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**Sample Scenes from “Redemption’s Promise”
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Act I/Scene 10

Mood Music: “Mothers’ Theme”

Setting: Joel’s house; the next night

(Joel and Jason are seated at the table.. Outside the house, unknown to them, are Aurilius and another soldier.)

Joel: Jason, I don’t know how to tell you this—

Jason: You can’t back out on me now, Joel. I need you; our people need you. You’ll be a hero, Joel.

Joel: *(laughs nervously, lowering his voice so his mother will not hear)* I’ll probably be a dead hero.

Jason: No, Joel. Not if we all work together. I have ten others who will be helping us. Look, I found out that the “heavy guard” is just eight soldiers—

Joel: Eight soldiers too many, if you ask me.

Jason: *(showing his anger and disappointment)* I didn’t take you for a coward, Joel.

Joel: I’m not a coward. It’s just that, well—I’ve been thinking a lot about your idea that the coming Redeemer will free us from the tyranny of Rome, and that this Jesus may be the One.

Jason: I’m certain He is, Joel! I saw and heard Him yesterday for the first time. I’m convinced He is sent from God!

Joel: So am I, Jason.

Jason: Then, why the hesitation?

Joel: I've been going to the synagogue lately, Jason, to study our prophets, to see what they mention about the Messiah.

Jason: And—

Joel: I've been amazed by what Isaiah says.

Jason: Which is?

Joel: Isaiah clearly teaches that the Messiah will be exalted and extolled.

Jason: Well, of course, Joel. He's going to be the next king of Israel, higher than even Caesar himself!

Joel: But there's more, Jason, more about the prophecy than we've been taught.

Jason: What are you talking about?

Joel: In the very same passage, Isaiah goes on to say things like, "his visage was so marred more than any man," "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth," and "Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin..."

I've been thinking, Jason, that perhaps redemption's promise has to do more with spiritual freedom, the forgiveness of sins, rather than escape from the bondage of Rome. Jesus claims that He has the power on earth to forgive sins, Jason.

Jason: (*seriously*) You believe that, don't you, Joel.

Joel: Yes, I do. I believe with all my heart that He is the promised Redeemer for Whom all of Israel has waited. He's God, Jason, God come to earth in human form!

Jason: But, why would He come to earth if not to claim it for His own and show His Almighty power?

Joel: It could be that He will show His power, Jason, in a way we don't understand.

Jason: *(sighs)* Perhaps. *(gets up abruptly)* Whether He came to save souls for eternity or from tyranny, I'm still going through with the plans we've made for tomorrow. I need to contact several others tonight. Are you with us, or not, Joel?

Joel: *(pauses, struggles with the decision)* I'm sorry, Jason. I can't.

Jason: *(looks back angrily, just before he leaves)* Your father would be proud! *(Jason exits down the road, upstage left. Aurilius and the soldier keep out of sight until he is almost gone)*

Aurilius: *(stepping out of the shadow, speaks to the soldier)* Follow him. Note every house he stops at, then report at once to the tribune with names and places.

Soldier: *(saluting)* Yes, sir.

Abigail: *(enters room where Joel is)* Is he gone?

Joel: Yes, mother.

Abigail: You're not going to go along with his scheme, are you?

Joel: No.

Abigail: *(sighs as she sinks down onto the bench by the table. Just then, the door is forced open and Aurilius enters.)*

Aurilius: You are under arrest, Joel Bar-Nathan.

Joel: Why, what have I done?

Abigail: No! No, you can't take him! *(She tries to protect her son, but is pushed away. Aurilius ties Joel's hands behind him.)* No! *(Abigail weeps as Joel is taken out of the house. Lights fade on house, come up on Petronai. Joel and Aurilius stand before him. A guard is beside Petronai.)*

Petronai: Joel Bar-Nathan, you are accused of plotting to steal weapons to be used in an insurrection against the government. What have you to say to this charge?

Joel: *(nervously, but respectfully)* I am guilty of helping to plot the attack, sir, but I decided, only tonight, not to go through with it.

Petronai: *(calmly, self-assuredly, with sarcasm)* Did you now? How convenient. Well, no matter. You shall be tried and executed on the morrow anyway. *(to guard)* Chain him in the inner prison. I suspect he'll have some company before too long. *(the Guard leads Joel away. Petronai speaks to Aurilius.)* Bring Antonius Marcos to me immediately!

(Lights Down)

End Scene

Mood Music - "Joel's Theme"

Act II/Scene 2

Mood Music: "Ruth's Theme"

Setting: Upper room in Antonius' house; one week later

(Antonius enters the room; Jason turns away from him, arms crossed defiantly)

Antonius: Well, I see that a month's confinement has not broken your spirit.

Jason: *(turning back towards him)* What have you done with her?

Antonius: And of whom, may I ask, are you speaking?

Jason: I think you know.

Antonius: Ruth?

Jason: Yes, sir. Where is she? The last time I saw her was a week ago.

Since then, you've sent others to bring my food. I want to know what's happened to her.

Antonius: You need not fear for her safety, Jason. I sent her away.

Jason: Why?

Antonius: Two reasons. Number one, because I sensed a growing affection between the two of you. Ruth is a slave; you are the son of a Roman centurion.

Jason: *(in earnest)* I might have been a slave myself!

Antonius: True. However, you chose to be my son.

Jason: *(nodding in agreement and disappointment)* A choice I have regretted ever since.

Antonius: *(bristling)* The other reason has to do with your ill-fated attempt to steal those weapons. I discovered that it was she who encouraged you to spy on me.

Jason: The decision was mine!

Antonius: Nevertheless, it was at her suggestion. Was it not!

Jason: *(pauses, turns away again, not answering, speaks softly, more contrite)* Where is she?

Antonius: Rome rules a vast empire, boy. I have made certain that you will never find her. *(Jason stands looking down, defeated, and says nothing)*

I have other news that may interest you, about the man called Jesus, the one you thought would lead your people against mine. *(Jason looks up at him surprised; Antonius laughs)* Don't look so surprised that I would know such information. I have ways of finding things out, just as you do.

(There is a long dramatic pause; Antonius walks closer to Jason and looks him straight in the eyes, taking pleasure in his announcement) He's dead, Jason.

Jason: *(shaking his head in disbelief)* No, I don't believe that.

Antonius: He was crucified only yesterday.

Jason: Crucified!

Antonius: And, it was your own people who delivered Him over to the authorities.

Jason: You're lying.

Antonius: No, Jason. Your own religious leaders stirred up the people to ask for the release of a notorious criminal, one by the name of Barabas, in exchange for this man's crucifixion.

Jason: *(in anguish of soul)* Why? What had He done? Just last week they praised Him as He rode through the town. They hailed Him as King!

Antonius: *(laughing, speaks sarcastically)* King! Ah, yes, Jesus, King of the Jews! So read the inscription posted on the cross, just above his head. So we soldiers referred to him as we mocked Him after His trial. We dressed Him in a scarlet robe and gave Him a reed for a royal scepter. Why, we even gave Him a crown, only it was made of thorns instead of gold.

Jason: How could you!? How could anyone? All He ever did was good! He healed the sick; He taught of peace and love.

Antonius: *(mockingly)* Peace and love. Yet, you, along with many others, thought His purpose was to overthrow the government.

Jason: *(not really listening to him, talking to himself)* He fed the multitudes; He raised the dead.

Antonius: Yet, He could not save Himself from destruction.

Jason: *(trying to hold back his anger)* It must have given you great pleasure to drive the nails into His hands.

Antonius: That was not my privilege, nor was I responsible for His scourging, though I witnessed both. I was there to control the crowd of angry, mocking onlookers, mostly Jews, even your high priest, Caiaphas. Oh, to be

sure, there were a few sympathizers among them; his mother, a few of his followers, very few. One was named John. I heard this King of yours tell this John to care for his mother; to be her son.

Jason: (*softening*) What else did He say?

Antonius: At His trial, very little. When asked by Pilate if He were the king of the Jews, He acknowledged that He was, though He added that His kingdom was not of this world. Other than that, He said nothing.

Jason: (*to himself*) “As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth.”

Antonius: What are you mumbling about?

Jason: (*thinking back to Joel*) Just something someone once said to me.

Antonius: Pilate proclaimed Him innocent, washed his hands of the affair.

Jason: Then why?

Antonius: Because of the insistence of the people. He was afraid of them, if you want my opinion.

Jason: Did Jesus say anything else during— (*pauses, finding it hard to go on*) during His crucifixion?

Antonius: Yes. He looked up to heaven, at one point, and asked God why He was being forsaken by Him. Then Jesus told one of the two thieves, who was hanging beside Him, that He would see the man that day in Paradise. (*shakes his head*) He was a dreamer. (*pauses*)

I must admit, there was something remarkable about Him. Through everything He suffered, and He did suffer, more than any man I’ve ever witnessed. Being a soldier, I have seen much suffering. By the time we were finished with Him, this Jesus of yours was hardly recognizable. Yet, never once did I hear Him cry out in pain.

Jason: (*to himself*) “His visage was so marred more than any man...”

Antonius: Not once did I see a look of anger or revenge on His face. It was

only of love and pity, even for those who called for His death. *(pauses)* He prayed to your God shortly before crying out, “It is finished!” He even asked forgiveness for His persecutors. I cannot deny that I have never seen such strength of character. It was as if—as if He wanted to be there, both for the sake of those who loved Him and those who hated Him.

But, that makes no sense.

Jason: *(thinking back to what Joel had shared with him)* “Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; he hath put Him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin.” Perhaps it makes more sense than we realize.

Antonius: Nevertheless, he is dead. He can no longer be a threat to Rome. You no longer have a leader to follow, and your fellow plotters are with him in the grave.

The tribune has agreed to give you one more opportunity at freedom. Be assured, Jason, it will be your last.

(Lights Down)

End Scene

Act II/Scene 4

Setting: The atrium of Antonius’ house; a month later

(Jason enters from the back of the auditorium, down the center aisle, and crosses to Antonius’ house; he is obviously very happy)

Antonius: *(entering from behind the curtain in back of the atrium just as Jason is about to go to his room)* Where have you been that you should be in such high spirits?

Jason: *(with back still towards Antonius, hesitates to answer)*

Antonius: Do not think, Jason, that because you are now free to leave this house, you are not still under surveillance. The tribune continues to have his spies, as do I. It has been reported that you went to hear some impostor pretending to be that Jesus who was crucified last month.

Jason: (*turning towards Antonius*) He was not an impostor, sir. It was Jesus Himself.

Antonius: (*laughing at him*) That's impossible! I saw the man crucified! No-one survives Roman crucifixion. I know He was dead!

Jason: Yes, sir, He was. But, He rose from the dead only three days after his burial.

Antonius: No man can raise himself from the dead!

Jason: I know. Jesus is no mere man. He is the Son of God.

Antonius: (*shakes his head*)

Jason: When you told me the details of His death, you failed to tell me that an acquaintance of yours, the centurion in charge of the crucifixion, admitted that Jesus was the Son of God.

Antonius: (*somewhat shaken*) He was simply overreacting to the darkness, the earthquake.

Jason: No, sir.

Don't you see? He has to be God Himself come in the flesh. No mere man could raise himself from the dead. Only God could do that!

Antonius: He didn't rise from the dead! I know the men that guarded His tomb; they claim his disciples came and stole his body while they slept.

Jason: (*thoughtfully*) I also heard that report. And, I heard that these "guards" had nothing happen to them as punishment. I was under the impression that the government executed men for deserting their post.

Antonius: You have said enough, Jason. I forbid you to see this man again!

Jason: If you are concerned about me joining Him for the cause of insurrection, you need not worry. (*pauses, turns away, thoughtfully*) I understand now what Joel had been trying to tell me, what Ruth was saying. Jesus came to bring freedom; it is true. But, He came to bring freedom of the

soul, freedom from sin. *(turning back towards Antonius, he takes hold of Antonius' arm, as if concerned for his soul)* Redemption's promise is not for the Jew alone, but for all men, everywhere, who will turn to Him in repentance and faith.

Antonius: *(shaking him off roughly)* I am warning you, Jason. You are to have nothing to do with this man! He was crucified as a hated criminal! Your own people—

Jason: *(sadly)* My own people did not realize what they were doing. They did not understand the prophecies of Isaiah. They did not know that their Messiah must first suffer for their sins, *(pauses)* and that it would be at their own hands.

The Man I heard preaching today is Jesus. I saw and heard Him before His death. There is no mistaking it. Five hundred people are witnesses! He even had the nail scars in His hands.

Antonius: You are not to become one of his followers!

Jason: *(softly, respectfully)* I already have, sir.

Antonius: Then you must deny Him at once. Petronai already distrusts you. If he finds out—

Jason: I know there is animosity between you and the tribune. I know that he would like nothing better than to humiliate you because of my beliefs. For your sake, I will do as you say; I will not go to see Jesus again. But, I cannot deny Him. My faith in Christ is not something I can put on and take off again, as a cloak. Something inside of me changed when I confessed my sin to Him and received Him as my Savior. It is a change that will last for all eternity. *(Antonius exits angrily to the back room.)*

(Lights Down)

End Scene

Mood Music - "Jason's Theme"

Act II/Scene 5

Setting: The streets of Jerusalem; about ten days later

(Jason enters the street, stage left; Shara enters stage right, notices Jason)

Shara: *(touching his fancy cloak)* Well, I see you are still associated with the centurion.

Jason: Yes, Ma'am.

Shara: With your mother not being heard of since your father's execution, I'm surprised you would still want to be a part of them.

Jason: Well, it's not that I—

Shara: What do you think of all the excitement that has occurred in Jerusalem, these last two months, over this Jesus of Nazareth?

Jason: I—

Shara: When my husband and I decided to return here for good, we had no idea that things would be in such an uproar. I wonder if the city will ever be the same again because of all that's happened here.

Jason: *(thoughtfully)* The *world* will never be the same again, Ma'am.

Shara: *(seriously interested)* What do you mean?

Jason: I heard one of His disciples preaching today. Peter was his name. He said that this same Jesus, Who was crucified and rose again, has now ascended up into heaven and is sitting at the right hand of the throne of God!

Shara: Oh, my! I had no idea. This is exciting! *(notices a friend of hers passing by; she is excited, but serious)* Esther, come hear what this boy has to tell! *(Her friend comes over to listen to Jason. Shara sees two other friends.)* Shimea, Adah, come here! *(Shara continues to gather friends as Jason tells them what happened at Pentecost. Jason should ad lib the discussion.)*

Aurilius: *(sees crowd, mistakes it for an unruly mob)* What is going on here? All of you disperse! Go home! Who's responsible for this ruckus?

Shara: *(frightened, trying to explain, not meaning to cause harm)* This boy was just telling us about Jesus, the One you Romans crucified. Why—

Aurilius: *(recognizing Jason, cuts her off and speaks to Jason)* You. I should have known. You are under arrest, Jason Bar-Micaiah. *(nods to the soldier to tie Jason's hands behind him.)*

Jason: *(struggling somewhat)* Under arrest! For what reason?

Aurilius: For inciting a riot. *(Shara quietly backs offstage.)*

Jason: *(trying to plead his case)* I did nothing of the kind. I was simply—

Aurilius: *(cutting him off)* You were simply stirring up the people concerning a condemned criminal.

Jason: *(respectfully, but firmly)* He was not a criminal; He was the Son of God. One of your own centurions admitted as much.

Aurilius: *(slaps Jason)* Silence! *(roughly pushes Jason towards the stairs to the Tribune's Hall)* The tribune will be gratified to finally have an opportunity to sentence you. *(Jason is thrown down on top of the lower steps. A soldier departs through the archway and returns moments later with Petronai. Petronai pauses upon seeing Jason, then is seated. Aurilius walks over to him and whispers the charges against Jason.)*

Petronai: So, you are in trouble once more, son of Antonius. Only this time you will be given no more chances. You have rebelled against my authority once too often.

Jason: *(earnestly)* Please, sir, I wasn't rebelling against your authority. I was only telling what I had seen and heard. It was not meant to be a threat against you or Rome.

Petronai: *(laughs)* With your personal history of insurrection, you expect me to believe that! You must take me for a fool. *(pauses, gets up from his seat, contemplates what to do, then takes Aurilius' sword from its sheath and*

walks down the steps towards Jason. He takes Jason by the hair, forcing his head back, and puts the sword threateningly to Jason's throat.)

But, it is you who are the fool.

(Petronai releases Jason, walks back to his chair, then speaks to Aurilius.) Bring Antonius to me at once. (Aurilius salutes, then begins to leave. Petronai puts out his hand and stops him.) Do not tell him why I have sent for him.

I have sought for such an occasion as this, (looks over at Jason) to be able to put Antonius in his place once and for all. (turns back to Aurilius) Ever since he was overlooked for the position of commander of the garrison here at Jerusalem, and I was appointed in his stead, he has been jealous. Though I should have power over him, somehow he has always managed to lord himself over me. It was because of his marriage to a Jewish woman, you know, that the governor denied him the post he sought. Though we permitted it, his adoption of this boy was, in part, a slap in the face to both myself and the governor. I have never quite trusted him since. (looks back towards Jason) This is my chance to test the true loyalties of my "friend."

(Petronai tells Aurilius some things that the audience does not hear. Aurilius crosses to Jason, turns him away from where Antonius will be standing, then forces him to his knees, with his head down. Aurilius and another guard stand in front of Jason, so he may not to be seen by Antonius.)

Antonius: (salutes) You sent for me, sir.

Petronai: Yes, Antonius. I have a prisoner who has been condemned for inciting a riot. He was stirring up the people against us concerning that Jesus of Nazareth whom we condemned as a criminal. I wish for you to scourge him.

Antonius: (saluting again) Yes, sir. (steps towards Aurilius)

Petronai: (nodding to Aurilius; Aurilius lifts Jason to his feet and turns him towards Antonius) Take a good look at him, Centurion! He's your son!

Antonius: (taken back at first, and realizing that he is being tested, Antonius struggles with his emotions. He looks from Jason, to the Tribune, and back to Jason again. After a long, tense pause, he speaks firmly and slowly with controlled anger.) I have no son! (takes Jason by the arm and roughly pushes him ahead of him through the pillared archway)

(Lights Down)

End Scene

Mood Music - "Tribune's Theme"

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**Samples scenes from “Tell Me the Story of Jesus”
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Act 1/Scene 1

(Lights up on center stage-mountainside scene)

Salome: *(enters, stage right, speaks to the audience)* Oh, hello. I don't believe we've ever met. You've just come to Jerusalem today? Then you haven't heard about the events of the past few weeks. Oh, what a stir of excitement there has been. Do you have a moment? Would you mind if I told you? I realize we're strangers to each other, but—well, this news is so glorious I just can't keep it to myself. As a matter of fact, it would be a sin to keep it to myself.

You see, it's about this man called Jesus. Oh, you *have* heard of His name. Did you ever hear Him preach? I remember the first time I saw and heard him. It was in Galilee on the top of a mountain... *(The choir, dressed in biblical costumes, begins to enter slowly from all corners of the stage area. They sing “Tell Me The Story of Jesus” as they enter, then sit or stand in various places on the stage. The song may be divided up between the choir members as solo parts, duets, etc., as if they were singing conversationally. It works well to have the entire choir sing the last line of the first two verses. The refrain should be sung only once at the end of the entire song with everyone singing in four-part harmonization.)*

Salome: *(as she sits down on a rock)* To hear Him speak! His words...

Choir Woman 1: His words are full of love and mercy.

Voice of Jesus: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of God.”

Choir Man 1: His words are commanding, authoritative!

Voice of Jesus: “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father, which is in heaven.”

Choir Man 2: His words reveal that He is none other than God Himself!

Voice of Jesus: “I and my Father are one.”

Choir Woman 2: His words are so compassionate.

Voice of Jesus: “Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns: yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?”

Choir Woman 3: His words are like a parable; at times they are difficult to understand.

Voice of Jesus: “Straight is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”

Salome: Yes, His words were like no other man’s. When He opened up the Holy Scriptures to us, it were as if, (*searching for the right words*) as if...

Salome and Woman 1,2,3, Man 1,2: ...as if He were their author!

(Choir sings verses one and four of “Break Thou The Bread of Life.” Divide the first two phrases between men and women. Use two part harmony for each. The last two phrases of each verse should be sung in four-part harmony by all.)

Salome: *(to the audience)* There’s so much to tell you! *(notices James and John)* Wait. *(rises)* Do you see those two men over there? They could do much better than I in describing the life of Jesus to you. You see, they were two of His closest disciples. *(She walks over to the men. The choir members exit slowly. The ladies exit to both side aisles and remain there throughout the flashbacks to follow, providing an antiphonal effect)* Excuse me.

James: *(bowing slightly)* Greetings, sister Salome.

Salome: I'd like to introduce you to some people. I met them only a few minutes ago. It seems they have just arrived in Jerusalem as of today. I was attempting to tell them about Jesus, but, since the two of you were so close to Him, I thought perhaps you could do better at telling them what He was really like.

James: Of course. We'd love nothing more.

Salome: Oh, thank you so much!

(to the audience) It was nice meeting you. I'm certain you'll find what they have to say to be very informative and exciting. I must go now. I need to purchase some vegetables at the market. Good-day. *(Salome exits, stage left)*

James: *(to the audience)* Well, first of all, I suppose we should introduce ourselves. My name is James, and this is my brother, John.

John: *(also speaks to the audience)* Greetings.

James: As Salome said, we were, and still are, disciples of Jesus. He chose twelve of us to work side-by-side with Him in His ministry.

John: It's quite an honor to be His follower. You see, we believe with all our hearts that He is the Christ, the Messiah, the One sent from God, the One for Whom all Israel has waited!

James: It's true. If we hadn't felt compelled to follow Him, we would not have left our ships.

John: Let me explain. My brother and I are fishermen. It's our family's business. I never would have believed we would leave it...

James: Our fishing partners, Peter and Andrew, also left all to follow Him.

(James and John each sing one verse (#1, #3) of "Jesus Calls Us." Verses #2 and #4 may be sung as a duet.)

James: *(speaking again)* Little did we know when we made that decision to follow Jesus and become ‘fishers of men,’ as He called us, what unusual and, as Salome said, exciting events we would witness.

John: We’ll be happy to tell you all we can about His ministry among our people. *(pauses)* Or perhaps you’d rather *see* it for yourselves.

End Scene 1

(Lights off James and John)

Act 1/Scene 2

Flashback #1-The Woman at the Well (John 4:5-42)
(This scene is not included in the sample but is in the Director’s Notebook and Script download)

Act I/Scene 3

Flashback #2 - The Leper (Matthew 8:2-4)
(This scene is not included in the sample but is in the Director’s Notebook and Script download)

Act I/Scene 4

Flashback #3 - The Centurion’s Servant Healed (Luke 7:1-10)

(Ladies sing in unison the title phrase of “Tell Me The Stories of Jesus,” fading out at the end)

(Lights come up on an interior house scene, a somewhat wealthy place. A centurion is pacing back and forth. Coughing is heard occasionally from another room. There is a knock at the outside door. The centurion answers it.)

Centurion: Come in, my friends. *(two men, elders of Israel, enter)* Did you find Him? Did you find this man called Jesus? Will He heal my servant?

Elder 1: Yes. Yes, He is coming.

Centurion: He's coming here?

Elder 2: We spoke to Him of how you love our nation, even though you yourself are not a Jew.

Elder 1: We explained to Him how you built the synagogue for us here in Capernaum, that you are worthy of His help.

Centurion: Oh, no, my friends, I am not worthy, for I believe this man is God Himself. Go, tell Him not to trouble Himself to come. Tell Him—tell Him I do not feel worthy of His presence in my house, nor did I feel myself worthy to come to Him personally. Tell Him to but speak the word only and my servant will be well. For as a man of authority, I speak to my soldiers and servants and they immediately do as I wish. Cannot the Son of God but speak and it shall be done?

Elder 1: We will go at once. *(The men leave. Coughing is heard offstage. The centurion goes into the back room. Lights dim on scene and come up on elders, center stage. They are looking out toward the audience, as if seeing Jesus.)*

Elder 2: Our friend, the centurion, said not to trouble Yourself to come to his house and heal his servant, but rather to speak the word only and his servant would be healed.

Voice of Jesus: “I say unto Thee: I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

(The elders nod their agreement, then return to the house. Lights come up on the centurion's house. They knock at the door. The centurion enters from the back room and answers the door.)

Elder 1: *(excitedly)* We told Jesus what you said and...

Centurion: I know! I know! My servant is well! He lives, as I knew he would!

End Flashback #3
(Lights off scene)

Act 1/Scene 5

Flashback #4 - Raising of the Widow's Son (Luke 7:11-18)

(This scene is not included in the sample but is in the Director's Notebook and Script download)

Act 1/Scene 6

Flashback #5 - Jesus Blesses the Children (Luke 18:15-17)

(This scene is not included in the sample but is in the Director's Notebook and Script download)

Act 1/Scene 7

Flashback #6- Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

(Ladies sing, in unison, the title of "Tell Me The Story of Jesus," fading out at the end of the phrase.)

(A small table, bench, coins, etc. are set up. Zacchaeus is seated behind the table. A guard is standing beside the table. There are three people in line to pay their taxes.)

Man: *(at the front of the line, throws his money bag on the table)* It's there, Zacchaeus! All of it! But we both know that most of it will end up in your money bag, not in the coffers of the government where it's supposed to go.

Zacchaeus: *(glancing at the soldier next to him, says menacingly to the man)* If you care to question my integrity further, sir, I shall have no choice but to—turn you over to the proper authorities!

Man: *(backing down some, but not completely, as he glances somewhat nervously at the soldier.)* No, I'll not question your integrity further, but may God have mercy on your wicked soul! *(He begins to leave; soldier blocks his way momentarily and gives him a threatening look, then backs away and allows him to leave.)*

Zacchaeus: *(to widow)* State your name.

Widow: Naomi, sir. I'm a widow, wife of the late Zerrubabal.

Zacchaeus: (*looks up, unmoved*) Is that supposed to impress me somehow to lower your taxes?

Widow: (*fearfully*) I—I don't mean to be presumptuous, sir.

Zacchaeus: (*impatiently*) Then don't be! Pay your taxes and begone with you!

Widow: But, sir, they're so high. It's been a difficult year. My husband died only a few months ago. I have four children at home, sir.

Zacchaeus: (*sarcastically*) I'm deeply touched!

Widow: I have only enough money to pay half the tax, sir. If I could just...

Zacchaeus: Do you own any cattle?

Widow: Only two, sir. One is for milking. The bull we had hoped to have for meat this winter.

Zacchaeus: Bring one of them by this time tomorrow.

Widow: But, sir, we need them. If you could just give me a little more time. I'm taking in sewing and...

Zacchaeus: (*firmly*) Bring them by this time tomorrow! Next!

Widow: (*crying softly; quietly places money on the table and walks off, her head down*)

Zacchaeus: (*looks up at the next person in line who is a young teen-aged boy*) What is a child doing here? Is this supposed to be funny?

Boy: No, sir.

Zacchaeus: Then leave. I have important things to do.

Boy: I'm here to talk about my father's taxes, sir.

Zacchaeus: Oh? And why isn't your father here himself?

Boy: He's ill, sir. *(sadly)* Quite ill.

Zacchaeus: *(muttering to himself)* Everyone has their excuses. *(to boy)* I see. And I suppose you are here to tell me that your poor father is so sick he cannot come to pay the taxes himself, so he sent you. Is that correct?

Boy: Yes, sir.

Zacchaeus: *(looking at him skeptically)* I am not accustomed to, nor do I like, doing business with a mere boy. Why didn't your mother come?

Boy: *(quietly, slowly, with head down)* She—she's dead, sir.

Zacchaeus: Mmm. All right. State your father's name.

Boy: Jonathan, sir, son of the late Josiah.

Zacchaeus: Very well. Give me the money your father sent. *(boy hesitates; Zacchaeus eyes him suspiciously)* I'll count your money to make certain you didn't foolishly spend some on your way here today.

Boy: I—that is...

Zacchaeus: What did you do, spend it all?!

Boy: No, sir. *(pauses)* We—that is, my father—my father's been sick for a long time, sir, deathly sick. We had the money for taxes, but we had to spend it on a physician and medicine.

Zacchaeus: *(slaps his hand angrily down on the table)* You had no right to do that! That was government money!

Boy: It will get paid, sir. We just need a little more time.

Zacchaeus: I thought you said your father was deathly ill.

Boy: He is, sir.

Zacchaeus: Then how does he expect to pay?

Boy: I hope to get some work, sir.

Zacchaeus: Oh, you'll have some work to do, no doubt. *(gives soldier a "knowing" look; says to boy)* Do you have any other family...brothers, sisters, uncles?

Boy: No, sir.

Zacchaeus: Good, then no-one will miss you. Guard, take him away!

Boy: *(frightened, as the guard grabs him by the arm)* What are you going to do?

Zacchaeus: I'm going to find you some work, boy. You'll bring a good price on the slave market, enough to pay your father's taxes, I should think.

Boy: *(struggling to free himself from the guard's clutches)* Slave market! No! You can't do this!

Zacchaeus: *(unmoved, matter-of-factly)* You stole from the government. Now you shall have to pay. Take him away!

Boy: No! *(pulls free from the soldier, runs a short distance and trips in the middle church aisle near the front)*

Guard: Stop that boy! *(He runs after the boy, roughly picks him up, and forces him down the center aisle and out the back of the church.)*

Boy: *(struggles to get free until they are out of the room)* No! You can't let him do this! It's not right! Please, sir! What about my father?!

Zacchaeus: *(He gathers the money and money bag from the table, then crosses to stage right; a small group of people pass by him excitedly. He*

stops the last man in the group.) You, there! What's going on? What's all the excitement about?

Man 2: Haven't you heard? Jesus is speaking over there by the group of Sycamore trees! *(follows the rest of the crowd offstage)*

Zacchaeus: *(to himself)* Jesus. I have heard of this man. I think I'll stop by and hear him for a few minutes before I go home. *(pauses, thinking)* But with all those people... If only I weren't so short. Perhaps I could climb one of the sycamores. *(brightens)* Yes, that's what I'll do. *(hurries offstage)*

End Flashback #6

(Lights off scene)

INTERMISSION

Act II, Scene 1

(After Intermission)

(James and John are back on stage, where they were before the flashbacks, as lights come up gradually)

James: *(to the audience)* You're probably wondering what happened to Zacchaeus. Well, he climbed one of those sycamore trees and, not only did he see Jesus, but Jesus saw him. Jesus told Zacchaeus to come down because He was going to go to his house!

John: The crowd was puzzled and a bit angry. They couldn't imagine how Jesus could even think of going to the house of such a sinner!

James: But, as Jesus Himself said to Zacchaeus, He had come to seek and to save that which was lost.

John: What a changed man Zacchaeus became!

James: It happens to everyone who comes to Jesus by faith and repents of their sins.

John: Zacchaeus not only repented, he restored everything he had taken by deceit—fourfold! He also gave half his goods to the poor!

James: Well, as you’ve seen for yourselves, our lives following the Master were anything but dull.

John: And those are just a few of the instances. Time would hinder us from telling you about *all* the miracles He performed.

James: Not to mention the parables He taught, the occasion when He chased the crooked money dealers out of the temple...

John: Or the way He revealed the hypocrisy of many of our religious leaders. *(pauses)* Jesus did so many wonderful things in the last three years that, if they should all be written down, “I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written!”

James: During that time Jesus made many friends. Three of His closest friends were a man named Lazarus, and his sisters, Mary and Martha.

John: What a blessing they were to His ministry! Their home was always open to Him, for they loved Him greatly... *(James and John remain onstage, heads down and motionless, during the following flashback)*

End Scene
(Lights off scene)

Act II/Scene 2
Flashback #1- Mary and Martha (John 11:21-46, 12:1-9 Luke 10:38-42)
(This scene is not included in the sample but is in the Director’s Notebook and Script download)

Act II/Scene 3

(Lights up on James and John)

James: *(to John, pointing to Peter who has entered stage right)* There’s Peter. *(acts as though he is discussing something with John, then says to the audience)* He’s another one of Jesus’ disciples. Remember how we told

you that he and his brother, Andrew, also left the fishing profession to follow Christ?

(calling to Peter) Peter, will you come here, please?

Peter: Of course, James. *(walks over to them)*

John: *(introducing Peter to the audience)* These people have just arrived in Jerusalem. We've been telling them about Jesus and His ministry.

Peter: *(to audience)* How do you do?

James: We were just about to tell them what took place in the Garden of Gethsemane and the events that happened afterward, but...

John: We really feel as though you could do better at relating all the details. *(pauses, says cautiously)* Would you mind?

Peter: *(hesitating momentarily)* No—no, of course not.

John: *(to audience)* You'll want to hear what Peter has to say.
(to Peter) Goodbye, Peter. *(to audience)* Goodbye.

James: It was nice to have met you.

Peter: *(to James and John)* Goodbye. *(nervous, mumbling to himself)* You'll want to hear what Peter has to say. Oh, yes, I always have plenty to say. I usually have too much to say.

(as if suddenly remembering the audience) Forgive me. I—was a little hesitant to talk with you. You see, in order for me to tell you the whole story, I have to be honest with you—painfully honest.

One day Jesus warned us that things were going to be different. Let me explain. Up until that time, His public ministry had gone well. The multitudes loved Him, followed Him wherever He went. Sometimes we'd have to go out in a boat just to get away from them for awhile.

But there were some who didn't love Him; in fact, they hated Him. They were our own religious leaders. *(shakes head sadly)* Imagine that! Those who knew the prophecies—that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, that He would rise up out of the house of Judah and be a great prophet such as the world had never seen... *(pause)* It's so ironic, that they,

of all people, should miss the pure truth that the Messiah they preached about was in their very midst!

It was jealousy, simple as that. Jesus had revealed their hypocrisy; how they would appear to be so righteous on the outside, but were so rotten on the inside. “Whited sepulchers full of dead men’s bone,” He had put it.

(pauses, walks back toward stage right) It was about two days before the feast of the Passover when Jesus announced to us He would be crucified. Crucified! We couldn’t believe what we had heard! Why, just a few days before the people had lined the streets and shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is He that come in the name of the Lord!”

Then, as we were eating the Passover meal with Him, He surprised us further by saying it would be one of His own chosen twelve who would betray Him! One of us! We couldn’t imagine who it would be...*(Lights come down on Peter as he looks toward Judas’ scene-far stage left)*

End Scene

(Lights gradually fade)

Act II, Scene 4

Flashback #2 - Judas and Caiaphas

(Matt. 26: 14-16; Mark 14:10,11; Luke 22:3-6)

(This scene is not included in the sample but is in the Director’s Notebook and Script download)

Act II, Scene 5

**(Matt. 26:20-58; Mark 14:17-54;
Luke 22:19-55; John 13:21-30,36-38;18:1-15)**

(scene reverts back to Peter)

Peter: We didn’t know who would betray the Savior, but Jesus did. As we shared our horror at the thought of one of us delivering Him over to His enemies, even then, unnoticed by the rest of us, Jesus was telling Judas to do what he had to do quickly. *(hesitates momentarily, then takes a few steps while thinking, speaks dejectedly)*

If that were not bad enough, the Lord then proceeded to tell us that all of us would be offended and run away from Him during His hour of crises. I knew I would never do such a thing. I made the mistake of boasting to the Lord that, although everyone else might fail Him, I never would! (*looks down, ashamed*) I was crushed when He told me I would deny Him, not once, but three times, before the cock crew twice the next morning.

“Oh, no, not me, Lord!” I had said so confidently. “Even if I have to die with You, I’ll never, never deny You!”

Only a short while later Jesus took four of us with Him while He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane...(*sits down in the garden. All stage lights are dim, lights in the audience shine dimly while the choir sings from around the perimeter of the church.*)

Choir: (sings “*T’is Midnight and on Olive’s Brow*” This is sung “a capella” in four part harmony. (*after the song - lights down on house, up on stage*)

Peter: When He had finished, the soldiers came, led by...led by one of the twelve, just as Jesus had said. Judas came right up to Jesus and mockingly hailed the Lord as His Master, then betrayed Him with a kiss! I was quick to react. I drew out my sword and cut off the ear of the high priest’s servant.

Then Jesus rebuked me. He said, “Put up your sword: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Don’t you think that I could pray to the Father now and He would send me twelve legions of angels? But, then, how would the scriptures be fulfilled that it must be like this?”

Jesus took the man’s ear and restored it, just as if it had never been severed! Then the soldiers bound the hands of Jesus behind Him and took Him to Annas who sent Him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Jesus was right; at first we all forsook Him, every last one of us. True, I did follow. But I made certain it was at a safe distance, that no-one would associate Him with me. (*begins walking toward the scene of Caiaphas’ palace*)

I wanted to know what would happen, so I waited, out where it was dark, on the porch of Caiaphas’ palace where some of his servants were warming themselves by the fire.

End Scene

(Lights down on scene)

Act II/Scene 6

Flashback #3 - Peter's Denial

(Matt. 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-65; John 18:15-18,25-27)

(Dim lights up on the porch of Caiaphas' palace. Several servants are seated around a fire. Peter comes closer to warm his hands. From time to time he gazes nervously through an opening in the door to see what is happening to Jesus.)

False Witness: *(from inside the building)* This fellow also said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days."

Caiaphas: "Do you answer nothing? What is it that these witnesses have spoken against you?"

Servant Woman: *(outside the building by fire, to Peter)* You were also with this Jesus of Galilee.

Peter: *(glancing over at her, then turning his gaze away quickly)* Woman, I don't know what you're talking about. *(Cock crows; Peter reacts, remembering what Jesus had said.)*

Caiaphas: *(inside the building, to Jesus)* "I command you by the living God that You tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God."

Voice of Jesus: "Thou hast said, Nevertheless, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven."

Caiaphas: "He has spoken blasphemy! What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard His blasphemy. What do you think?"

Man 1: He is guilty of death! *(Others agree. There is the sound of slapping.)*

Man 2: *(sarcastically)* “Prophecy to us, Thou Christ. Who is he that smote Thee? *(laughter by all inside the building)*

Servant Woman: *(to the nearby servant man I)* This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

Servant Man 1: *(to Peter)* You *are* also one of them.

Peter: *(nervously)* I do not know the man!

Servant Man 2: Surely, you *are* one of them. Your speech betrays you; you speak like one from Galilee.

Servant Man 1: *(rising and pointing an accusing finger at Peter)* Wait! I saw you in the garden! You cut off my kinsman’s ear!

Peter: *(raising his voice)* I swear to you, I don’t know the man! I swear it! I...(cock crows again. Peter looks toward the sound, then glances through the open door and reacts as if Jesus were looking at him. He leaves the porch area quickly, falls to his knees in anguish, and weeps.)

End Scene

(Lights off porch, dim gradually on Peter)

, Act II, Scene 7

Pilate’s Wife

(Matt. 27:19-26; Mark 15:1-15; John 18:28-19:16)

(This scene is not included in the sample but is in the Director’s Notebook and Script download)

Act II/Scene 8

Flashback to Judas Iscariot (Matt. 27:3-10)

(Lights come up on the scene with Judas Iscariot before Caiaphas and two church leaders.)

Judas: I’ve changed my mind. Take your money back! *(tries to hand the money bag back to Caiaphas)*

Caiaphas: Have you gone mad!?

Judas: (*almost hysterically*) I've sinned! I've betrayed innocent blood!

Leader 1: (*menacingly*) What is that to us?

Judas: (*angrily throws the money on the floor*) Take your money! All of it! (*runs out of room, takes off rope belt,, looks at it, then begins tying it into a noose*)

I've sinned! I've shed innocent blood. My life's not worth living! (*looks down at the rope, shakes his head as if he has decided what he must do*)

End Scene

(Lights down on scene)

Act II/Scene 9

Crucifixion/Monologue of Christ's Mother, Mary

(Matt. 27:27-56; Mark 15:16-41; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-35; John 19:16-30)

(A soloist sings the first two verses of "Were You There," as the choir proceeds slowly to the front. They face sideways on either side of a cross, or three crosses, which are illuminated at the back of the stage. The choir sings reverently, in four-part harmony, as if watching the crucifixion, all four verses of "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross." When the song is finished, they exit off both sides of the stage. Lights fade on center stage and come up, stage right, on the interior house scene. Mary, the mother of Christ, enters slowly. John remains at the door.)

John: Are you certain there's nothing else I can do for you, Mary?

Mary: (*holding back the tears*) No, thank you, John. You've been very kind. Everyone has. I—I just need to be alone for a little while.

John: Of course. If you need anything, I'll be nearby.

Mary: Thank you. (*John exits. Mary gently closes the door. Alone in the room, she looks despondently about her then sinks back against the door frame.*)

(*looking up, with much emotion*) Oh, my Son! My Son! I hardly recognized You! The terrible things they did to You! I—I... (*closes her eyes as if trying to block out the scene of His death.*) I couldn't bear to watch!

(*pauses, remembering fondly, through her tears and sadness*) I tried to think back to happier times, to the day that Gabriel appeared to me and told me God had chosen me to be the mother of His Son! Me! What had I done to deserve such an honor? I was but a poor handmaid: I had no earthly treasures, no great name. I was a sinner like anyone else. Why should He choose me?

I thought back to Your birth. What a cold night it was! What a lonely, smelly stable You were born into. There You were, tucked away in a remote corner of the world, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in that manger, unnoticed by the world, but announced by angels to lowly shepherds on a hillside!

(*almost breaking down*) Oh, what a beautiful baby You were! How I loved to hold You and look into Your sweet little face, knowing, more than anyone could ever know, that I was looking into the face of my Emmanuel—God come in the flesh!

“Jesus,” the angel had told Joseph. “You shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins. (*wistfully*) Jesus, what a beautiful name. (*sings verses 2 & 4 of “That Beautiful Name.” The choir ladies sing the chorus after the last verse only, from backstage. Mary joins them near the end, but cannot finish. She breaks down and cries.*)

Oh my dear, dear Jesus. Now I know what Simeon meant when he prophesied at Your dedication that a sword would pierce through my own soul, for there could be no sharper sword than Roman crucifixion! To think that You...(*breaks down momentarily*) You, of all men... You, who never harmed a soul. You, who spent Your life helping others. You, who never sinned a day in Your life. How could they? How could they crucify You as if, as if You were a common criminal! (*long dramatic pause*)

If it were not for Gabriel's announcement, or the time the angel warned Joseph to take You into Egypt to escape Herod's wrath, or Simeon's prophecy—I would lose hope. But I know that somehow all of this was in God's plan for You. I know You are the Son of God! And though my soul is torn apart, I know that joy comes in the morning, that I will see You

again, that you have a perfect plan in all of this that is hidden to us at the moment. Only strengthen the faith of your followers, my Son. Strengthen the faith of all of us, that we may be true to You no matter what may come.

I will not say goodbye, my Son, for though I do not understand all that has happened, I know—deep in my heart I know this is not the end—but the beginning!

End Scene
(Lights off scene)

Act II/Scene 10
Mary Magdalene in the Garden
(Matt. 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-10; Luke 24:1-11; John 20:1-18)
(This scene is not included in the sample but is in the Director’s Notebook and Script download)

Act II/Scene 11
The Ascension (Matt. 28:16-20; Mark 16:12-20; Luke 24:49-53)

Peter: Yes, He rose from the dead! And He made certain I knew. He wanted me to know He had forgiven me, just as He will forgive anyone and everyone who comes to Him, by faith, and repents of their sins.

I saw Him after His resurrection! Within forty days after He had risen, He appeared to over 500 people! It was clear to me then; I understood what had happened and why. Jesus’ life had not been taken from Him; He had given it freely! He had borne our punishment that we so greatly deserve for our sin, in order to deliver us from hell and prepare a place for us in Heaven!

That’s where He is now, in Heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father’s throne! He had been speaking to us at Bethany. When He lifted up His arms to bless us, He suddenly ascended up into Heaven in a cloud! While we watched in wonder and awe, two angels appeared unto us and said,

Voice of Angel: *(The choir moves quickly to the stage area and faces the audience, looking up as if seeing Jesus ascend and hearing the angel.)* “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus,

which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven.” (*The choir sings “**The Hallelujah Chorus**” or “**To God Be The Glory.**”*)

End Scene
(*Lights down*)

