

The Passion, 2012

Adapted from the Bible by
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1

The Triumphal Entry

Narrator A voice was heard, and it said, 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him.'

'til he has led the truth to victory:
in his name the nations will put their hope.'

Enter Jesus through audience with child riding on his donkey, with Disciples, Women, Followers. All have leafy branches and bright fabrics to wave.

Enter the Moneychangers, Traders, Witness 1 & 2, and People onto Stage.

Enter Religious Leaders.

Followers Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!

And when Jesus had come into Jerusalem, the entire city was moved, saying,

People 1 WHO IS THAT? (*Nobody answers*) WHO IS HE?

Follower 1 JESUS!

Follower 2 HOSANNA! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!

Follower 1 IT'S JESUS, THE PROPHET FROM NAZARETH.

Follower 2 THE KING OF ISRAEL!

Follower 3 BLESSED IS THE KING WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!

Follower 1 PEACE IN HEAVEN AND GLORY IN THE HIGHEST!

People 1 JESUS! Born into this, an oppressed Israel, he grew up in the poor, overpopulated town of Nazareth, a Jewish enclave amongst non-Jewish cities, four days journey away from this, the centre of the Jewish world, the city of Jerusalem.

Israel is under two layers of government; on top are the invading Romans, who have occupied our land with military rule for over 60 years, and beneath them, the half-Jewish leader Herod the Great exercises control over us people in the name of Rome. Herod is detested by the Jewish people for his tyrannical rule and for selling our Jewish heritage to a foreign power. Herod's son was so brutal in his

exercise of power in Jerusalem that Rome replaced him with its own governors, and eventually with Pontius Pilate.

Within Jerusalem stands this, the Second Temple, the House of the Holy. The invading Babylonians destroyed our first Temple, and this rebuilt Temple stands as the footstool of God's presence.

In this troubled time of conflict, four distinct movements dominate our lives:

The pragmatic and wealthy Sadducees seek to conserve their wealth and power through compromise with Rome.

The idealistic Pharisees strive to live a life of spiritual purity by meticulously following the scripture, the Torah, the Jewish law.

The Essenes solve the problem of preserving Jewish identity in a Roman-occupied Israel by withdrawing to a monastic life, away from mainstream Jewish society.

The Zealots are armed revolutionaries determined to liberate us Jews from our Roman oppressors.

Jesus is from none of these movements. As a boy he learned the scripture at his village school, and at his synagogue he became a radical and powerful teacher.

As a man he chose twelve students, twelve disciples to learn from him and to spread his teaching...

Some of the Pharisees called to him from the crowd,

Pharisee 1 TEACHER, REBUKE YOUR DISCIPLES FOR THIS SEDITIOUS CLAMORING.

Jesus I TELL YOU, IF THESE WERE SILENT THE VERY STONES WOULD CRY OUT.

Followers *(To the audience, to the world)* HOSANNA! BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD! BLESSED IS THE KINGDOM OF OUR FATHER DAVID THAT COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD! HOSANNA IN THE HIGHEST!

2

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

*Enter Money Changers, Traders, People, Pharisees, Sadducees, Scribes.
Enter DS Jesus with Disciples, Women, and Followers*

- Jesus You who buy, and you who sell in the Temple, get out!
- Money Ch. 1 What are you talking about?
- Trader 1 *(To the Pharisees)* Can he say this?
- Jesus Take these things away!
- Trader 1 I've always traded here!
- Jesus Do not make my Father's house a house of merchandise!
- Trader 2 I have to deliver these now!
- Jesus I will not allow you to carry your wares through the Temple!
- Trader 2 Someone help me!
- Jesus You shall not use the Temple as a short cut!
- Dove Seller A short cut? We have every right to be here! Come on, I've got doves to sell!
- Money Ch. 1 That's right! And if you're here to buy a sacrifice, you'll need to change your money with me.
- Money Ch 2 Come to my table Rabbi, you'll find my rates far better than his!
- Money Ch 1 Don't listen to him he's as crooked as his father. Come and...
- Jesus overturns the tables.*
- Jesus Is it not written, 'my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations'? But you have made it a 'den of thieves.'
- Money Ch. 1 *(Of the turned tables)* Who are you to do this?
- Pharisee 2 Who gives you authority to do these things?
- Jesus I will ask you one thing, answer and I will tell you by what authority I do these things: When my cousin John baptised the people in the Jordan, was it from heaven or from men?

- Pharisee 2 *(Aside)* If we say, ‘He had authority from heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why then did you not believe him, and everyone will demand to know why was John beheaded.’
- Pharisee 1 But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us because they are persuaded that John was a prophet!
- Pharisee 2 *(To Jesus)* We don’t know.
- Jesus Then neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. I have a story for you.

A man planted a vineyard, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a distant country for a long time. When grape harvest came he sent a servant to the vinedressers, that they might give him some fruit of the vineyard. But the vinedressers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. He sent another servant and they beat him, treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. And again he sent a third; they wounded him, and cast him out. Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son. Surely they will respect him.’ But when the vinedressers saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘This is the heir. Come, let’s kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.’ So they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore what will the owner of the vineyard do to them?

Religious Leaders do not answer.

- Dove seller Will he not come and destroy those vinedressers and give the vineyard to others?

People and Followers hang upon the answer, People 1-3 and Followers 1-3 discuss.

- Pharisee 1 *(Taking CS)* May this never be!
- Jesus What then is the meaning of that which is written: ‘The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone? Whoever falls on that stone will be broken; but those upon whom it falls will be crushed.’

The People and Followers discuss interpretations of Jesus teaching.

- Pharisee 2 *(Aside)* The people know that the parable was spoken against us.
- Sadducee 1 *(Aside)* We should take him, arrest him now...
- Sadducee 2 *(Aside)* ...but the multitudes see him as a Prophet.

Sadducee 1 *(Aside)* ALRIGHT! LEAVE HIM TO ME. *(To Jesus)* Teacher, we know that you are true, show no prejudice or favouritism, but teach the way of God in truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?

Jesus *(Knowing their hypocrisy and craftiness)* Why do you test me? Show me the tax money. Bring me a denarius.

Sadducee 1 *(To Moneychanger 1)* Give him a coin.

Money Ch 1 What? After everything he's done?

Sadducee 1 Give him a coin.

Moneychanger 1 reluctantly gives him a coin.

Money Ch 1 I'll want that back.

Jesus Whose image and inscription is this?

Sadducee 1 Caesar's.

Jesus Return to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.

Scribe 1 *(Marveling at Jesus)* I don't believe my ears!

Sadducee 2 *(Aside)* Surely we are not going to allow him to speak like...

Scribe 2 ...Teacher, you have spoken well. Which is the first commandment of all?

Jesus The first of all the commandments is: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with your entire mind, and with your entire strength. And the second is this: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself. ' There is no other commandment greater than these.

Scribe 1 *(Separating himself from the Pharisees)* Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth; for there is one God, and to love him thus, and to love one's neighbour as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Jesus *(Acknowledging his wisdom)* You're not far from the kingdom of God.

(Speaking of the temple of his body) This is also the truth; destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

The People are shocked into an uproar, the Followers are out of their depth. All are silenced by Pharisee 1.