

PAUL

A DRAMA IN TWO ACTS

BY

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CHARACTERS

Paul

Peter

Barnabus

Johnmark

Rachel

Miriam

James

Thomas

Mark

Roman Lawyer

High Priest

Ananias

First Man

First Woman

Second Man

Second Woman

Voice

Narrators

Sound Design

Demons/CounterEnsemble (The Greek

Chorus-All Actors

.

Act 1

SCENE 1 PRELUDE JERUSALEM 33 AD

The stage is dark. All dialogue off stage.

DEMONSTRATORS

DEATH! DEATH! DEATH!

SAUL

Death for the desecrators of the Lord!

DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)

DEATH!

SAUL

Justice at last!

DEMONSTRATORS

Justice at last! Justice! Justice at last! Justice at last!

SAUL

A lesson to all!

DEMONSTRATORS

A lesson to all! A lesson to all! A lesson to all!

FIRST MAN

Blessed be the God of Israel.

DEMONSTRATORS

Blessed be the God of Israel! Blessed be the God of Israel!

SAUL

No more blasphemy!

DEMONSTRATORS

No more blasphemy! No more blasphemy!

FIRST WOMAN

May the evil heresy die!

DEMONSTRATORS

DEATH! DEATH! DEATH!

SAUL

Long live Israel!

DEMONSTRATORS

Long live Israel! Long live Israel!

SAUL

Long live Israel and the Roman Empire!

SCENE 2 TARSUS SAUL'S TENT THAT
MORNING

A sign reading SAUL'S TENTS hangs from a wall. Another sign reads ALL SALES IN SHEKELS AND ARE FINAL. SEVERAL WHIPS hang from a wall. Rachel enters carrying a bag and examines the room, and shakes her head.

RACHEL

That man will never change!

She wipes her hand on several pieces of furniture to see if there is any dust.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Not a spec of dust! Remarkable! There is no one like Saul of Tarsus in all Israel.

She glances at several books on the table.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Greek, Latin, Hebrew. Is there a language he doesn't know?

Saul of Tarsus enters with a whip
and a sword.

SAUL

There are at least thirty languages I do not know. Those three are the only ones worth knowing. Especially Greek.

RACHEL

I understand that you have even read the works of all the great Greek scholars.

SAUL

Only Plato, Aristotle, Thucidides, Socrates, and a few others.

RACHEL

What are you off to this morning?

SAUL

Serving my Lord.

RACHEL

You are always serving our Lord.

SAUL

By destroying the lunatics.

RACHEL

Why do those people bother you so much?

SAUL

We got that evil Stephen this morning.

RACHEL

Never heard of him.

SAUL

One of the lunatics.

RACHEL

Which lunatics?

SAUL

Which lunatics she asks!

RACHEL

Jerusalem is loaded with lunatics.

SAUL

The followers of the "divine one."

RACHEL

Oh, them. They'll probably disappear.

SAUL

Don't you care about how these people can destroy our lives!
To you as a Jew, and to me as both a Roman and a Jew.

RACHEL

They're harmless, but very silly. All they preach is love.
All they want is death.

SAUL

They are a cancer on society. Take this Stephen

Martyr! He committed the worst
treason!

RACHEL

Against the Romans?

SAUL

Far worse! AGAINST PROVIDENCE! You should have heard the
hard neck. I knew him well once. He turned into a monster.

RACHEL

I understand he was a good man who fell for the lifestyle of
the those people.

SAUL

This morning he defended himself by giving a dreary historical account of the Nation's founding, raising his finger as he blamed Israelites for a whole litany of sins.

RACHEL

He may have lost his mind!

SAUL

He concluded by calling us betrayers and murderers. The demonstrators threw him at my feet after stoning him. He cried out something like Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. He then died.

RACHEL

A little heresy never bothers me.

SAUL

You never heard of their founder, this Jesus?

RACHEL

Of course. Along with every cult passing through Jerusalem. You seemed to have had some pity when you saw his mother weeping before him?

SAUL

Poor woman. To have such a shameless self indulgent megalomaniac for a son.

RACHEL

I remember him as a troubled youth. I understand he ran away from home when he was 12. His father Joseph was a good carpenter. His mother did her best. Her only son. He had no consideration for her.

SAUL

But, she contributed to the falsehood by never denying that Greek myth about a God coming down from heaven and conceiving a God-like with a human mother. Had she done so number one megalomaniac son would have been alive.

RACHEL

I heard a lot of rumors about his birth. My mother told me Joseph may not even have been the father of the child.

SAUL

Well the cult says he was born of a virgin. Ha!

RACHEL

Suppose it's true?

SAUL

My dear cousin, That's nonsense.

RACHEL

But he performed all those miracles!

SAUL

I don't believe a one of them.

RACHEL

So many witnesses!

SAUL

I don't believe a one of them.

RACHEL

O, well...

SAUL

He only appeals to the lowest classes.

RACHEL

Not true. Look at Nicodemus and all those very wealthy women.

SAUL

Nicodemus lost his mind. What is the appeal? You tell me!!!

RACHEL

Eternal life. Something that we don't give them.

SAUL

I'M A PHARISEE. I believe in eternal life. But I can't make divine promises. Neither can that megalomaniac! That man claimed he was God! Blasphemy! Blasphemy! Blasphemy!

RACHEL

Don't get so upset!

SAUL

Enough on the subject. What can I do for you, my kinswoman?

RACHEL

Nothing. I want to pay what I owe you.

SAUL

What do you owe?

RACHEL

I thought you kept good records.

SAUL

I do.

RACHEL

Then I owe you 4 pieces of silver for the tent my dear deceased husband purchased two years ago.

SAUL

Can you afford 4 pieces of silver?

RACHEL

Why.... Of course.

SAUL

Liar!

RACHEL

I am not a liar!

SAUL

Tell me the truth. Can you afford it!

RACHEL

No.

SAUL

Then the debt is paid.

RACHEL

I won't accept charity.

SAUL

Be on your way. Or I shall throw you out of here.

RACHEL

You're really are a good man, Saul.

SAUL

Spend the money on your family. Buy a new garment for your son. He can certainly use one.

RACHEL

No one knows all the good you have done.

SAUL

I want no praise. Only praise God.

RACHEL

Saul needs some praise too.

SAUL

Do not be silly!

RACHEL

Does all else go well by you?

SAUL

All is fine! (Sighs) But I am still plagued by my demons.

RACHEL

In each life a little rain must fall.

SAUL

Not rain, just my weaknesses. Thorns in my side.

RACHEL

I wish I could help.

SAUL

Only Providence can help.

RACHEL

You've always been vague about these thorns.

SAUL

Providence has been very kind. That is why a thorn in the flesh was given to me, an angel of Satan, to beat me, to keep me from being too elated. Three times I begged the Lord to remove this thorn, that it might leave me, But he did not.

RACHEL

What does that mean?

SAUL

Enough questions!

RACHEL

I know what you need, Saul.

SAUL

What?

RACHEL

A wife.

SAUL

Don't be ridiculous!

RACHEL

Many a nice girl would be happy to be your wife. Circumcised on the eighth day, well educated, financially successful, of the race of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrew parentage, in observance of the law a Pharisee. And a Roman Citizen at a very young age!

SAUL

I'm too old.

RACHEL

That's what you told me ten years ago.

SAUL

It is only the love of the Law which matters.

RACHEL

Oh, come on.

SAUL

I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and constraints, for when I am weak, then I am strong

RACHEL

Why should Providence punish such a faithful servant!

SAUL

You have so little faith!

RACHEL

Now let me ask you a question.

SAUL

Yes?

RACHEL

(Looking into the distance) What if that imposter IS the Son of...

Saul advances toward her.

SAUL

You blaspheme!

RACHEL (

I was only wondering if...

SAUL

They must all be put to death.

RACHEL

If they die as martyrs, and the megalomaniac was right, they will.....

SAUL

(Angrily) You have a sense of humor!

RACHEL

Why do you hate these lunatics so much?

SAUL

First, it's a a cult. Second, they are cannibals. They now brag about eating HIS body and drinking his blood and call it something like a sacrament. Three They commit treason.

RACHEL

But....

SAUL

They equate this megalomaniac to the Divine One and came up with something called the Holy Spirit. Worse, Israelites are now expected to pray to three beings, not one! The Father, The Son, and something new called the Holy Spirt.

RACHEL

A bit odd!

SAUL

Yesterday's fruits and nuts are spreading the religion today. His chief disciple denied him thrice the crucifixion.

RACHEL

I understand it was embarrassing to watch that denial.

SAUL

This Peter guy is quite a dope.

RACHEL

Worse. Those two flighty, arrogant brothers, James and John, are my neighbors. They aren't worth a hill of beans, and their mother is quite a shrew.

SAUL

If you had a mother like theirs you wouldn't be worth a hill of beans either.

RACHEL

The worst one was that crooked tax collector, .

SAUL

He was corrupt even by tax collector standards.

RACHEL

Then there's Simon the Zealot. Quite a rabble rouser.

SAUL

And so on. And then the prostitute who kept following them around.

RACHEL

Actually, I understand the only decent one, that Judas guy, took his own life after he came to his senses.

SAUL

But the devils made him feel so guilty that he hung himself.

RACHEL

Don't let these rabble rousers bother you.

SAUL

I still have that uneasy feeling. But thank Providence for the Law.

RACHEL

But..

SAUL

The law is all we have!

RACHEL

And love?

SAUL

Love is ambiguous. The Law is what counts

The High Priest of Jerusalem
enters.

HIGH PRIEST

Saul, our cherished Saul!

SAUL

I am honored that you have come to my humble tent shop.

HIGH PRIEST

Your tent shop is not humble. You are the most successful
tent maker in Jerusalem. You know why I have come?

SAUL

They must be stopped! Each one of them must die.

RACHEL

But they ARE fellow Israelites.

SAUL

All the more reason why they must be dealt with harshly.

HIGH PRIEST

There is much difficulty brewing in Damascus. If anyone can
put an end to this nonsense it is you, Saul

SAUL

I need letters to the synagogues in Damascus.

HIGH PRIEST

Already done! Truly you are a righteous man, Saul.

SAUL

When I return, I must pay a visit to the home of that
fisherman and his fellow lunatics.

RACHEL

But have some pity.

PAUL

I will destroy every last one of them.

DARK OFFSTAGE

Peter, Mark, James, Thomas, and Mark can be heard rushing in from the outside, all nearly out of breath. Peter slams the door shut.

PETER (O.S.)

We made it!

JAMES (O.S.)

I think we lost them!

MARK (O.S.)

I'm not sure.

THOMAS

Keep your voice down.

JAMES (O.S.)

The worst of the Pharisees.

THOMAS (O.S.)

Lord Save us from the tent maker.

PETER (O.S.)

We must love our enemies.

MARK

Every rule has its exception.

The knock becomes louder. They all run into a hiding place. The knock continues.

SAUL (O.S.)

Open up! Open Up!

THOMAS

(Whispering)

Save us from the Devil, Lord

ALL

Amen.

SCENE 3 THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

Sound of a horse trotting is heard
offstage.

SAUL (O.S.)

My horse must be thirsty! Look at the way he's jumping!

What is that light from the sky!

The horse neighs.

SAUL (CONT'D)

(Screaming) Stop! What has gotten into you. What is that
light! What is that light. THAT LIGHT! WHOA THERE. WHOA
THERE. YOU HAVE NEVER ACTED LIKE THIS BEFORE!

The horse neighs again only louder.
And then falls to the ground. We
hear a crash.

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

WHOA! WHOA! HELP ME GOD! HELP ME GOD! HELP....

Saul falls to the ground. We hear
thunder and lightning And then harp
music for about a minute.

SAUL (CONT'D)

Oh this deep, deep slumber. It feels so good. I am at peace.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Sleep, Saul. Sleep.

SAUL

I must be on my way. I have much work to do in Damascus.

WOMAN'S VOICE

S-s-s-s-s-s.

SAUL

Who are you and why are you hissing me!

WOMAN'S VOICE

Sleep, Saul of Tarsus.

Harp music begins again.

SAUL

Oh, what a beautiful sleep.

WOMAN'S VOICE

You have slept nine hours.

SAUL

I feel so much better.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Good.

SAUL

My head! My head! My head! My pain.

WOMAN'S VOICE

My pain.

SAUL

Stop it.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Stop it.

SAUL

Go away!.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Go away.

SAUL

Woman. Leave.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Woman, Leave!

SAUL

Stop torturing me! Lord help me. Destroy this demon!

WOMAN'S VOICE

Destroy this demon!

SAUL

Stop the pain! Stop the pain! My head! My head!

WOMAN'S VOICE

Mild compared to the pain endured by Stephen and the Nazorean!

SAUL

Help! I am powerless!

WOMAN'S VOICE

You are powerless.

SAUL

I see twelve men approaching me.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Who are they?

SAUL

I do not know.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Look closer.

SAUL

They are dressed in clothing from a different day.

WOMAN'S VOICE

As they should be. They are the twelve prophets.

SAUL

Why are they in this dream.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Do you doubt that they foretold the coming of the Messiah.

SAUL

I do not.

WOMAN'S VOICE

How many references to his coming by the prophets

SAUL

16

WOMAN'S VOICE

And the Psalms?

SAUL

Eighteen.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Be still and know that he is God. You have a choice.

SAUL

Suddenly I feel a chill in my spine.

WOMAN'S VOICE

Sleep, Saul.

Harp music. Then Saul reawakens.

SAUL

I suddenly feel a happiness I have never known before!

WOMAN'S VOICE

It is the beginning of a new life.

SAUL

I AM HAPPY! I AM HAPPY. A JOY I HAVE NEVER KNOWN. Do I hear a voice.

VOICE

Be still and know that I am God.

SAUL

And about my horse?

VOICE

He is well. Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

SAUL

This voice sounds familiar.

VOICE

I am the Nazarean whom you are persecuting, ' Can you stand on your feet?

SAUL

Who are you?

VOICE

You will be my greatest apostle.

SAUL

Why me, Lord?

VOICE

(Laughing)

You were chosen at your mother's womb. I am sending you to open their eyes and turn humans from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.

SAUL

Me! Who are you?

VOICE (O.S.)

Saul of Tarsus after three days you will see.

SAUL

Three days?

VOICE

(Laughing)

Three days. Familiar? Go forth. Your work will spread through the four corners of the earth and for all time.

We hear harp music in the background.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Ananias of Damascus!!

ANANIAS (O.S.)
 Is this a dream !

VOICE
 It is I.

ANANIAS
 Who are you?

VOICE
 I AM that I am.

ANANIAS
 Yes, Lord.

VOICE
 I am the Nazorean.

ANANIAS
 Yes, Lord.

VOICE
 You are familiar with Saul of Tarsus?

ANANIAS
 No more evil man in the world.

VOICE
 He was my enemy too. Our enemies can sometimes be our
 greatest friends

ANANIAS
 Am I missing something! We should recruit our worst enemies
 to spread the Word!

VOICE
 Sometimes. .

ANANIAS
 Yes Lord.

VOICE

You have a mission. Lay your hands on him, that he may regain his sight.

ANANIAS

Lord, I have heard from many sources about this man, what evil things he has done to your holy ones in Jerusalem.

And here he has authority from the chief priests to imprison all who call upon your name.

VOICE

Go, for this man is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before Gentiles, kings, and Israelites, and I will show him what he will have to suffer for my name.

ANANIAS

Yes, Lord

VOICE

He will interpret my Word to the four corners of the earth.

ANANIAS

Such a mean spirited messenger.

VOICE

And that is who must have the backbone to spread that message.

SAUL'S HOME (OFF STAGE)

Saul's is seated, obviously blind. Ananias walks in and touches Saul.

ANANIAS

Saul, my brother, the Lord has sent me, that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Suddenly Saul jumps up

SAUL

The scales have fallen from my eyes. THE SCALES HAVE FALLEN FROM MY EYES! I CAN SEE!

ANANIAS

Saul! Saul!

SAUL

Who are you?

ANANIAS

I am Ananias!

SAUL

What are you doing here?

ANANIAS

So that you may restore the sight of humanity.

SAUL

I once wanted to persecute you. You were high on my list.

I do not want to persecute you now!

ANANIAS

Why not?

SAUL

I am no longer Saul.

ANANIAS

Nothing more need be said. You will become one of the great leaders of our religion.

SAUL

If this is the Lord's will. So be it.

SCENE 4 APOSTLES HOME A WEEK LATER

Peter, Thomas, and James are seated. Mark rushes in.

MARK

I have some terrific news. He's had a concussion!!! He's had a concussion!

PETER

Who?

MARK

The only person in the world I would wish that upon.

PETER

Who had a concussion!

MARK

That tent maker.

ALL

Where?

MARK

Outside Damascus.

ALL

HURRAH! HURRAH! YEA! YEA!

PETER

Is he dead?

THOMAS

It must be God's will. .

MARK

You can not wish that on anyone. Remember what the Master said.

THOMAS

If it happened however.....

JAMES

Then it is God's will and that is another story

THOMAS

Ananias is coming over shortly. Wait til he hears the good news.

PETER

But still let us love our enemies!

JAMES

Each rule has an exception.

Ananias walks in.

PETER

Come in, our friend. We have some news.

ANANIAS

And so do I. I have a guest who will be arriving shortly. A new convert.

MARK

Blessed be the Lord.

JAMES

Hallelujah!

THOMAS

We gain more converts every day.

MARK

Who is he?

ANANIAS

It's a surprise.

A timid knock is heard at the door.

PETER

Can someone answer the door.

ANANIAS

Our convert has arrived.

THOMAS

We have some good news for you .

Thomas answers the door, begins screaming, and runs.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

IT'S SAUL OF TARSUS!

Immediately all except Ananias flee
to upper rooms

PETER

A BETRAYAL. YOU OF ALL PEOPLE, Ananias!

THOMAS (O.S.)

ANOTHER JUDAS ISCARIOT!

MARK (O.S.)

Ananias, where are your thirty pieces of silver!

THOMAS (O.S.)

Show this murderer out of this house.

MARK(O.S.)

At least Judas only betrayed the Master.

ANANIAS

Be at peace. Gentleman. He's one of us now.

THOMAS(O.S.)

You expect us to believe that?

MARK

Saul of Tarsus would be the last man on earth that the Master
would choose to spread The Word .

ANANIAS

You are not God.

SAUL

Peace, my Brothers in Christ.

ANANIAS

As you were Chosen by God, so has Saul of Tarsus, now Paul,
has been chosen an Apostle by God.

MARK

We were chosen when Jesus was alive.

ANANIAS

So what! The Master lives forever. Do you lack faith!

Silence pervades.

SAUL

Now come or I shall find you!

ANANIAS

Come Peter. Don't be a coward again.

SAUL

COME. I WILL NOT HARM YOU! I SAID COME!

The Apostles begin filtering into
the room

SAUL (CONT'D)

Yes. I am a new man filled with the Holy spirit

JAMES

You are Saul of Tarsus!

SAUL

I am not. Saul of Tarsus is dead!

THOMAS

You look and sound just like him!

MARK

Be silent or he will kill you.

THOMAS

I will die for our Lord.

SAUL

But not at my hands. We will die together for our Lord.

PETER

Are you not Saul of Tarsus!

SAUL

I am not!

PETER

You are Saul of Tarsus, the man who has been persecuting us!

SAUL

Yes he did, but Saul of Tarsus died.

PETER

You look and sound like him as Thomas said.

SAUL

LET ME REPEAT! I am a new man. The old Saul is gone. The new Paul is a servant of Christ...and therefore an Apostle.

PETER

Keep your tongues!

ANANIAS

Have you no faith!

PETER

Not in our worst enemy.!

ANANIAS

Our Lord is speaking to us. Now accept him.

MARK

Would the Lord choose this evil man to be an apostle. A murderer.

ANANIAS

I ask each of you! Who is our greatest prophet.

ALL

Moses!

ANANIAS

Was he not a murderer! He murdered an Egyptian. And whom did God chose to be our king?

ALL

David!

ANANIAS

Need I tell what he did to Bathseba's husband Uriah? Who knows how many other murders he committed. And yet David and Moses were chosen by God. And so is Paul!

PAUL

With you, I will die for our Lord.

PETER

Who will kill YOU!

PAUL

The Saul types. Yes, I had the concussion. And then HE appeared to me. I have a special commission from the Lord.

ANANIAS

Hear him. Come out.

Nothing happens. Silence. They whisper.

PAUL

There is no back door.

ANANIAS

Come. Do not be a coward again Peter.

PAUL

I was once your greatest enemy. I am now your closest friend. Listen.

PETER

Come.

PAUL

I shall spread the word of Jesus. We will create an army of followers.

The disciples come in .

PETER

Explain.

PAUL

We must put on our full armor. We will all take on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

PETER

These words sound alarmingly like the masters own words.

PAUL

Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

Each of the Apostles walk closer
and listen intently.

PETER

I like what I hear. But the devil can play tricks

THOMAS

Should I ask you to remember Judas Iscariot.

JAMES

I have no doubts.

ANANIAS

And You should have none either, Thomas. Remember what the Lord said to you once.

THOMAS

Saul of Tarsus is not the Lord.

PAUL

I am not worthy of holding his sandal. I am his Apostle on earth. And I will die for him.

PETER

He seems to speak from the heart

PAUL

Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the word, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. .

PETER

You are convincing, but can you understand their reluctance?

THOMAS

Only last week you tried to kill us.

PAUL

Today is a new day. It is I who will be persecuted with you. Are you ready to accept me.

THOMAS

Tell us who Jesus is.

Saul thinks for a moment. Then
rises and begins speaking slowly.

PAUL

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, For through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see- such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. He holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

They all stand in amazement.

MARK

And how will you know how to interpret what Christ meant?

PAUL

The Spirit will come upon me. Now we must bring all the Israelites to the New Word of love, The Holy Spirit. I am a Benjamite, of the Tribe of Saul.

MARK

Our first king!

PAUL

But he failed and was replaced by David. As Saul was chosen by the Lord, I too have been chosen by God. As Paul I can not fail. The Word will be spread to the four corners of the earth. So help me God, I WILL NOT FAIL!

MARK

So be it.

ALL

AMEN!

They all embrace Paul.

SCENE 5 PAUL'S LIVING QUARTERS IN
EPHESUS

Paul rushes in and slams the door
as agitators shout out offstage.

FIRST MAN (O.S.)

DEATH TO THE TRAITOR! DEATH TO THE INFIDELS!

DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)

Our ally is now our enemy. Death! Death! Death!

SECOND MAN (O.S.)

Let him speak! Tell us about sin and how we can be saved.

WOMAN(O.S.)

Let us leave this screw nut alone. We have business to attend. May he rot.

Barnabas and Johnmark knock on the
door.

PAUL

Who is it!

BARNABAS

It is I, Barnabas, and I have my cousin Johnmark with me.
Let us in.

Paul opens the door. He and
Barnabas embrace

PAUL

I thought I saw you among the demonstrators.

BARNABAS

Your oratory becomes more inspiring as the years go by.

PAUL

They are not my words. They are the words put into my mouth.
And you, I have heard but good things about your work in
Jerusalem. What brings you to Ephesus?

BARNABAS

I was sent by the brethren.

PAUL

I can use the help.

BARNABAS

I also came to introduce my cousin Johnmark here who is
not yet a believer.

PAUL

I have known you both since you were born. From the tribe
of Levi? Johnmark.

JOHNMARK

Yes Sir.

PAUL

So you have come to believe?

JOHNMARK

I am not sure.

PAUL

What doubts do you have?

JOHNMARK

Many. Not totally convinced.

PAUL

Did you see the miracles he performed.

JOHNMARK

I did.

PAUL

Did you see physical healings.

JOHNMARK

I did.

PAUL

And the exorcisms?

JOHNMARK

I heard about them

PAUL

And walking on water?

JOHNMARK

Rumors persist.

PAUL

You don't believe them?

JOHNMARK

I do.

PAUL

And yet you do not believe? And the walking on water?

JOHNMARK

At the time I considered the rumors nonsense.

PAUL

Surely you know my story!

JOHNMARK

I do. But why have I not had such a revelation

PAUL

Faith comes from above. You have not yet been selected, but prayer and persistence may change this

JOHNMARK

I am puzzled. You puzzle me.

PAUL

I puzzle YOU!

JOHNMARK

I stood behind you during the crucifixion.

PAUL

So what!

JOHNMARK

You had more hatred in your eyes than anyone in the demonstrators.

PAUL

That man was not I.

JOHNMARK

Who was it then?

PAUL

Saul of Tarsus.

JOHNMARK

The spelling is different. Is it the same animal?

PAUL

I am born again, and unless you are born again there is no hope of salvation. THAT IS WHEN FAITH WILL COME!

JOHNMARK

You have always had dogmatic ideas. Once it was the Jews who were all right and now its the Jews who are all wrong.

PAUL

Wrong! Once I said the Jews had it all right. I say the same thing again.

BARNABAS

Perhaps we should leave?

PAUL

No stay.

BARNABAS

I thought he was of the belief.

PAUL

He is!

BARNABAS

Why?

PAUL

Because he's a believer. Only he lacks faith. And that will come

JOHNMARK

No one ever accused Saul of Tarsus of being a fool

PAUL

But he was a fool.

JOHNMARK

Yes, I am a believer. But with one doubt.

BARNABAS

You had never expressed this to me before.

PAUL

What is that doubt?

JOHNMARK

The Resurrection.

BARNABAS

The Resurrection! That is central to our belief!

JOHNMARK

An obstruction which I must surmount

PAUL

Yes, which you must surmount.

BARNABAS

Why the doubt? You saw the miracles, you saw the exorcisms, you heard the wisdom from above, and you heard his word.

JOHNMARK

It pains me. I suffer

PAUL

Suffering is at the heart of what it means to be Christian.

JOHNMARK

God does not plan pain for us.

PAUL

Our pain and suffering disciplines us unto the truth. I know I have my own thorn by my side at all times

JOHNMARK

I so want to believe

BARNABAS

Then what is the problem? Why do you not believe. From the outset, Jesus' ministry was rife with miracles. He changed water into wine, he healed a royal official's son without even seeing or touching the lad, he healed a man who had been paralyzed for thirty-eight years. He also walked on water, multiplied fishes and loaves, and created sight in a man born blind. And finally, as the climax of all his miracles, he raised a man from death.

JOHNMARK

What I have heard for years.

PAUL

What is that?

JOHNMARK

That the whole resurrection thing was a fraud.

PAUL

A fraud!

JOHNMARK

Through the years I have heard that Peter and James helped him escape and that actually he fled along with Mary Magdalen

PAUL

Idiocy! What would Peter have to gain by concocting this plot!

JOHNMARK

I don't know.

PAUL

Why would Peter give up a lucrative profession to spread the divinity of a megalomaniac.

JOHNMARK

I once heard you utter the same thing.

PAUL

I have seen the light and you know my story.

JOHNMARK

I can not get this thought out of my mind

PAUL

You must pray and keep praying it will pass.

Peter enters. They all stand.

PETER

I have heard everything you said, Johnmark. Who would put that evil thought in your mind.

JOHNMARK

I want your faith.

PETER

Trust my word. I was there, as were James and John. Those words ring out in my mind This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. They will ring in my mind through eternity. I trembled with awe and fear.

JOHNMARK

But the rumors?

PAUL

What rumors!

JOHNMARK

Oh, I spoke too much.

PAUL

You spoke not enough!

JOHNMARK

I do not want to seem disrespectful.

BARNABAS

You're with friends, Johnmark! Speak your mind!

JOHNMARK

(Clears throat) (beat) ...That it was all a dream.

BARNABAS

A dream! All three men had the same dream at the same time.

JOHNMARK

True it does not seem reasonable.

PAUL

Then why do you not believe it?

JOHNMARK

The new Covenant is confusing.

PAUL

Have we not explained well enough for you?

JOHNMARK

Yes.

PAUL

Explain one thing to us.

JOHNMARK

Yes?

PAUL

Why are we all willing to die for our belief.

JOHNMARK

Because you have faith.

PAUL

Don't you want eternal life?

JOHNMARK

Off course. But anybody can make a hollow promise.

BARNABAS

This doubt of yours is one I have never heard before.

PAUL

The promise?

JOHNMARK

The promise doesn't count

BARNABAS

We must go. I'm sorry..

PAUL

No, Stay.

BARNABAS

Why!

PAUL

He will make the best of all followers.

BARNABAS

Why?

PAUL

Because he doubts?

PETER

Because he doubts!

PAUL

Because he doubts!

PETER

Surely...

PAUL

The strongest doubters become the strongest believers.
The Spirit fell upon me by a light that blinded me! I fell
and had a concussion. That Spirit has not fallen upon
Johnmark.

BARNABAS

We all have our own epiphanies.

PAUL

Few are as dramatic as mine. And so we must pray that Faith
will be bestowed upon our young friend. Agreed?

PETER

Amen.

BARNABAS

Amen

JOHNMARK

Amen.

PAUL

I will die for Christ. So will Peter. So will Barnabas.
And so will you. If you remain with us.

JOHNMARK

I remain!

PETER

My son.

PAUL

You can do us much good. You are young and sturdy.

JOHNMARK

I will stay with you unto the end, and give my life To
Christ. So help me God!

They embrace!

PAUL

Barnabas, I remember when you came to Tarsus to seek after my
vision and brought me to Antioch. We attracted great crowds.
You were a good man and full of the Spirit and of faith and a
great multitude was added to the Lord.

BARNABAS

But I had you to help me. Do you remember what the Spirit
said to them?

PAUL

Set apart for me Barnabas and Paul."

BARNABAS

May he say the same for Johnmark.

SCENE 6 A MONTH LATER A STADIUM IN
GREECE

Paul. Barnabas, Johnmark, stand
in the middle of the stadium.

FIRST MAN

What do you know about our religion!

PAUL

I know all about the Stoics, the Cynics, the mystery religions, and the Greek and Roman Gods. I know all religions

FIRST MAN

But you are a Jew. The Greeks do not proselytize. Nor do we Jews.

PAUL

This is a new day. This is the new Judaism.

DEMONSTRATORS

Boo! Boo! Boo!

PAUL

Will you please listen to what I say?

DEMONSTRATORS

No! No! No!

PAUL

I bring you a message of eternal salvation.

DEMONSTRATORS

Ha! Ha! Ha!

PAUL

I preach the Word of Love and Peace

DEMONSTRATORS

An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth

PAUL

The new word is a repeat of the old one, but the emphasis is on love.

SECOND MAN

Both the Code of Hammurabi and Moses say the law of retribution works.

PAUL

But brings no satisfaction. That is why a saviour came to this world. To preach love.

DEMONSTRATORS

Ha, ha ha.

SECOND WOMAN

Why can't we see God?

DEMONSTRATORS

Ha. Ha. Ha.

PAUL

We've had some exceptions.

DEMONSTRATORS

Who!

PAUL

Abraham, Adam, Jacob, Solomon, Nathan, Isaiah,

FIRST MAN

Seems like the whole world. But...

PAUL

Right.

FIRST WOMAN

Where is God!

PAUL

Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet."

MAN

Then you are talking about two gods. One named Jesus and the other named the resurrection.

PAUL

You misunderstand. .

DEMONSTRATORS

Boo! Boo! Boo!

PAUL

(Whispering) Help me God.

DEMONSTRATORS
Give us an eternal life. We want it.

PAUL
God came to you.

DEMONSTRATORS
When? When

PAUL
Not long ago. He preached throughout Palestine.

DEMONSTRATORS
That Jesus story!

PAUL
God has been with us through all ages.

DEMONSTRATORS
Says who! Says Who!

PAUL
Says God.

DEMONSTRATORS
Ha! Ha! Ha!

PAUL
And you still did not believe in him. Do you want to hear?

DEMONSTRATORS
You commit blasphemy! Hang him! Hang him!

PAUL
I do not blaspheme!

DEMONSTRATORS
Hang him! Hang him!

The demonstrators move toward Paul,
but Johnmark steps in front of him

JOHNMARK

Do not come one step closer. You will regret it. Hear this man out. If you do not like what you hear, leave.

The demonstrators move back.

PAUL

What do you fear!

DEMONSTRATORS'

For our children, our brethren!

PAUL

I come in the name of Jesus.

DEMONSTRATORS'

Kill him Kill him!

FIRST WOMAN

And about women

PAUL

I believe in equality

SECOND WOMAN

You seem to hate women

PAUL

I do not

FIRST MAN

We can not kill a Roman Citizen.

DEMONSTRATORS

Then Go! Go! Go!

FIRST WOMAN

Another question for you.

PAUL

Ask!

WOMAN

I am a Greek. I understand that you condemn relationships between members of the same sex. We encourage such relationships.

PAUL

Why?

FIRST MAN

A part of our tradition!

PAUL

It is sinful!

FIRST MAN

I am a Roman. Such relationships helps us control our population growth, and bond older and younger men in friendship.

PAUL

An abomination in the eyes of both God and man. Do not be deceived; neither fornicators nor idolaters nor adulterers nor boy prostitutes nor sodomites nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor robbers will inherit the kingdom of God.

SECOND MAN

Not our men and not our God. My wife is a Roman where the practice is widespread. Why do you condemn!

PAUL

Have you heard of the story of Sodom and Gomorrah.

SECOND WOMAN

Just a fable.

PAUL

I ask you to trust what God has written in your heart.

FIRST MAN

I have, and it's different from what he wrote in your heart.

PAUL

I will pray for you. .

DEMONSTRATORS

Your beliefs are not our beliefs! Boo! Boo! Boo

FIRST WOMAN

Another question, oh Prophet?

PAUL

I am not a prophet, I am a disciple of Christ.

FIRST WOMAN

You speak of love and charity What are they?

PAUL

Charity is patient, is kind: charity envies not, deals not
 perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeks not
 her own, is not provoked to anger, thinks no evil: Bears
 all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures
 all things. Charity never fails. There remain faith, hope,
 and charity, these three: but the greatest of these is
 charity.

WOMAN

That is the message I like to hear

DEMONSTRATORS

PAUL! PAUL! PAUL!

JOHNMARK

We must now take our leave.

DEMONSTRATORS

STAY! STAY!

PAUL

We shall return. Now we must go.

JOHNMARK

(Whispering) Your brilliance comes from above, Brother .Paul

PAUL

I am insane.

JOHNMARK

What!

PAUL

I am insane with the freedom and love of God which I have.

BARNABAS

Your joy is an inspiration to all of us.

PAUL

Not to all. You hear how the demonstrators change from one moment to the next. What do the Levites say about me.

JOHNMARK

We'd rather not say sir.

PAUL

Come on now.

BARNABAS

They think you're...

PAUL

Crazy. They are right. I am speaking as a fool. I am talking like a madman. If only you would put up with a little foolishness from me! Please put up with me.

BARNABAS

But you don't sound mad when we hear you preaching.

PAUL

But I am mad.

JOHNMARK

You also seem sturdy.

PAUL

I have been beaten, stoned, faced robbers floods hungered, felt thirst, and faced dangers from Gentiles danger from Jews.

JOHNMARK

You have remarkable fortitude.

PAUL

I am weak. If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. All for the love of God.

JOHNMARK

I have something to share with you.

PAUL

Yes?

JOHNMARK

I now accept the resurrection and wish to be baptized.

Barnabas, Paul, and Johnmark
embrace.

SCENE 7 HOME OF THE APOSTLES

Peter, Mark, James, and Thomas are
reading. Paul enters the room.
They do not look up.

PAUL

Then the rumblings are true!

MARK

Our Brother! What have you done to us!

PAUL

I am fulfilling my mission. We have more new believers than
there are stars in the sky.

PETER

In fact you have brought in hundreds of thousands into the
new belief. We are reaching the four corners of the earth!
Romans, Greeks, Ephesians, Galatians Syrians ..

PAUL

Stop! What is your point!

PETER

The mission you were granted. Is it from on HIGH OR from the Master or SAUL OF TARSUS!

PAUL

From the LORD!

MARK

So you say!

PETER

Brother Paul. What have you done!!!! The Master sent us, those he knew and ate with and slept with, to plant the vine in the midst of God's Chosen people. These promises were made to our forefathers, both the patriarchs, the prophets, and the Wisdom writers.

PAUL

You are right. These promises were made .

THOMAS

We were sent to be a light to unto the Gentiles. NOT TO MAKE THE GENTILES God's CHOSEN PEOPLE.

PETER

Paul, You infer that Jews and gentiles are equals.

PAUL

Humanity is God's chosen race?

PETER

Brother Paul. We have had innumerable complaints and bitterness from your brethren of the strife and dissension you have caused.

PAUL

You do not want Gentiles to become followers of Christ?

PETER

I did not say that.

PAUL

What did you say?

PETER

We are willing to accept the Gentiles, but first they must convert.

PAUL

Says who.

PETER

The Master!

PAUL

Upholders of the first covenant have their laws. I am a Jew and will observe those laws.

PETER

And the Gentiles

PAUL

Did the Master say that they must observe our dietary laws and be circumcised?

PETER

He said that the old does not replace the new and vice versa

PAUL

Insofar as the ten commandments are concerned.

PETER

God selected the Jews as his own people.

PAUL

Dietary laws and circumcisions for our own, and each Christian regardless of background will have his own laws. The rest comes from the mouth of the Lord Did he not say go out and seek all nations?

PETER

Yes. But

PAUL

Yes but....

PETER

No but....

PAUL

There is your answer.

THOMAS

But you are constantly speaking for all Christians

PAUL

I have been commissioned to do so. But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not obliged to observe dietary laws.

PETER

We are not convinced.

PAUL

May I quote you Psalm 67: May your ways be known throughout the earth, your saving power among people everywhere. May the nations praise you, O God. Yes, may all the nations praise you. Let the whole world sing for joy.

MARK

That is your interpretation. You do David an injustice.

PAUL

Remember what Isaiah said. "I will also bless the foreigners who commit themselves to the LORD.

THOMAS

We disagree with your interpretation.

PAUL

We will discuss another day.

END OF ACT ONE

Act 2

SCENE 1 OUTSIDE CORINTH

Paul faces the demonstrators.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I come as a disciple of Christ and...

DEMONSTRATORS

Get out! Get out! Get out!

PAUL

What did I do to you! Dear brothers and sisters,

WOMAN

You are a devil!

PAUL

Where is that joyful and grateful spirit you felt when I last spoke to you? I am sure you would have taken out your own eyes and given them to me if it had been possible.

DEMONSTRATORS

You're our enemy! Those wiser than you are our teachers now.

PAUL

Have I now become your enemy because I am telling you the truth? Those false teachers are so eager to win your favor, but their intentions are not good. They are trying to shut you off from me so that you will pay attention only to them.

DEMONSTRATORS

Boo! Boo! Boo!

PAUL

Oh, my dear children! I feel as if I'm going through labor pains for you again, and they will continue until Christ is fully developed in your lives.

DEMONSTRATORS

Kill him!

PAUL

Why do you want to kill me?

MAN

You destroy our livelihood

DEMONSTRATORS

Down! Down! Down!

MAN

He does not respect us!

JOHNMARK

What shall we do

PAUL

The Holy Spirit will show us what to say, along with firmness, cajolery and flattery.

SECOND MAN

How do the dead rise again.

PAUL

That...

FIRST WOMAN

We do not believe you.

FIRST MAN

Or with what manner of body shall they come?

PAUL

That we do not yet know!

SECOND WOMAN

Well enough for the afterlife. But I have a few problems in this life.

PAUL

I am here to help you.

FIRST WOMAN

I have problems with my family. My husband beats me, our children ignore us. And we can hardly survive on the money we have.

PAUL

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her. A man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

FIRST WOMAN

Easier said than done.

PAUL

You must try.

FIRST WOMAN

That doesn't help me a bit. I have found a nice way to get him to behave himself by using our sacred writings.

PAUL

What sacred writings!

FIRST WOMAN

An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.

.

PAUL

Have you asked for your Rabbi's advice.

FIRST WOMAN

He's no help. He told me to be obedient.

I told him to take an extended swim
in the Dead Sea.

FIRST MAN

What do you say to wives?

PAUL

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church.

FIRST MAN

I have a wife who never does what I tell her to do.

PAUL

Aren't you the head of the household.

FIRST MAN

She says I am, and then does whatever she wants. I have even beaten her. And she still does whatever she wants.

PAUL

You must pray.

FIRST MAN

That doesn't work either. But look, have you ever gotten married.

PAUL

No I have not.

FIRST WOMAN

So if you have never married how can you advise married people what to do?

PAUL

I have been instructed by the Holy Spirit!

SECOND MAN

You know less about advising married than we know about advising single people. I have been both married and single.

PAUL

I will pray for you.

Peter enters.

PETER

Brother Paul?

PAUL

Peter what can I do for you?

PETER

I have changed my mind.

PAUL

About what.

PETER

The Gentiles

PAUL

And what brought this about?

PETER

The same force that you saw on the road to Damascus

PAUL

Another Ephiphany?

PETER

Yes.

PAUL

Tell me about it.

PETER

I was praying in Joppa and had a vision where I saw animals and birds. A voice told me to eat them which I rejected because I wanted nothing unclean in my mouth.

PAUL

A natural reaction

PETER

And the voice answered again from heaven: What God has made clean, do not call common.

PAUL

A revelation indeed.

PETER

And this was done three times. And when I had begun to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us also in the beginning.

PAUL

We have come upon a new day.

PETER

Thus God has told me to accept the Gentiles and that we are all one.

PAUL

Amen.

SCENE 2 THE APOSTLE'S HOME LATER
THAT WEEK

Paul enters with Peter. Thomas, Mark, and James are seated and writing.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Good evening, Gentlemen.

They continue writing. No one looks up.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You asked for a meeting with us.

They all remain silent.

PETER

You asked for a meeting. Now you have nothing to say!

THOMAS

We have had our own meeting.

PAUL

And what do you have to say?

MARK

We can not understand the new religion.

PAUL

Then YOU have a problem.

PETER

Why can you not understand what he says?

THOMAS

It's all intellectual gibberish.

MARK

Can't the message be made simple.

PAUL

Simple messages will not do for complex people.

THOMAS

Why not?

PAUL

They too are members of God's kingdom because for the curious, the keen of intellect, a simple answer will not do. Christ knows this. God granted me this intellect so that I can spread the Word of Jesus to the four corners of the earth. Give an example of what you do not understand

THOMAS

Nearly all of it.

PAUL

Give an example.

THOMAS

Here's an example---

Now thanks be to God, who always makes us triumph in Christ Jesus and manifests the odour of his knowledge by us in every

PETER

Stop! What can you not understand!

MARK

It's confusing. What is the odour of Christ!

PETER

He speaks in hyperbola! We are all Jewish.

MARK

Did the Master speak that way.

PETER

Heavens yes. The mustard seed...if these rocks could speak and so on. Are we not all on the same road. Jesus was hyperbola.

PAUL

State your case. Other than you're too stupid to understand Hebrew!

ALL EXCEPT PETER

Let us leave!

PETER

Now wait! Is this what the Lord would have wanted! Dissension!

ALL EXCEPT PETER AND PAUL

We had none while he was with us!

PETER (CONT'D)

That is not my recall. Do I sense a note of jealousy?

THOMAS

What are you saying

JAMES

We are not jealous.

PETER

The truth!

JAMES

First this man persecutes us.

THOMAS

Brutally and efficiently. The terror is still with me this day.

PETER

I thought we settled that years ago.

PAUL

Bearing resentments is not in keeping with the masters word.

THOMAS

Easy for you to say. It is you who is constantly lashing out at people and bear the worst resentment...

PAUL

I won't hear it.

JAMES

And then once you became an apostle, you dictated all we were to do.

PETER

Such as.

JAMES

Did away with our eating patterns which had been with us for a thousand years.

PETER

And we all agreed that the gentiles would be able to eat what they wanted.

PAUL

In no way did I dictate what we are to eat!

PETER

HOW NOT!

PAUL

AGAIN! Do you want the word of God sent to the four corners of the earth?

Silence

PETER

Answer his question

PAUL

True Brothers. May I ask again? How shall all we die?

ALL

Martyrdom!

PETER

Then let us forget our trifle grievances.

JAMES

Trifle grievances! You preach love. And practice hatred.

PAUL

What hatred.

MARK

People are for you or against you. The list of people is horrendous. One man did this, the coppersmith did that

PAUL

These people have hurt me and the cause.

PETER

INDEED@!

THOMAS

THEY HURT YOU not the faith.

PETER

They hurt both, but more hurt the faith. These men were evil!

PAUL

Brothers! Brothers!

MARK

The New Covenant is to turn lions into lambs. You came in like a lion, and you are still a lion.

PAUL

My words are not eloquent, but I preach the Word.

PETER

GENTLEMEN! GENTLEMEN! GENTLEMEN!

ALL

YES!

PETER

How am I going to die!

ALL

You will not...

PETER

Of course I am going to die! But how?

THOMAS

How are we to predict.

PETER

How did the Saviour say I would die.

THOMAS

By martyrdom.

PETER

And how are you going to die, Thomas!

THOMAS

The Same.

PETER

And the rest of you!

ALL

The same.

PAUL

And why are we all willing to die!

ALL

To spread the Word.

PETER

Then let us unite in spreading the Word.

ALL

We will try.

PETER

Amen.

SCENE 3 LYSTRA DAYTIME MONTHS
LATER

Paul and Barnabas stand before the
demonstrators.

DEMONSTRATORS

Death to the sorcerers. Destroy the cult!

MAN

Stop!

WOMAN

These are men of God

DEMONSTRATORS

Not our God! Not our God!

WOMAN

I have seen them cure cripples

DEMONSTRATORS

HA! HA! HA! HA!

SECOND MAN

Do not mock these men. I am a lifelong cripple. I have
never walked. But I am a believer since the first time I
heard you Paul. I have always been afraid to ask.

PAUL

I have seen you and know that you are a man of faith.

THIRD MAN

I believe with my whole hear and soul.

PAUL

STAND UPRIGHT ON YOUR FEET! OH MAN OF FAITH!

He leaps up and begins walking. The
demonstrators stand in amazement.

DEMONSTRATORS

Ah-h-h

PAUL

This is the intercession of the Holy Spirit.

DEMONSTRATORS

THEY ARE GODS! THEY ARE GODS! THEY ARE GODS

PAUL

WE ARE NOT GODS!

BARNABAS

WE ARE SIMPLY DISCIPLES OF CHRIST!

PAUL

HEAR US!

DEMONSTRATORS

The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men!

MAN

I CAN WALK! I CAN WALK!

DEMONSTRATORS

THESE MEN ARE GODS. Barnabas is really Jupiter.

BARNABAS

I AM NOT JUPITER!. We are slaves for Christ.

DEMONSTRATORS

JUPITER! JUPITER! JUPITER!

PAUL

You commit sin.

DEMONSTRATORS

HE IS MERCURY!

PAUL

Stop

DEMONSTRATORS

MERCURY! MERCURY! MERCURY! YOUR ARE MERCURY. THE CHIEF
SPEAKER

MAN IN THE DEMONSTRATORS

You have only done what Gods can
do.

WOMAN IN THE DEMONSTRATORS

Jupiter's priest will want to
bring oxen and garlands and offers
sacrifice with the people

PAUL

You men and women, why do you do these things? We also are
mortals, men like you. We simply want to convert you to
the Word of Jesus. Hear us.

DEMONSTRATORS

JUPITER! MERCURY! JUPITER! MERCURY!

PAUL

(Speaking to Barnabas) let us escape!

BARNABAS

At once!

PAUL

How foolish can men be.

BARNABAS

Don't ask. Just run.

PAUL

Where is Johnmark?

BARNABAS

I don't know.

SCENE 4 APOSTLES HOME

Paul is reading. James enters.

PAUL

My brother James.

JAMES

Good afternoon, Brothers Paul and Barnabas. I know you are all ready to leave on your next journey. But I must see you for a moment, Paul. The brethren is confused between what the Lord taught and what you are teaching. We must clarify before you leave.

PAUL

There can be no contradiction between the Lord and me. If I am in error, I will correct anything I have said. Speak on.

JAMES

I believe we have a difference on our approach to faith and works, Brother Paul, which is confusing the brethren.

PAUL

What might that be?

JAMES

I believe we are justified by works and you believe we are justified by faith. I disagree

PAUL

Abraham had faith in God, We are children of Abraham. Abraham foresaw in scripture, that God also justifies the Gentiles by faith. God then told Abraham: In you shall all nations be blessed.

JAMES

What good is it, my brother, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

PAUL

Yes!

JAMES

What! If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?

PAUL

I do not see a problem.

JAMES

Surely! Can you explain?

PAUL

They that are of faith shall be blessed. Because the just man lives by faith. If he is not just, he has no faith

JAMES

So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works."
Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works.

PAUL

Absolutely.

JAMES

Therefore you say that he who has faith will have that faith manifested in good works.

PAUL

Yes, my brother.

JAMES

We say the same thing. But differently.

PAUL

We are one. Show me a man with faith and no works and I will show you a man who says he has faith ---but in reality does not.

BARNABAS

This resolution will unite all of us even further.

JAMES

I wish you Godspeed until we meet again.

BARNABAS

Until we meet again.

PAUL

Until we meet again.

James exits.

BARNABAS

We must leave for our next journey.

PAUL

I am ready

BARNABAS

Johnmark is waiting for us.

PAUL

Johnmark!

BARNABAS

Johnmark, of course.

PAUL

Surely you speak in jest.

BARNABAS

Of course not.

PAUL

The same Johnmark who abandoned us when the demonstrators came attacking the brethren.

BARNABAS

Yes.

PAUL

No way.

BARNABAS

We all have moments of weakness. He has made up for it in a million ways Think of the disciples. They had been with Jesus for three whole years, and still they needed some pruning. The tax collector had already given up his cheating ways. Mary Magdalen had already been delivered of seven demons. And James and John had already had to deal with their desire to be given special seats in Jesus' kingdom. PLEASE FORGIVE AND LET LIVE!!!

PAUL

We must be soldiers for Christ

BARNABAS

Christ has love.

PAUL

I do too

BARNABAS

No you do not. Why can he cannot come.

PAUL

Because he is a coward.

BARNABAS

Jesus forgave Peter many times

PAUL

I too have forgiven

BARNABAS

Paul, you're not a Christian.

PAUL

What I am I then.

BARNABAS

A pharisee.

PAUL

How dare you!

BARNABAS

Like the Pharisee, you simply think you're more upstanding than others,

PAUL

You are brazen.

BARNABAS

Brazen. You forget the whole essence of Jesus message

PAUL

I preach Jesus message.

BARNABAS

The Jesus message is love.

PAUL

I of course Love Johnmark, bur he is a man of weaknesses.

BARNABAS

Weakness. Look at Peter and how he denied the Saviour. Look at all he did. And yet Jesus forgave him.

PAUL

I have forgiven Johnmark. But he has no backbone.

BARNABAS

Neither did peter. Are you Superior to the Master!

PAUL

Who are you to judge me.

BARNABAS

You will go down in eternity as the architect of Christianity Do you not realize that God's kindness is meant to lead you to love? All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God

PAUL

It's not a matter of worthy people and unworthy people. All people are unworthy because God's standard is -absolute.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

And all "are now justified by his grace as a gift. I believe in a loving, forgiving God. I try to live a good life. If occasionally I slip and do the wrong thing, God understands. God doesn't expect me to be perfect."

BARNABAS

Reconsider.

PAUL

My mind is made up.

BARNABAS

You preach Christ, but befriend the Devil

PAUL

We will go our separate ways.

BARNABAS

But we will be one in Christ.

PAUL

We will both continue with our work for one Master.

We are not here to agree completely with one another, but to sink our differences, whatever they are, in our common service under our one Master. We must never let our quarrel with our brother or sister become a quarrel with God.

BARNABAS

I have one prayer to offer for you, Paul

PAUL

Yes?

BARNABAS

Dear Lord, please help this man become a Christian.

PAUL

Get out of this room.

BARNABAS

Now and forever.

SCENE 5 ATHENS SEVERAL MONTHS
LATER

Paul appears in the middle of the
stage, the light shining upon him.

DEMONSTRATORS

Down with Paul!! Down with Paul!!

PAUL

You Athenians, I see that in every respect you are very
religious.

DEMONSTRATORS

You take away our livelihood

WOMAN

You destroy our gods

SECOND WOMAN

Our gods are as good as your gods

FIRST MAN

Are we to destroy all these statues to our gods.

SECOND MAN

Id your God better than our God

PAUL

No.

FIRST WOMAN

Then explain yourself!

PAUL

I respect your shrines. Indeed, I respect your shrines!
For as I walked around looking carefully at your shrines, I
even discovered an altar inscribed, 'To an Unknown God.' 7
What therefore you unknowingly worship, I proclaim to you.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

The God who made the world and all that is in it, the Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in sanctuaries made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands because he needs anything. Rather it is he who gives to everyone life and breath and everything.

Heavy applause from the audience.

PAUL (CONT'D)

He made from one the whole human race to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he fixed the ordered seasons and the boundaries of their regions, so that people might seek God, even perhaps grope for him and find him, though indeed he is not far from any one of us.

Heavy applause from the audience.

DEMONSTRATORS

A man of God.

COUNTER DEMONSTRATORS

Paul! Paul! Paul!

SCENE 6 AUNT MIRIAM'S HOME

Paul enters. Paul and Aunt Miriam embrace

PAUL

My beloved aunt.

AUNT MIRIAM

My Saul !

PAUL

No, I'm not Saul!

AUNT MIRIAM

I heard that. To me you will always be little Saul.

PAUL

Saul died!

AUNT MIRIAM

Oh stop, it's so good to see you Saul.

PAUL

I AM PAUL. Don't ever forget that!

AUNT MIRIAM

Oh Hush. Come in. I have some good soup and bread for you.

PAUL

Ah yes. You make the best soup and bread in Jerusalem. How are the children?

AUNT MIRIAM

We tried to invite you to the weddings, but we couldn't find you. You're always on the move.

PAUL

To spread the Word.

AUNT MIRIAM

Oh that again!

She hands him a loaf of bread and a bowl of soup.

PAUL

What do you mean by "that again!"

AUNT MIRIAM

The soup will do you good. You look so underfed, and what are those marks on your face and hands.

Paul begins eating

PAUL

Best Soup you ever made.

AUNT MIRIAM

I worry about you. How many times have you been jailed and beaten.

PAUL

I don't count anymore.

AUNT MIRIAM

Best guess!

PAUL

Beaten about 40 times Jailed about ten times.

AUNT MIRIAM

All for this new thing you're doing!

PAUL

This new thing!

AUNT MIRIAM

You could have been retired now and enjoying all of your labors. Is it all worth it?

PAUL

Once I was and lived for Saul. Now I am Paul and live for the Master.

AUNT MIRIAM

If you don't mind being poor and getting beat up and going to jail all the time. Saul, I..

PAUL

I am Paul!

AUNT MIRIAM

Sorry, Paul.

PAUL

For the love of the Savior I will undergo floggings, jail, humiliation,, poverty and even death. He is the Master.

AUNT MIRIAM

If that is what keeps you happy. (Long pause) Do you want more soup?

PAUL

Stop the Souping! It's your redemption I'm worried about.

AUNT MIRIAM

So why are you picking on soup. I understand even that carpenter loved good food. Don't get so upset, cousin.

PAUL

Upset! I worry for your soul.

AUNT MIRIAM

Don't worry about my soul. Eat some bread.

PAUL

Don't you feel it remarkable that God chose to bring about his work of human redemption through two human babies and their mothers.

AUNT MIRIAM

Suppose, if I were gullible enough.

PAUL

Aunt Miriam!

AUNT MIRIAM

What babies, what mother?

PAUL

Jesus and Mary. Elizabeth and .

AUNT MIRIAM

You had a good mother too.

PAUL

You don't get it.

AUNT MIRIAM

Get what?

PAUL

Why I'm here.

AUNT MIRIAM

To see me. Because you know I love you

PAUL

I am here to save your soul.

AUNT MIRIAM

Don't waste your time Just eat.

PAUL

You are generous, but I offer you eternal food.

AUNT MIRIAM

You look like a a skinned rat.

PAUL

I'm leaving.

AUNT MIRIAM

I'm shocked

PAUL

Why!

AUNT MIRIAM

You stand up to mobs, to your worst enemies, and you let a little ole lady get your goat.

PAUL

I see a barren fig tree.

AUNT MIRIAM

I am proud of you. You are famous and the leader of that cult along with that fisherman.

PAUL

Cult! The worship of God is not a cult

AUNT MIRIAM

Eat, drink, and be merry.

PAUL

Is that all you think about. So man only lives to eat, drink, defecate, and urinate.

AUNT MIRIAM

Those too are gifts from God.

PAUL

And no thought about eternal life and entering the kingdom of God.

AUNT MIRIAM

The Kingdom of God! Every time you folks squabble about the Kingdom of God, someone seems to get killed. Can't you hold your beliefs without killing one another.

PAUL

We followers of Christ don't kill.

AUNT MIRIAM

Just wait and see what your followers do someday.

PAUL

I can not control what every Christian o earth does.

AUNT MIRIAM

I've upset you.

PAUL

Yes you have.

AUNT MIRIAM

Paul! You played together as children, There's always a big soft spot in my hears for you. Do you realize how much trouble you have caused.

PAUL

That is why I was created.

AUNT MIRIAM

Half of our relatives won't even speak to you

PAUL

Its more like 90 percent the truth be known.

AUNT MIRIAM

Doesn't matter, I love you! You can believe what you want.
Just don't force your stuff down my throat.

PAUL

Goodbye!

Paul walks out and Aunt Miriam runs
after him.

AUNT MIRIAM

You forgot your bread, and didn't eat a thing.

PAUL

Goodbye!

AUNT MIRIAM

Come back. You are always welcome

SCENE 7 PRISON OUTSIDE ROME 67 AD

Paul faces the Roman Lawyer.
Demonstrators shout from the
outside.

DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)

Kill him! Kill him! Death! Death!

COUNTER DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)

God have mercy! God have mercy! God have mercy!

ROMAN LAWYER

Do you have anything to say before you die.

PAUL

My life is an offering to God. I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race, and now the prize awaits me.

ROMAN LAWYER

Then you will die. You have lead a life of contention.

PAUL

I have no regrets.

ROMAN LAWYER

You know I do not enjoy killing you.

PAUL

You are following the Emperors orders. But they ARE crazy, like I am crazy.

ROMAN LAWYER

Had Nero known you claimed to be mad he might not have sentenced you to death.

PAUL

My type of craziness is a good type of craziness. Craziness at what seems like the nonsense of it all. But what is crazy to human makes perfect sense to God.

ROMAN LAWYER

How do you know this?

PAUL

Because the spirit has come upon me.

PAUL (CONT'D)

My time has come. You must perform your duty. You are the Roman Lawyer.

ROMAN LAWYER

Your wish is granted. You will be crucified in a few moments in the same manner as Peter. The Emperor will be pleased

PAUL

I accept my martyrdom. I die gladly for what I believe.

DEMONSTRATORS

DEATH! DEATH! DEATH!

FIRST MAN

Death for the desecrators of the Lord!

COUNTER DEMONSTRATORS (O.S.)

Mercy! Mercy! Mercy! Blessed be the God of Israel.

FIRST WOMAN

May the evil heresy die!

DEMONSTRATORS

May the evil heresy die! May the evil heresy die! Long live
Israel!

PAUL

I have fought the good fight. I have won the battle . I
meet my creator.

ROMAN LAWYER

Do you have anything to say before you die?

COUNTER DEMONSTRATORS

Mercy! Mercy! Mercy!

PAUL

I breath my last breath and die for the faith. I enter
eternity.

END OF PLAY