST 1: (5:11) Why won't God rescue Him, if He is God's Son?

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

MARY LAZARUS: (5:30) What are they doing? What's happening?

SIMON OF CYRENE: (5:35) The Roman soldiers are dividing his garments.

JOSEPH: (5:37) How can this be? How can they know? Is this David's prophecy?

NICODEMUS: (5:43) It must be. "They have pierced his hands and his feet.
They divided his clothes among them and cast lots for his garments."

JESUS: (6:00) Mother, see your son! (6:07) John, here is your mother!

JESUS: (6:20-23) *(Record two versions: One with a loud voice and another with a very soft voice)* My GOD! My GOD! Why have You forsaken Me?

ROMAN 1: (6:33) *(To ROMAN 2)* What is this? A Storm?

ROMAN 2: I don't know. It's midday, but the sun is going dark.

LONGINUS: I can feel this darkness. Report this to Pilate.

JESUS: (6:50) ...I...I am thirsty.

JESUS: (With a loud voice) (7:06) It is finished! (7:17) Father! Into Your Hand, I commit my Spirit!

ACT III—SCENE 8B: EARTHQUAKE AND AFTERMATH

LONGINUS: Break their legs and you may go.

ROMAN 2: The one they called Jesus is dead.

ROMAN 1: *(Tossing him a spear)* Make certain.

MOTHER: Even with his last breath, he trusted the Lord, crying out David's Psalm:

MARY MAGDALENE: "Into Your hand, I commit my spirit."

JOHN: But "You will redeem me, Lord, God of Truth."

LONGINUS: This was indeed a sign. Truly, he was the Son of God.

ACT IV—SCENE 1: SANHEDRIN FEAR

CAIAPHAS: What is it you called us here for?

PRIEST 1: About the earthquake; it's damaged the curtain in the Temple. It's entirely torn!

PRIEST 2: Top to Bottom! And, it happened precisely at the same time Jesus died!

THE GREAT PASSION PLAY – 2025 SCRIPT (12.24.24)

PRIEST 1: Many are saying it was a sign from God, and that Jesus was a righteous man!

ANNAS: This is most unfortunate. It will give momentum to the cause of His followers.

CAIAPHAS: We have heard how He said He would rise after three days. If His disciples hid the body; this superstitious mob would be out of control!

ANNAS: Then we must guard his tomb; hold his body until after the three days. Then his words will mean nothing!

ACT IV—SCENE 2: BURIAL

JOSEPH: Friends, Pilate has granted us the body.

JAMES: Let us take him down from the cross.

NICODEMUS: We have brought spices and linen to bury Him.

JOSEPH: And I have a new tomb nearby; we can take Him there.

MOTHER: My own Son, how has this happened? Simeon warned me of this so many years ago, when Joseph and I first brought him to Jerusalem. I cradled him tightly, my little baby boy, after Simeon told me: "A sword will pierce your soul." Now I know what he meant.

(The Pieta)

NICODEMUS: Is this what the prophet Isaiah spoke of?

JOSEPH: Surely, He took up our pain...

MOTHER: He bore our suffering...

JOHN: He was pierced for our transgressions,

MARY LAZARUS: crushed for our iniquities,

MAGDALENE: the punishment that brought us peace was upon him,

MOTHER: and by his wounds we are healed.

ACT IV—SCENE 3: REQUEST FOR GUARDS

PILATE: So, you are here again?

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CAIAPHAS: Governor, we have remembered that this Jesus said He would rise from the dead after three days.

ANNAS: Considering the earthquake and other circumstances surrounding His death, we believe His followers may hide His body and claim He has risen.

CAIAPHAS: This would be worse than if He had never died!

PILATE: I see, yes...yes, I see very well. Set a guard. Make the area secure.

ACT IV—SCENE 4: POSTING THE GUARDS

PRIEST 1: Check to see that the body is there.

ROMAN 2 (possibly instead of Guard 2): The body is there.

PRIEST 1: Very well, seal the stone.

PRIEST 2: *(To the GUARDS)* The high priest said no one is to enter until after the third day.

PRIEST 1: *(To the GUARDS)* Keep a close watch and don't let anyone enter the Tomb.

ACT IV—SCENE 5: RESURRECTION

JESUS: Satan, the battle is finished! I have come to set the captive free! I AM the first and the last! The Living One! I died and behold, I AM alive forevermore. And I now take the keys of death and hell.

OVERLAID VOICES: You will not leave My/His soul in Hell, nor let Your Holy One see corruption *(Ps. 16)*

He/I will swallow up death in victory. *(Isaiah 25:8)*

As Jonah was three days in the fish, so shall the Son of Man be three days in the earth. *(Mt.12:40)*

After the suffering of his/my soul, he/I will see the light of life and be satisfied. *(Isaiah 53:11)*

I have power to lay my life down; and I have the power to take it up again. *(Echo)* *(Jn. 10:18)*

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ACT IV—SCENE 6: EMPTY TOMB

JOANNA: Why is the stone rolled away?

MARY MAG.: I don't know! Are the guards alright?

MARY LAZ.: *(Rising from looking at one of the guards)* They appear to be fine, and no sign of fighting.

MARY MAG.: Then where's the body? Has someone taken it? Who has taken it?
[ANGEL steps forward.]

ANGEL: Why do you look for the living among the dead? You are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. Do not be afraid. He is not here; he is risen, just as he said.

Go and tell this to his disciples and Peter. **Jesus will appear to them as well. For He was raised from the dead** so that whosoever believes in Him shall have victory over death and shall have the gift of everlasting life.

ACT IV—SCENE 7: OUTSIDE UPPER ROOM (I WANT TO SEE IT)

JAMES: Mary! What's happened? What is it?

MARY MAG.: *(Bursting)* Brothers, we have come from the tomb, just now; the stone was rolled away, and the body of Jesus was gone! Then, an angel appeared and told us He's alive...

MARY CLEO.: *(interrupting)* Raised from the dead!

MARY MAG.: Yes! And the angel told us to tell you! Well, say something!

PETER: Mary, I don't think that He...

MARY MAG.: *(Interrupting)* You don't believe us! Well, it doesn't matter, the angel said Jesus would appear to you.

JOHN: I want to see it.

ACT IV—SCENE 8: APPEARANCE TO MARY MAGDALENE

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MARY MAG.: There were guards lying here unconscious.

JOHN: *(To Peter)* The wrappings are here, but no body.

PETER: *(Going inside first)* The cloth that was on His head is folded and off by itself.

JOHN: *(Falling on his knees)* It's what He said! *(Raising his hands)* I believe.

MARY LAZ.: Let's go to the others at John Mark's house. The angel said He would appear to them!

MARY MAG.: *(Coming out of Simon's house)* Was there something you wanted, Peter? *[She sees his distress]* Are you alright?

PETER: Let me alone awhile. I'll come down later.

MARY MAG.: (RECORD HER CRYING BEFORE THIS) Where are you, Lord? I know the Psalmist's pain: "I feel the anguish of death. Suffering and sorrow," is this my life now? "Lord, save me."

JESUS: Why are you weeping?

MARY MAG.: The body of my Lord is gone, and I'm not sure what has happened to Him.

JESUS: [May need to remind the audience somehow that Jesus is finishing the Psalm that Mary quoted: Record two versions: one with the Psalm line and one with just her name...] **When you were brought low, I saved you.** Mary!

MARY MAG.: Rabbi! *(She hugs Him.)*

JESUS: Mary, you can't keep holding on to me!

MARY MAG: I just can't believe you're really here! You're back from the dead!

JESUS: Yes, Mary, I'm really here, but now, I must ascend to My Father, and to Your Father. Now go, and tell the others that I will also appear to them.

MARY MAG: Yes, Master, I will tell them! You're alive! *(Mary runs down sidewalk to tell the others, saying:)* He's alive! He is Alive! I have seen the Lord, and He is alive!

[INCLUDE IN PROGRAM Psalm 116]

Psalm 116:8 For you, LORD, have delivered me from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling,
9 that I may walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.

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ACT IV—SCENE 9A: APPEARANCE TO PETER

PETER: (*Lifting his face toward heaven*) O Lord! John believes. You'd think I could believe, but what difference would that make? How can I prove myself now? I have failed Him! How could He ever trust me again? Oh! How could He ever trust me!

JESUS: Peter.

PETER: Lord.

JESUS: Lay aside your failures; they cannot separate you from Me. Return to Me.

PETER: But Lord, in the garden when I was sleeping, and then later, you saw... You heard me... I have sinned...

JESUS: And I forgive you. I heard you weeping bitterly because you thought you had failed Me. The battle was Mine alone to fight. I have fought and won, now, go to your brothers and strengthen them. I shall appear to them as well.

PETER: Yes, Lord! I will, I will strengthen them: for you are the Rock eternal. (Isaiah 26:4) There is no rock like our God!" (1 Samuel 2:2).

ACT IV—SCENE 9B: EMMAUS ROAD

JESUS: What are you debating as you walk?

ANDREW/EMMAUS 1: All this about Jesus of Nazareth of course.

EMMAUS 2: We had hoped that he'd liberate Israel.

ANDREW/EMMAUS 1: Instead, he was sentenced to death and was crucified.

PHILIP/EMMAUS 2: That was three days ago, and now a woman we know has astounded us. She went early to the tomb, failed to find his body, and claimed an angel told her that Jesus was alive. Others went to the tomb and found things just as the woman had said.

ANDREW/EMMAUS 1: But Jesus, they did not see.

JESUS: (*At 41 seconds*) How is it you don't believe all that the Prophets said? Was the Messiah not bound to suffer this before entering into His glory? Moses

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wrote in the Scriptures at the very beginning: “The Messiah will crush the Serpent’s head, but the Serpent would bruise his heel.” (repeat starts) Daniel said that the “Anointed One would be put to death, but not for himself.” The prophet Zechariah foresaw this when he said, “Grace and mercy....[will come when] they look to the Messiah, the one they have pierced.” (around 1:18) And Hosea said, “on the third day, the Messiah will be raised up.”

PHILIP/EMMAUS 2: Friend, you speak with knowledge. Here is where we plan to spend the night.

ANDREW/EMMAUS 1: Stay with us awhile, for evening draws on and the day is almost over.

JESUS: I will go inside and break bread with you.

Oh Father, bless these men and their brothers and sisters as they go forth to do your work. Open these men’s eyes that they may see! (*JESUS disappears*)

PHILIP/EMMAUS 2: Lord!

ANDREW/EMMAUS 1: Master!

PHILIP/EMMAUS 2: He’s vanished! Where has he gone?

ANDREW/EMMAUS 1: Didn’t we feel our hearts on fire as he talked with us and explained the Scriptures to us?

PHILIP/EMMAUS 2: This is the greatest miracle of all.

ANDREW/EMMAUS 1: Let’s find the other and tell them that Jesus is alive!

ACT IV—SCENE 10: BRIBING THE GUARDS

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): While we guarded the tomb, there was an earthquake...

ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): And an angel appeared and rolled away the stone!

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): Both of us were knocked out!

ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): When we came to, the tomb was empty and we came here...

CAIAPHAS: Are you trying to cover for yourselves? You let His disciples steal the body!

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): We swear! It was just as we said!

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ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): And we don't know where the body is!

ANNAS: Stop this! No one else but you two were there?

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): No, there wasn't.

ANNAS: Then no one else knows what...happened.

CAIAPHIS: We don't know what happened!

ANNAS: We know He didn't rise from the dead! (*To GUARDS*) You must say His disciples took the body.

ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): But we don't know who took it!

CAIAPHAS: Annas is right, who else would take it?

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): But the angel....

CAIAPHAS: No one else saw the angel, did they? You will do as we say, or you will be punished. You probably fell asleep and dreamed of the angel!

ANNAS: That will be the story. You fell asleep and His disciples stole the body. Spread that around and we will reward you even though you failed. If Pilate hears it, we will deal with him. Agreed?

ROMAN 1 (Guard 2): Yes!

ROMAN 2 (Guard 3): Agreed!

ACT IV—SCENE 11: APPEARANCE TO THOMAS

PETER: (*To Thomas*) That is how it happened after I went to the tomb. He has appeared to me, Thomas, and told me to encourage the rest. Mary has seen Him; I have seen Him; so have all the rest of the apostles...

THOMAS: (*Interrupting*) Except me. All the rest but me. You have all seen him, heard him, and touched him, and you keep saying He will appear to me, too. Yet eight days have passed and still nothing! I will believe when I see, when I touch His hands and side!

[JESUS appears]

JESUS: Peace to all of you. Thomas, here's my hand; touch Me. Put your hand to my side. Do Not Doubt! But believe.

THOMAS: My Lord and my God!

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JESUS: You have believed because you have seen. Blessed are those who believe without seeing! All that was written about me in the Scriptures had to be fulfilled, that the Messiah must suffer, die, and rise from the dead on the third day, to this you shall be my witnesses.

Consider Voiceover John: Jesus performed many other miracles and signs not written here. If every one of them were written down, I don't suppose there would be room enough in the whole world for all the books that could be written.

But these things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and through faith will have life in His name.

ACT IV—SCENE 12: ASCENSION

*[JESUS is seated on ascension rock & all are gathered around Him **PETER** and **James** have arrived first to hook-up Jesus to Ascension Lift.]*

JOHN: (4:04) Lord, will You restore the Kingdom to Israel, now?

JESUS: It's not for you to know the times or the seasons, that the Father keeps under His own authority. But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power to testify of my death and resurrection with great effect to the people of Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

[JESUS stands.]

There is forgiveness of sins for all who turn to me. You've seen these prophecies come true. And soon, I will send the Holy Spirit upon you just as my Father promised. Don't begin telling others yet. Stay in the city until the Holy Spirit comes and fills you with power. Full authority in heaven and on earth has been committed to me. Go forth and make all nations my disciples. Baptize men everywhere in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And be assured, I am with you always, even to the end of time.

[Ascension]

RECORD THIS WITH ANGEL VOICE:

ANGEL FROM HEAVEN VOICE: Men of Galilee! Why do you gaze into the heavens? This same Jesus who was taken up from you, shall come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven. And, He shall reign forever!

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KEVIN SORBO CLOSING

Tonight, you have witnessed the account of the greatest act of love the world has ever known so that the whole world may receive the gift of eternal life.

In just a few moments there will be a time of benediction and worship in the amphitheater. All are welcome to stay and pray during this time. We ask that if (or as) you exit the amphitheater please do so quietly as a courtesy to those who remain praying or worshipping in their seats.

****start music****

If you do not believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you can receive Him right where you are and leave this place forever changed. Jesus paid the debt for our sin and God raised Him from death to life.

The Bible says in Romans 10:9: "if you confess with your mouth that 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."

If you need to pray with someone, our prayer team is at the top of the stairs ready to pray with you.

For those here who already believe, we pray this performance strengthens your faith and is an encouragement to your spirit wherever your journey has taken you and that it will inspire you to continue sharing the love of Christ everywhere you go.

Thank you for attending The Great Passion Play— "May the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."