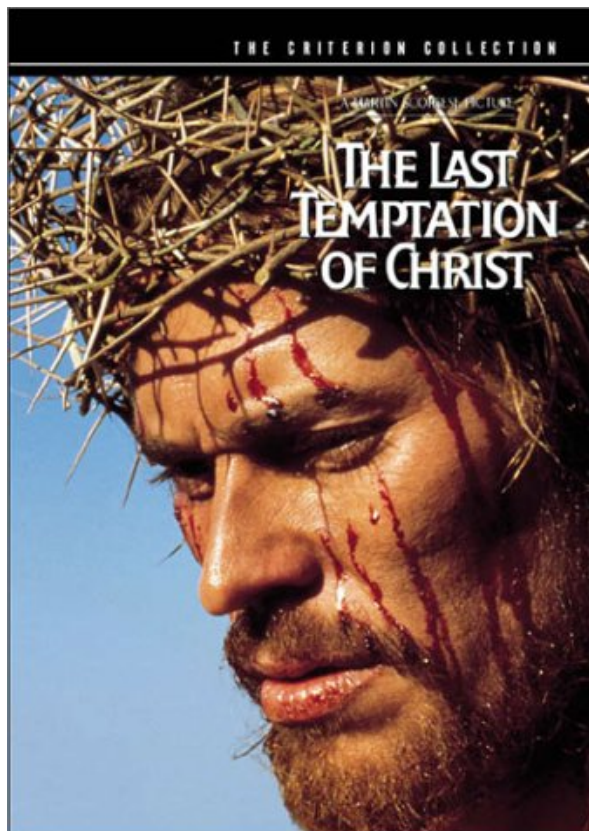


THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

by

Paul Schrader

Based on a novel  
by Nikos Kazantzakis



*Mn3a ncyena*

TITLE:

THE DUAL SUBSTANCE OF CHRIST -  
THE YEARNING, SO HUMAN,  
SO SUPERHUMAN, OF MAN TO ATTAIN GOD...  
HAS ALWAYS BEEN A DEEP  
INSCRUTABLE MYSTERY TO ME.  
MY PRINCIPLE ANGUISH AND SOURCE  
OF ALL MY JOYS AND SORROWS  
FROM MY YOUTH ONWARD  
HAS BEEN THE INCESSANT,  
MERCILESS BATTLE BETWEEN  
THE SPIRIT AND THE FLESH...  
AND MY SOUL IS THE ARENA  
WHERE THESE TWO ARMIES  
HAVE CLASHED AND MET.  
NIKOS KAZANTZAKIS

VOICE

This film is not based  
upon the Gospels but upon  
this fictional exploration  
of the eternal spiritual  
conflict.

EXT. NAZARETH - MORNING

From above: Flying close over a thick grove of olive  
trees. MUSIC fades into the sound of wings beating  
through the air. We hear (OVER) the voice of a young  
man, thoughtful but strong.

JESUS (V.O.)

The feeling begins. It's a  
light tingling at first.  
Right on the top of my  
head. Very tender. Like a  
caress. Soft wings  
carrying me to Paradise.  
Then the pain starts.

Now we see JESUS, the son of Mary, 28 years-old,  
sleeping under an olive tree. The mid-morning sun (OVER-  
EXPOSED) shines on his stubby face. He is dreaming.

JESUS (V.O.)

It feels like the bird has  
grabbed me from behind.  
Just above the neck.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D, V.O.)

Talons slip underneath the  
skin and work and claw  
their way up the back of  
my neck. Then the real  
pain begins. Each claw  
digs into the soft matter  
behind my brain, and then  
across the top of my head  
toward my eyes. Just  
before they reach my eyes,  
they dig down...

Jesus awakens. He looks around.

JESUS (V.O.)

And I remember. I have to  
make a cross.

While he is still speaking he reaches up to touch the  
back of his head, where the pain started. He pulls his  
fingers away. There is blood on them.

CUT TO:

INT. CARPENTER'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Jesus shapes a long piece of timber with an adze. His  
patched tunic rests on the workbench. Walls are hung  
with tools.

A nail-studded belt hangs from a hook above his head.  
The belt is speckled with dried blood. Two drops of  
fresh blood drip off the belt onto the ground.

JESUS (V.O.)

At first I fasted for  
three months. Then I  
whipped myself before  
sleeping. At first it  
worked, then the headaches  
returned. I know it's God.  
Or the devil. Who can tell  
them apart? They exchange  
faces; God sometimes  
becomes all darkness, the  
devil all light, and they  
become confused in my  
mind.

Outside, there are NOISES of a crowd gathering nearby. Undistracted, he finishes off the piece of timber, which has become the crossbar of a cross. He places the crossbar between two brackets on the wall, then puts himself halfway between them and stretches out his arms, gauging the proper proportion.

CUT TO:

EXT. NAZARETH STREET - DAY

Narrow and crowded with citizens on their way to a crucifixion. A ROMAN SOLDIER watches them with professional disinterest. His armour is non-existent, his uniform is certainly not splendid. He looks like a sloppy traffic cop. PEOPLE come from behind him and walk in front.

Over the soldier's left shoulder appears a man with blazing red hair and beard, moving with the crowd. He walks close behind the soldier for just a moment. Very professionally, he cuts his throat. The soldier falls to the ground. The man keeps walking calmly and the camera follows as, in the background, people start to notice that a soldier has been stabbed.

A WOMAN screams. Two other MEMBERS of the crowd grab her and silence her, while SEVERAL OTHERS drag the body off into a hut.

The red-haired man keeps walking. This is JUDAS.

CUT TO:

EXT. NAZARETH CARPENTER'S WORKSHOP - DAY

Jesus looks toward the door, almost as if he has felt the murder.

JESUS (V.O.)

Who is it? Who are you?

Why are you following me?

Judas enters, sees Jesus working on the cross.

JUDAS

Are you ready?

Jesus doesn't answer.

JUDAS

I said are you ready?

He grabs him. Jesus still doesn't answer. He keeps working.

JUDAS  
You're a disgrace.

Jesus smiles at him.

JESUS  
I'm the disgrace? Judas, I  
see the blood on your  
knife.

Judas lets go of him. He takes the knife from inside his cloak and removes it from its scabbard. He wipes the blood off the blade with a rag.

JUDAS  
Come with us. Help us.

JESUS  
Leave me alone.

JUDAS  
No. This time you won't  
finish.

He grabs Jesus' hands and holds them.

JUDAS  
Listen. Everything's  
ready. We're going to save  
the Zealot. He could be  
the one we've been waiting  
for. You can't just pray  
for the Messiah. You've  
got to help him. You can't  
expect God to do  
everything. He needs our  
help too.

JESUS  
He'll have to do it  
without me.

JUDAS  
You might be killing the  
Messiah. This Zealot today  
is not like all the  
others. I feel it.  
(MORE)

JUDAS (CONT'D)

He's different. Don't finish the cross. Come with us. Don't you want to be part of it? You want the Romans to be here forever?

JESUS

The Messiah has nothing to do with the Romans.

JUDAS

Yes he does. How else do you expect to be free? If this Zealot is the Messiah and we don't save him, then he'll die and we'll never know. But if we save him, the miracle might happen.

JESUS

What miracle?

JUDAS

The sign, the signal. The royal crown of David will shine on his head.

JESUS

It can't be much of a miracle if we have to help.

JUDAS

You're not even ashamed.

JESUS

No.

JUDAS

Romans can't find carpenters to make crosses. Except for you. You throw yourself into it like a madman. Everybody thinks you're crazy. But not me. I can see through this act of yours.

(MORE)

JUDAS (CONT'D)

Fainting, hearing voices,  
having visions. Everyone  
thinks you're a madman.  
But I know what your are.  
You're an enemy. You're  
worse than the Romans.  
You're a Jew who's killing  
Jews. And you're not  
ashamed. You don't even  
have any pride.

JESUS

No, I don't have any  
pride. I don't go to  
Synagogue. I disobey the  
commandments. I work on  
the Sabbath. Your  
Messiahs? You find them,  
I'll crucify them.

Judas hits Jesus across the mouth.

JUDAS

You're lucky you're a Jew.

JESUS

Why?

JUDAS

Anyone else would have  
been dead by now. You  
think Zealots are  
murderers? We're  
pathfinders, we're  
patriots, and you're in  
the way.

JESUS

Then get me out of the  
way.

Judas and Jesus stare each other down.

JUDAS

I will. In my time. Not  
yours. When I'm told.

JESUS

When did you ever need  
permission to kill  
anybody?

JUDAS

To kill a Roman, never. To  
kill a Jew, we all have to  
agree. We have more  
respect for Jews than you  
do. The next time I see  
you, you're dead.

CUT TO:

EXT. CARPENTER'S WORKSHOP - DAY

A CENTURION pushes his way through a small crowd.

Jesus stands ready outside the workshop, the crossbar  
resting against a wall. The crowd is taunting him with  
cries of "Crossmaker!," "Traitor," "Cooperator,"  
"Collaborator," but he ignores them.

Someone throws something. A MAN in the crowd  
deliberately jostles him roughly, trying to start a  
fight. The Centurion breaks things up.

CENTURION

Leave him alone. You  
ready?  
(as Jesus nods)  
Come on.

Jesus buckles the nail-studded belt around his waist.  
The Centurion helps Jesus heft the cross-beam to his  
shoulders. The Centurion leads Jesus through a gauntlet  
the crowd has formed from the village to the crucifixion  
site on the edge of Nazareth. Ahead, six Roman soldiers  
lead the protesting ZEALOT. Two mounted soldiers flank  
the group. The Zealot's hands are tied behind him. His  
clothes are torn and bloody, his long hair and grey  
beard matted with blood and sweat.

ZEALOT

You're the people of  
Israel! God is with us!  
He's judging us now!  
Fight!

The soldiers push him along.

MAN IN CROWD

How long do we have to  
wait for the Messiah?

ANOTHER MAN

Until you die! Because  
he's not coming.

WOMAN IN CROWD

He forgot about us! He  
doesn't want us!

YOUNG MAN

Listen to the Zealot! God  
is strength.

MAN

Give us strength now!

A Roman soldier slams the Man against the wall, then  
shoves the crowd back as the Zealot passes. The crowd  
cools down a little.

Now the villagers heap abuse on Jesus. MARY, 56, mother  
of Jesus, pushes her way through the crowd. A MAN is  
about to throw a stone at Jesus. She grabs his arm,  
tries to pry the stone from his fingers.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

Don't touch him. Get away  
from him.

She starts pushing people away in angry desperation.

WOMAN IN CROWD

You defend him.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

Yes. He's my son. He  
doesn't know what he's  
doing.

The crowd now starts pushing Mary. She resists. A  
Centurion breaks up the melee. Jesus continues on his  
way.

The Zealot has reached the crucifixion site: a rocky,  
flint covered mound. The soldiers wait for the cross.

Children throw pebbles at Jesus as he approaches the  
Zealot. The Roman guards brace themselves for violence.

Jesus sets the cross down beside the Zealot who is held by guards.

Mary comes through the crowd, takes her son by the arm.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

Alright. Come away now.

Jesus pulls away from her. She goes after him but a guard yanks her back into the crowd. The Centurion gathers some pieces of parchment together as the Zealot's voice rings out:

ZEALOT

Listen! Don't be afraid!  
God is strong. Rome is  
smoke. God will blow it  
away. Remember the  
Maccabees, remember how  
they threw out the Greeks!  
We'll throw out the Romans  
the same way. There's only  
one God of Hosts and he's  
our God!

CENTURION

(he's heard it  
all before)

Finished?

Without waiting for an answer, the Centurion begins to read the charges against the Zealot.

CENTURION

'This man naked before you  
now is condemned for  
sedition, for lifting his  
hand against Rome. Even as  
a boy he pulled the  
Imperial Eagle from walls.  
He ran to the mountains  
and rallied the people to  
Revolution. He promised a  
Messiah would come from  
among the people to rise  
up and destroy Rome...'

He starts paging through the parchment, his interest wandering.

CENTURION

'...murder... betrayal'  
...so on... 'looting...'  
and so on... 'and  
therefore he is condemned  
to die. Rome condemns him.  
All the Gods of Rome  
condemn him.' And I  
condemn him. Start.

The Zealot has been stripped naked and laid down on the cross- bar. The guards prepare to drive the nails into his wrists. A hush comes over the crowd.

The spike is placed in the Zealot's wrist. The hammer drives it home. The Zealot's scream (almost ecstatic) is echoed by the crowd.

Blood spurts from his wounds: a drop splatters on Jesus' lips.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Close angle on Jesus, who is speaking vehemently.

JESUS

Speak softer! I can't  
understand! Softer!

Silence.

JESUS

I still can't... stop...  
Are you trying to make me  
understand, or do you just  
want to hurt me?

(pause; then, as  
if answering)

Well, if I don't belong  
here, with men, where do I  
belong? Tell me! Or do you  
just want to punish me?

Still silence.

Now we see the whole room, which is a small area just off the kitchen. Jesus is alone. His Mother enters. Jesus looks over.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

What are you hearing?

She sits near him and puts her hand over his.

JESUS

They want to know if I'm  
afraid. Afraid! Of course  
I'm afraid!

(looking up)

Hear that? I am afraid. Is  
that what you want?  
Alright.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

What do they want?

JESUS

They want me to speak. To  
go out and speak!

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

Speak about what?

JESUS

About the Kingdom of  
Heaven. But I don't care  
about the Kingdom of  
Heaven. I like earth. I  
like to eat, sleep, see a  
woman without my head  
being torn in half.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

But you can have that  
right now.

JESUS

No! Because anytime I try  
to get what everybody else  
has, the pain starts. And  
the voices.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

And so you make crosses!

JESUS

Yes, I make crosses! To  
keep him quiet. To make  
God hate me! To make him  
find somebody else.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

You're sure it's God?  
You're sure it's not the  
Devil?

JESUS

I'm not sure. I'm not sure  
of anything.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

If it's the devil, the  
devil can be cast out.

JESUS

What if it's God? You  
can't cast out God.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

But if it's God, why  
should he hurt you?

JESUS

Because he loves me. And I  
don't want him to love me.  
I want him to hate me! I  
want to crucify every one  
of his Messiahs.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

The more you dare God, the  
more you make him angry.  
Maybe that's why he's made  
you so unhappy here.

JESUS

Where?

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

Here. With people. Maybe  
you shouldn't be here.

JESUS

If I don't belong with  
people, who do I belong  
with, God?

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

I don't know. Go and ask  
him. Go where God is.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDGE OF NAZARETH - DAWN

Jesus begins his journey to go where God is. He walks with a certainty we have not seen before.

Nazareth, seen behind him, is stirring to life. Jesus' path takes him past the crucifixion site of the day before. At the foot of the cross are several GUARDS who are dividing up the Zealot's clothes. One of the Guards sees Jesus and calls to him.

GUARD

Crossmaker! Here's your share.

The Guard throws the Zealot's bloody headcloth. Jesus holds it for a moment.

GUARD

What's the matter? Don't you want it?

JESUS

Yes. I want it.

He puts the headcloth on.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD OUTSIDE NAZARETH - EARLY MORNING

Jesus strides across a grassy plain. Much of the "lake district" of Galilee was a fertile and pleasant valley. Jesus leans his body into the wind as he reaches a ridge.

JESUS (V.O.)

All this time I've been cursing him, trying to make him hate me. All that pain for something so simple, I should have realized. He just wants me to devote my life to him. If that's what it takes to stop the pain, I'm happy. Only one road leads to God. And it comes out in the desert. God's waiting for me in a well in the monastery. He does love me. I'll hide under his wings.

Jesus watches a small caravan in the distance and follows its path.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALILEE - DAY

Jesus passes two PEASANT GIRLS reaping in an open field. Their partially open dresses reveal their bodies. Their open sexuality intimidates Jesus.

PEASANT GIRL  
Are you going to Magela?

JESUS  
No. To the monastery.

They laugh.

SECOND GIRL  
Then you take the other road.

PEASANT GIRL  
If you really want to.

SECOND GIRL  
Why not stop and have some bread with us?

They're teasing him a little now and he's slightly embarrassed.

JESUS  
No, thank you. I can't.

They smile as they watch him go.

CUT TO:

LATER - JESUS

Walks alone along the windy seashore.

JESUS (V.O.)  
Lord, thank you for everything, for the loneliness, the hunger, the cold. I don't need anything else.

Hearing FOOTSTEPS, he stops abruptly. Turns and looks.

JESUS (V.O.)  
Who's that? Who's  
following me?

Seeing nothing, Jesus starts again. The FOOTSTEPS  
return - LOUDER.

JESUS (V.O.)  
Is that you?

He clutches his head, collapses to his knees in pain:

JESUS (V.O.)  
Magdalene! Magdalene!

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGDALA - DAY

Three camels in the forefront of a caravan kneel to the ground. Their riders and the camels are completely covered with sand. As the camels rest, the riders open their cloaks revealing bright robes of red, blue and gold and exotic jewelry.

Jesus walks past the caravan on the main plaza of Magdala, where TOWNSPEOPLE are salting fish in a public market. The streets are crowded with camels, donkeys, Mongols on horseback, Afghans laden with rugs and blankets, Nubian slaves following their Greek and Roman masters. A Berber woman dances. She is caked with dust. As she dances, the dust flies away, revealing her dress, her jewelry, her body.

Jesus passes a well where a woman is seated, drawing water. Her naked breasts are painted. He tries to avoid her glance.

JESUS (V.O.)  
Thank you Lord for  
bringing me where I did  
not want to come.

He pushes his way through the crowd until he reaches the home of Mary Magdalene. On her door, there is a painting of two intertwined snakes, one black, one white, and above the LINTEL, a painting of a large yellow lizard with its legs stretched out as if crucified. A row of camels, horses and donkeys stand outside. Jesus enters.

A young Indian nobleman with an aristocratic air, passes by Jesus and into the courtyard, Jesus stares and follows behind him.

JESUS (V.O.)  
He must be one of God's  
angels. He came down to  
show me the way.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARY MAGDALENE'S COURTYARD - DAY

Jesus and the nobleman take their places seated on the ground in Magdalene's courtyard. About a dozen men wait for their turn with Magdalene.

Besides the young Indian nobleman (with three gold bands around his ankles), there are three Bedounin, three old men with painted eyelashes and nails, two young men with black beards and moustaches, and two rich black merchants. An old lady is off to one side crouched on the ground with a small cage containing some crabs. A small fire is beside her on which she is cooking food. There is no door to Magdalene's room where she does business, only a wispy half torn curtain floating in the infrequent breeze. This affords her waiting clients a half-darkened view of the proceedings. An Arab makes love to her. She is nude, and good at her work.

The young Indian nobleman lowers his eyelids, begins swaying his upper body back and forth and moves his lips as if in prayer. Jesus and the others glance at him. One of the black merchants pushes him with his knee and smiles.

BLACK MERCHANT  
Prince of India, what does  
your God have to say about  
all this?

INDIAN NOBLEMAN  
(opening his  
eyes)  
All what?

BLACK MERCHANT  
Here, in front of you.

INDIAN NOBLEMAN  
That everything is a  
dream.

One of the old men, using prayer beads, turns to them.

OLD MAN

Well, if it's a dream,  
then don't wake us.

Jesus stares straight ahead. At that moment the Arab comes out from Magdalene's room. All the men groan as if saying "about time." The old man gets up and enters.

YOUNG MAN

Don't take all day, old  
man. There's six more here  
before me.

CUT TO:

LATER - THE SUN

is waning. Three merchants wait with Jesus. Two are eating.

An Egyptian emerges from the Magdalene's house. Another man gets up. Jesus defers to him.

CUT TO:

LATER - IT'S DARK

Jesus sits alone. The last customer closes the courtyard door.

Jesus stands, enters Magdalene's room.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGDALENE'S ROOM - DARK - AMBERLIT - NIGHT

Mary, lies naked on a stack of blankets, covered with the sweat of all nations. Facing the wall, she calls:

MAGDALENE

Is there anyone else?

Jesus stops in the middle of the room.

Mary turns and recognizes Jesus. She instinctively pulls back.

MAGDALENE

What are you doing here.

JESUS

I want you to forgive me.

The Magdalene doesn't understand.

JESUS

I've done too many wrong things. I'm going to the desert. To the monastery. Before I go I want you to forgive me. Please.

MAGDALENE

Oh, I see. You sit out there all day with the others. Then you come in there with your head bowed, saying 'Forgive me, forgive me.' Well it's not that easy. Just because you need forgiveness don't ask me to do it.

JESUS

Mary, I'm sorry.

MAGDALENE

I don't want your pity. I'm fine, just fine. I don't need help from anybody. Especially you or your God.

JESUS

God can save your soul.

MAGDALENE

I don't want him. He's already broken my heart. Say the truth.

Mary is half in darkness. As she speaks her legs partially open and one hand slips between them. Her other hand covers her breasts.

MAGDALENE

You want to save my soul?  
This is where you'll find  
it. You're the same as the  
others only you can't  
admit it. You lie about  
it. You're pitiful. I hate  
you. Here's my body. Kiss  
it. Save it.

Jesus, angry, lunges for her and hits her hand away very hard. She pulls back on the couch and they stare at each other. When Magdalene speaks again she is calmer, but even sadder.

MAGDALENE

Is that the way you show  
you're a man? You never  
had the courage to be one.  
If you weren't hanging  
onto your mother, you were  
hanging onto me. Now  
you're hanging onto God,  
going to the desert to  
hide because you're  
scared. Well go. Whenever  
I see you my heart breaks.  
Don't look at me.

She stands and puts on a dress.

CUT TO:

LATER

Mary takes a casserole from the fire, pours it into a bowl and hands it to Jesus with a barley roll. Jesus eats ravenously.

MAGDALENE

Is that the way you eat?  
Without thanking God?  
Don't you think you should  
thank him for giving you  
all this: bread, beans,  
whores, wine...

JESUS

Let me eat and let me go.

Mary looks at him and touches his face. As she speaks, Jesus doesn't respond.

MAGDALENE

I remember when we were  
children. When I was five  
and you were three. I  
remember when we laid  
under the tree together. I  
watched you. Later I  
wanted you to come to me  
but not before you  
suffered...

Magdalene is coming on to him. He is her lifetime love.  
No matter what he does, she will never stop loving him.

JESUS

Stop it.

He stands and walks over to the fire.

MAGDALENE

I never felt so much  
tenderness toward anyone  
as I felt for you then...  
all I ever wanted was  
you... nothing else.

JESUS

And what do you think I  
wanted? Do you think I  
wanted this? God help me.

MAGDALENE

To do what?

It takes him a moment to answer, but when he finally  
speaks it is with some tenderness.

JESUS

To leave.

MAGDALENE

Please... stay.

(pause)

Here, it's cold. Sleep by  
the fire.

(she reaches for  
him)

Is it so bad, sharing a  
prostitute's room? You'll  
still have your virginity  
for the desert. I promise.

JESUS

I can't stay, Mary. I'm  
sorry.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY - NIGHT

A small desert commune huddled near the edge of a precipice. The monastery is actually an unconnected series of low mud huts. Jesus strides toward them. The wind blows.

VOICE

This way.

Jesus turns. And aged MASTER is revealed standing by the huts.

Jesus joins him. The Master looks into his careworn face and smiles serenely, then leads him inside.

CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY - HUT - NIGHT

Jesus and the Master enter. Above the wind outside, Jesus can hear the sounds of prayer and singing.

JESUS

Do you pray this late at  
night?

MASTER

It's a funeral. The Master  
of the monastery died.

JESUS

I'll pray with you.

MASTER

(smiling)

No. Sleep well. You must  
be tired. 'First came the  
wings and then the angel.'  
God be praised.

He leaves.

CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY HUT - MORNING

A monk, JEROBOAM, is shaking Jesus awake.

JEROBOAM

Who are you? What are you  
doing here?

JESUS

I was brought here.

JEROBOAM

By who?

JESUS

An old man.

JEROBOAM

There are a lot of old men  
here. What was his name?  
Did he say anything?

JESUS

He didn't say his name. He  
just said 'First came the  
wings and then the angel.'  
That was all he said.

Jeroboam is startled.

CUT TO:

INT. MONASTERY HUT - DAY

Another hut. A simple room with a menorah. The Master who showed Jesus to the room lies on an open shroud on the floor, hands folded over his chest. His naked body is partially obscured by by mourners. One MONK kisses his closed eyes. ANOTHER his upturned palms, OTHERS his beard and his feet. Jesus and Jeroboam watch.

JESUS

This was the man who let  
me in last night. Did he  
just die?

JEROBOAM

This was the Master of the  
monastery. He's been dead  
since yesterday morning.  
And you've come in his  
place.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY - DAY

Carrying the Master's remains, the monks move through  
blowing sand. The dunes seem almost to sway like the  
rise and fall of the sea.

The procession, with Jesus at the end, stops at a pit.  
The monks, buffeted by the wind, roll the Master's  
remains into the pit.

Jeroboam shouts a prayer over the howling wind, but we  
cannot hear it.

JEROBOAM'S PRAYER:

JEROBOAM

The Master's soul has gone  
to heaven, his body's work  
is completed. It walked  
under the sun and moon,  
over stone and sand,  
sinned, felt pain, yearned  
for heaven. We commend his  
remains to the earth and  
his soul to our God.  
Flesh, the Master no  
longer needs you. Melt  
away.

Even as he speaks, the wind leaves a fine layer of sand  
on the Master's body; the face, beard, and hands sink  
away.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY - DAY

Later. The sandstorm is over, the air is still. Jesus  
and Jeroboam walk close together. They are in the midst  
of conversation.

JEROBOAM

In our period of mourning  
for the Master we believe  
we'll feel his presence  
here for forty days,  
advising us, scolding us.  
It actually appeared to  
you. And showed you the  
way to his room. His own  
room. He treated you like  
a royal visitor. He  
recognized you.

JESUS

He couldn't have  
recognized me for  
anything. I only came here  
to serve God and nothing  
else. That's all he wants  
from me, I'm sure of it.

JEROBOAM

God brought you here,  
didn't he?

JESUS

All he brought here is my  
shame.

JEROBOAM

Shame is also a  
temptation.

JESUS

God hunts me. He drives  
his nails into my heart.  
He wants to push me over.

Jesus' hand sweeps out. We follow. He is gesturing  
toward the steep precipice only a few yards away.

JESUS

He wants me to speak. But  
he didn't touch my lips  
with burning coals. How  
can I speak? I sinned.

JEROBOAM

We all sin.

JESUS

Not my sins. What does He want from me? Can't he see what's inside me? All my sins. I'm Lucifer.

JEROBOAM

Be quiet!

JESUS

No! I'm a liar. A hypocrite. I'm afraid of everything. I never tell the truth. I don't have the courage. When I see a woman, I blush and look away. But inside I have lust. For God, I smother the lust, and that satisfies my pride. But my pride destroys Magdalene. I never steal or fight, or kill... not because I don't want to but because I'm afraid. I want to rebel against everything, everybody... against God!... but I'm afraid. If you look inside me you see fear, that's all. Fear is my mother, my father, my God.

JEROBOAM

The more devils we have inside of us, the more chance we have to make angels. 'Angel' is the name for the devils who repent... so, you have to have faith. Have you ever slept with a woman?

JESUS

No...

JEROBOAM

And you don't want to?

JESUS

I do... No, I don't.

JEROBOAM

Why not?

JESUS

It's not enough for me.

JEROBOAM

Well, then what do you want?

(pause)

...Why don't you answer me?

JESUS

(smiling)

I am Saint Blasphemer,  
Father. So you'd better  
not ask me anything else,  
or I'll start my  
blasphemies.

JEROBOAM

Start your blasphemies.  
You'll be relieved. Start.

JESUS

There's Lucifer inside of  
me saying, You're not the  
son of the Carpenter,  
you're the son of King  
David. You're not a man,  
you're the son of man. And  
further: the son of God.  
And further than that:  
God.

Jeroboam is speechless.

JESUS

Do you want to ask me  
anything else?

JEROBOAM

No.

CUT TO:

INT. JESUS' HUT - NIGHT

Jesus sleeps on a woven mat.

He hears a HISSING SOUND. His eyes open, he sits up.

A snake emerges from a hole in the wall and slithers across the earthen floor. Another snake follows it. The snakes coil around each other and copulate.

Jesus watches, his back to the wall.

JESUS (V.O.)

Why now after all this  
time? Coupling. This is  
why we were thrown out of  
Paradise.

He looks at one of the snakes. It speaks to him in Mary Magdalene's voice.

MAGDALENE

Jesus, I forgive you.

(fast dolly in as) Jesus grabs his chest; the snakes hiss inside his breast.

JESUS

Leave me. Leave me alone.

Jesus breathes a sigh of relief. The snakes are gone. Jesus looks up. Jeroboam stands in the door. Jeroboam enters and puts his fingers to Jesus' lips.

(follow hand around and to lips 36 fps)

JESUS

They're gone.

Jeroboam nods. He has seen the snakes too.

JEROBOAM

God has just blessed you.  
The snakes left. They came  
from you. Everything has  
two meanings, one obvious,  
the other hidden. Now  
maybe you have to leave.

JESUS

I have to stay. That's  
what God wants me to do.

JEROBOAM

I don't think you're supposed to stay. God is already talking to you. He must want something else.

JESUS

What else could he want from me?

JEROBOAM

He's purified you for a reason. To be his instrument. He must want to speak through you. Outside.

JESUS

To who?

JEROBOAM

To anyone who will listen.

JESUS

And say what?

JEROBOAM

Just open your mouth. You love mankind?

JESUS

I see men and I feel sorry for them, that's all.

JEROBOAM

That's enough. Go and speak to them.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT MONASTERY - NIGHT

(SPECIAL EFFECT) A huge full moon illuminates the group of huts.

CUT TO:

INT. JESUS' HUT - NIGHT

Dark at first. Then, a HISSING NOISE. Jesus lights a palm- sized lamp, listens.

Then, he cautiously peers out the opening of the hut.  
Then he is pulled through.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY - HUT - NIGHT

An arm grabs Jesus from behind and throws him against the wall.

Judas stands in front of him, panting, his dagger in his hand.

JUDAS  
I hissed and you came.

JESUS  
I'm ready.

JUDAS  
Ready? You think we're  
going to a feast? I'm  
going to kill you.

JESUS  
Good. I'm relieved. I'm  
happy to see you. You're  
just in time.

Judas is startled.

JESUS  
God purified me tonight. I  
thought it was so I could  
go out and preach. But now  
I see. It's so I could  
die. And you're God's  
instrument. He brought us  
together.

Jesus opens his tunic.

JESUS  
Here's my neck. Cut it.  
Come on, cut it. What's  
the matter? Is there  
anything wrong? I was  
purified, you got your  
permission, it's all  
arranged by God. So what  
are you waiting for?

They stare at each other.

JESUS

You can't do it, can you?

JUDAS

I can if I want.

JESUS

Why don't you want?

JUDAS

I do want.

JESUS

Fine.

He positions himself for killing again. There is another pause.

JUDAS

Did you work some magic on me? When I go to kill a man, I kill him.

JESUS

(thinking it  
out)

Maybe God doesn't want me to die. If God really wanted me to die, you wouldn't hesitate. You'd just kill me.

JUDAS

No, you should die. What good are you living? Why should God want you alive? What good are you for Israel? Do you have some secret?

JESUS

I have no secret. I know that I have pity, though.

JUDAS

Pity! How far will that get us? What good is that for Israel?

JESUS

It's good for men.

JUDAS

Men! The Greeks who killed us were men. So are the Romans. Don't pity men, pity Israel. The rest can go to hell.

JESUS

I feel pity for everything. Donkeys, sparrows, grass.

JUDAS

And ants? I suppose you feel pity for them too?

JESUS

Yes. Everything's a part of God. When I look into the ant, into his shiny black eye, I see the face of God.

JUDAS

What do you see when you look in my face?

JESUS

(matter of  
factly)

I see God too.

JUDAS

You see God everywhere, don't you? Maybe that's why you don't fear death.

JESUS

Why should I fear death? Death isn't a door that closes, it's a door that opens. It opens and you enter.

JUDAS

(pause)

If I don't kill you, what happens?

JESUS

I don't know. Whatever God decides. I'll speak to others. I can't think of anything else.

JUDAS

What are you going to say?

JESUS

I'll just open my mouth and God will do the talking.

JUDAS

See. I told you. You're not crazy at all, are you? If God does talk through you, then you're the messenger of God and I can't kill a messenger of God, can I? You've got my hand stopped.

JESUS

I didn't stop your hand, God did.

JUDAS

He's the only one who could.

JESUS

God didn't send you to kill me. Maybe he sent you here to follow me.

JUDAS

The one's I follow are the ones who follow Israel.

Judas puts his knife away.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALILEE - DAY

Judas and Jesus walk across the plain toward Magdala.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGDALA - DAY

Mary Magdalene is hurled into a shallow pit, her knees and elbows bloody from being dragged down the street.

Jesus and Judas enter the village. They hear a commotion and hurry toward the crowd.

The crowd, in a festive mood, hurl insults and spit at her.

JUDAS  
It's Magdalene. She  
deserves it.

Jesus steps into the center of the pit as the crowd starts to throw stones. One of them hits Jesus on the chest. He looks over at the man who threw the stone. We have never seen Jesus like this before: neither has anyone in the crowd.

Two little KIDS take one look, giggle nervously, and run away. Judas is riveted. On the other side of the small crowd, PHILIP, PETER, ANDREW and JOHN watch this unexpected confrontation with fascination.

MAN IN CROWD  
Get out of here. This  
isn't your business. You  
want to get hurt?

More stones are thrown. Jesus doesn't move. Magdalene, has grabbed his leg for reassurance.

ZEBADÉE pushes his way through the crowd.

ZEBADÉE  
You heard what he said,  
idiot. Move.

JESUS  
No. I don't want this.

ZEBADÉE  
Oh, listen to this. He  
doesn't want this. Well,  
we want it.

JESUS  
Why?

ZEBEDEE

(livid)

We don't have to tell you  
why...

Peter, in the crowd, interrupts angrily.

PETER

Bad enough we live in a  
whorehouse. But does it  
have to be a Roman  
whorehouse? Our women  
can't even look in a  
mirror on the Sabbath, and  
this one goes with Romans  
on the Sabbath. She broke  
Moses' law. So she dies.

Jesus picks up two stones from the ground.

JESUS

Who's never sinned? Which  
one of you has never  
sinned? Whichever one of  
you's never sinned should  
come up here and throw  
these.

Zebedee steps forward immediately, carrying his own  
small stone.

ZEBEDEE

I've got nothing to hide.

JESUS

Good. Take one of these.  
They're bigger. You're not  
going to do much damage  
with the small one.

Zebedee hesitates.

JESUS

Be careful, Zebedee. There  
is a God. He's seen you  
cheat your workers. He's  
seen you with that widow,  
what's her name...

WOMAN IN THE CROWD

Judith!

JESUS

... Judith. Aren't you  
afraid God will paralyze  
you if you lift that  
stone? That your hand will  
wither and hang at your  
side?

Zebedee drops the rock and moves back. Several MEN start toward Jesus, but Judas steps between them, braced for action. They stop.

Jesus helps Mary to her feet. Judas calls to the crowd:

JUDAS

Follow us, follow the  
Rabbi. He wants to talk to  
you.

Judas, Jesus and Magdalene walk away from the pit. A large segment of the crowd follows.

WOMAN IN CROWD

Who is he?

MAN

It's Jesus. From Nazareth.

SECOND MAN

Nothing good can come out  
of Nazareth. Even the  
scriptures say it.

They start back, away from the crowd, toward the town.

CUT TO:

EXT. HILLSIDE IN MAGDALA - DAY

The nearby summit of the hill which was the site of some ancient pagan temple, probably Mesopotamian. Fragments of several carved capitals of columns lay on the ground along with pieces of pagan Gods (winged lions with women's heads, etc.).

Magdalene sits near Jesus' feet; Judas stands in the background. The crowd waits to hear what Jesus has to say. Jesus looks out over the poverty-stricken villagers, the peaceful country-side:

JESUS (V.O.)

This is what I've always been afraid of. There's so much to say. God has so many miracles.

A pause. The words start to come.

JESUS

Come closer everybody. My brothers. My sisters. I'm calling you that because we're all a family. A little closer. My voice isn't very strong, and I've got something to tell you.

The crowd gets closer, still more curious than anything else.

JESUS

I'm sorry if I have to tell you stories. But it seems to be the only way I can tell you what I have to.

(pause)

A farmer was planting in his field. Some seed fell on the ground and the birds ate it. Some seed fell on rocks and dried up. But some seed fell on rich soil, grew into wheat and fed a lot of people.

Long silence. No one has any idea what the hell he's talking about.

JESUS

Didn't you hear me? Are you people deaf?

ZEBEDEE

(indignant)

We can hear fine. It's not us. Can't you be more... clear.

Jesus thinks for a moment. He is also hiding annoyance.

JESUS

I'm the farmer. The  
farmer's me.

ZEBEDEE

Wait a minute. I get it.  
Don't tell me. We must be  
the stones. We're the  
ground, is that it? That's  
just fine. And two and two  
makes four.

(to crowd:)

Another lunatic.

JOHN, Zebedee's youngest son, who has an air of  
perpetual abstraction, leaves his father and approaches  
Jesus.

JOHN

Rabbi, tell me. If you're  
the farmer and we're the  
stones, what is the seed?

Jesus is baffled.

JOHN

What's the seed?

JESUS

(surprised)

Love one another. Love one  
another!

This is too much for the crowd to take.

ANDREW

Alright, let's say we  
accept that. Maybe that's  
even good advice. But for  
some other world. Not  
here. we're starving. Feed  
us first, then talk.

While the crowd makes noise, Judas steps near to Jesus  
and talks to him so the others can't hear.

JUDAS

What are you talking  
about, love? This is your  
message? We should all  
love the Romans? That's  
like putting our neck on  
the knife.

Jesus takes a step forward, going with the momentum of his strong feelings.

JESUS

Listen, I used to think  
God was angry too. But not  
any more. He used to jump  
on me like a wild bird and  
dig his claws into my  
head. But then one morning  
he came to me. He blew  
over me like a cool breeze  
and said 'Stand up.' And  
here I am.

ZEBEDEE

Go to hell!

MAN IN CROWD

These are all stories for  
children. They can't help  
us.

Jesus starts into the crowd, confronting them directly.

JESUS

What are you hungry for?  
And you, you're thirsty.  
What are you thirsty for?  
For justice. Justice.

ANDREW

And bread.

JESUS

Bread too, bread too. I'm  
telling you, whoever's  
hungry for justice,  
whoever's thirsty for  
justice... they're the  
one's who'll be blessed.  
They'll be filled with  
bread. They'll never be  
thirsty again.

Jesus works his way through the crowd, really winning them over. He points at somebody else.

JESUS

And you. You're in  
mourning. But mourners  
will be blessed. You'll  
have God's comfort, you  
won't need it from men.

Now he addresses the crowd at large.

JESUS

And the meek... they're  
the ones who'll be  
blessed. And the  
suffering... they'll be  
blessed too. and the  
merciful, and the  
peacemakers. And the poor,  
and the sick, and the  
outcasts... you will all  
be blessed. Because Heaven  
is yours.

Now the crowd is really with him.

JESUS

But believe me. The ones  
who are laughing now...

He indicates a couple of skeptics in the crowd.

JESUS

...will be crying later.  
The ones who are fed now  
will be hungry soon. And  
the rich... will be poor  
forever.

The crowd, agitated and excited, starts to run off.

FIRST VOICE

Let's kill the rich!

SECOND VOICE

Why bother with the rich?  
Kill the Romans.

JESUS

(protests)

I didn't say death. I said  
love! I said love!

ZEBEDEE

(motions to his  
son)

Let's go.

JOHN

No. Go on without me.

JAMES looks as if he wants to stay too, but Zebedee pulls him by the arm and stalks off. John and Andrew stay behind with Peter, Philip and Judas.

Mary Magdalene stands next to Jesus now.

MAGDALENE

Rabbi. I can help. Let me  
go with you.

JESUS

(interrupts)

No. Stay here. Tell people  
about me. Show them how to  
live.

He kneels and wipes her bloody feet with his tunic.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEA OF GENNASARET - DAY

Another day. Jesus leads his little band along the seashore: Peter, John, and Andrew walk with Jesus; Judas and Philip follow. Two peasant women, a street urchin and a couple of dogs bring up the rear. They approach Zebedee, who works with James, Nathaniel and two other fishermen.

ZEBEDEE

(to John)

Where have you been? We've  
been working all morning.

John steps over to his brother James and starts pulling him away.

JOHN

What are you doing this  
for, after what we heard.  
Come with us.

Zebedee grabs James' other arm.

ZEBEDEE

What do you think you're  
doing?

He swats both John and James on the ear. The other  
disciples laugh.

JUDAS

(laughing)

Watch it, Zebedee, you'll  
lose another son.

JESUS

Zebedee, do you really  
need them? You can hire  
other men. They won't be  
your sons, so you'll have  
to pay them...

ZEBEDEE

Pay them! I can't afford  
to pay them. I can't  
afford to pay anybody.  
Look, my nets have been  
empty for weeks.

JESUS

Look at them now.

The nets are teeming with fish.

ZEBEDEE

How'd you do that?

JESUS

Maybe the current changed.

(pause)

Zebedee, let your sons  
come with me. They can  
fish for men.

CUT TO:

EXT. SEA OF GENNASARET - AFTERNOON

Later the same day. Jesus and the disciples, now with  
James among them, walk past a stand of tall reeds.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALILEE - NIGHT

The disciples sleep in an olive grove. Jesus, awake, sits on a nearby knoll, looking into the night.

Judas walks over and sits next to him:

JUDAS

Rabbi, can I talk to you?

He sits next to him.

JUDAS

I'm not like these other men. I mean, they're good enough. But they're weak. How are they going to fight for you? They couldn't even fight for themselves. Where'd you find them? One's worse than the other. This is no army.

JESUS

I don't need soldiers.

JUDAS

You wanted me. And if I love somebody, I'd die for them. If I hate somebody, I'll kill them. I can even kill somebody I love if he does the wrong thing. Do you understand?

JESUS

I understand.

JUDAS

The other day when you said turn the other cheek to the man that hit you, I didn't like that. Only an angel could do that, only an angel or a dog. I'm a free man. I don't turn my cheek to anyone. You do need soldiers.

JESUS

Will soldiers make me free?

JUDAS

You want freedom for  
Israel?

JESUS

I want freedom for the  
soul.

JUDAS

First you free the body,  
then the soul. You know  
that. The Romans come  
first.

JESUS

The soul is first. If you  
don't change what the soul  
needs, you'll only replace  
Roman domination with  
another domination and  
nothing'll ever change.  
First you have to change  
man inside. Then man can  
change what's around him.  
It's wanting wealth and  
power that makes the soul  
want to dominate others.  
That's the wanting we have  
to change, we have to free  
the soul first. With love.

JUDAS

We all want that  
eventually. But right now  
the only way is to start  
from the bottom. You build  
a house from the  
foundation up...

(he turns)

Who's there?

Andrew, sleepy-eyed, walks over, concerned:

ANDREW

It's me, Andrew. Is  
everything...

JESUS

(interrupting)

Go back to sleep. Judas  
and I are talking.

Andrew turns and leaves. Judas waits, then speaks.

JUDAS

I still don't know who you are.

JESUS

Neither do I.

JUDAS

You can't look to the others for answers. All they can do is follow you. It's between you and me. When I went to kill you in the monastery, God took my strength away. That's what made me think, even if I didn't want to... that's what made me think you might be the one. The Messiah. Maybe you are, maybe you aren't, maybe you don't even know yourself if you are. That's why I said to myself, be patient for once in your life. See what he does, see what he says, and if he's not the Messiah there's plenty of time to kill him.

JESUS

How can I be the Messiah? First of all I wanted to kill those people when I saw them torturing Magdalene. Then when I opened my mouth, out came the word 'love.' Why? How can we tell?

JUDAS

Alright. You say God talks through you and right now I believe you. There's another one he talks through.

JESUS

The Baptist.

JUDAS

We'll go to see him. He stands out there every day preaching 'He is coming, he is coming.' As soon as he sees you he'll know who you are. He'll know if you're the one.

JESUS

I'm afraid, Judas. Stay here.

Judas spreads his blanket on the ground.

CUT TO:

EXT. GALILEE - NIGHT

Later that night. Judas and Jesus are asleep in each other's arms. Then Jesus appears to wake. On the ground in front of him is an apple. He reaches for it, takes a bite, extracts some seeds and the core. He scatters them on the ground. He watches where they fall.

And now we see: a tree has grown, ripe red apples hanging from its every branch.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER OF JORDAN - DAY

Jesus and his followers reach the edge of the Dead Sea. Andrew, a disciple of the Baptist, points ahead.

ANDREW

Up ahead. The water forms a pool in the caves. I'll show you.

JESUS

You're tired. Stay here.

ANDREW

No, I'd better come. It could be dangerous.

JESUS

NO. I want to go alone.

Jesus walks through the burning heat toward the caves. Judas, following behind, runs to catch up.

JUDAS

What about me! I'm  
supposed to be with you.

JESUS

Come on.

They walk down a slope. Jesus in front. Judas behind.  
John the Baptist's voice echoes in the distance.

Offscreen Voice:

THE BAPTIST (O.S.)

'Behold, I will raise up  
evil against you out of  
your own house, and I will  
take your wives before  
your eyes, and give them  
to your neighbor, and he  
shall lie with your wives  
in the sight of this sun.'

(2 SAMUEL XII, 11)

They push their way through a mixture of lower class  
Israelites, Ethiopians (painted nails, eyelashes, etc.),  
Chaldeans (brass rings in their noses, etc.) Some who  
have been or are about to be Baptized are naked.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. BAPTIST'S CAVE - DAY

Jesus and Judas approach. They enter a small cave like  
an antechamber in which the light has a slight greenish  
tint.

In the larger cave, the BAPTIST is preaching. Jesus  
gasps when he first sees him: a wild man, unkempt,  
unwashed, (hair like a Rastafarian). He shouts in the  
wind:

THE BAPTIST

"Roll on the ground, bite  
the dust, howl! The Lord  
of Hosts says: 'On this  
day I will command the sun  
to set at noon; I will  
crush the horns of the new  
moon and spill darkness  
over the earth.

(MORE)

THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

I will reverse your  
laughter, turn it into  
tears, and your songs I  
will turn into  
lamentations. I will blow  
and all your finery -  
hands, feet, noses, ears,  
hairs - will fall to the  
ground.' "

He's awesome. Even Judas is taken back. He grabs Jesus:

JUDAS

God. He sounds like the  
Messiah.

JESUS

No, the Messiah won't have  
an ax in his hand.

Judas pushes Jesus forward.

JUDAS

We'll see. Go in front.  
Let him see you.

Jesus walks slowly toward the Baptist, his eyes fixed on  
the prophet. The crowd flails and shouts; one half-naked  
woman slashes herself with sharp stones (throws herself  
on the ground, etc.).

JESUS (V.O.)

Even from behind, I knew I  
had seen him before.  
Where? When? Was it a  
dream? Yes, it was. But in  
the dream he was all  
dressed in white.

Jesus steps behind the Baptist. John suddenly turns at  
him.

THE BAPTIST

Who are you?

JESUS

(his voice  
anxious)  
Do you recognize me?

THE BAPTIST

Who are you?

JESUS

Have you read Isaiah? Do  
you know the prophets?  
What does Isaiah say?

THE BAPTIST

He says, "Prepare the way  
of the Lord." Are you  
telling me that's you?

JESUS

I don't know.  
(demanding)  
Tell me.

The Baptist looks around: the crowd wails in SILENT  
MOTION. A sudden calmness. We see them from Judas'  
P.O.V. Judas strains to hear but can't. The Baptist  
knows Jesus.

THE BAPTIST

Why are you here?

JESUS

To be baptized.

THE BAPTIST

I don't dare. If you are  
the Master, you should  
baptize me.

JESUS

Baptize me.

Jesus kneels at John's feet, throws off his robe (his  
nakedness partially hidden by people in the foreground).  
Judas looks on.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER OF JORDAN - NIGHT

Jesus and the Baptist sit in the cave by a fire built  
near the baptismal pool. An eerie blue-green light falls  
on the walls of the cave; their faces are reflected in  
the pool water. A group of pilgrims camp in the back of  
the cave. Music is heard.

Jesus and the Baptist are weary from hours of debate.

JESUS

Isn't love enough?

THE BAPTIST

No. The tree is rotten.  
You have to take the ax  
and cut it down.

JESUS

If I was a woodcutter, I'd  
cut. If I was fire, I'd  
burn. But I'm a heart and  
I love.

THE BAPTIST

I'm a heart also but I  
can't love what's unjust.  
I can't love evil. What I  
can't love I attack. God  
demands it. God demands  
anger.

JESUS

Anger? Aren't we all  
brothers?

THE BAPTIST

You think love is God's  
only way? Go to the Dead  
Sea. Look in the bottom,  
you'll see the two whores,  
Sodom and Gomorrah. God  
was angry. He threw fire  
at them, turned over the  
dry land and the sea  
swallowed them up. That's  
God's way. 'On the day of  
the Lord, blood will flow  
from wood, the stones of  
the houses will come alive  
and kill their owners!'  
That day is here. He gave  
me the ax, now I give it  
to you.

Jesus, frightened, turns away:

JESUS

That's not the answer.

THE BAPTIST (aggravated) No? Then what is the answer?

JESUS

I don't know. I think it's  
love.

THE BAPTIST

Well I know. And if you  
won't listen to me who  
will you listen to? To  
God? The God of Israel's a  
god of the desert. If you  
want to speak to him, then  
you go to the desert.

JESUS

(a beat)

I'll go to Idumaea.

THE BAPTIST

But be careful. The  
desert's full of sweet  
voices and death.

The Baptist walks over to Jesus.

JESUS

Thank you Baptist.

John kisses Jesus on the mouth.

JESUS (V.O.)

His tongue felt like a  
burning coal in my mouth.

Judas watches from a hole in the ceiling of the cave.  
From his P.O.V. he can't hear anything.

Jesus walks away, not looking back.

CUT TO:

EXT. IDUMAEA DESERT - SUNSET

Jesus runs across the desert as if pursued. He stops,  
pants, continues. The earth underneath is cracked. The  
whole landscape shimmers with heat under a huge white  
sun. (SPECIAL EFFECT). The image is tinted warm red.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - NEXT DAY

Jesus wanders through the wild, uninhabited terrain. The  
sun, like a blast furnace, blows sand into his face.

He starts to draw a large circle.

JESUS (V.O.)

I'm not going to leave  
this circle. I won't leave  
until you talk to me. No  
hums. No thunder. No  
headaches. Just talk to me  
in human words. Whatever  
path you want, I'll take.  
Love or the ax or anything  
else. Or if you want me to  
stay here and die I'll do  
that too. But you have to  
tell me.

He sits in the center of the circle.

He sees: the sun, looming huge in the sky, seeming to be  
unnaturally close to him. (SPECIAL EFFECT).

He sees: in the far distance, birds flying across a  
great plain.

He sees: on the flat desert, the plain of Sodom, a herd  
of gazelles.

He continues to watch as we...

FADE OUT:

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

FADE IN. Days have past. The hunger and deprivation are  
beginning to show on Jesus' face. His clothes are the  
color of soil.

JESUS

I don't want... I don't  
want to be alone.

He puts his head down, but hears sounds and looks into  
the moonlit night. SOUNDS: of water; bracelets;  
laughing. Then a large SERPENT coils at the edge of the  
circle, speaking in a half-human, half-animal voice.

SERPENT

I felt sorry for you. You  
were lonely. You cried, so  
I came.

JESUS

I didn't call you. Who are  
you?

SERPENT

Your soul.

JESUS

My soul.

SERPENT

You're afraid of being alone. Just like Adam. He called me and I reached into his ribs and gave him a wife.

JESUS

You're here to trick me.

SERPENT

Trick you? To love and care for a woman? To have a family - this is a trick? Why are you trying to save the world? Aren't your own sins enough for you? What arrogance to think it's your duty to save the world. The world doesn't have to be saved. Find love.

JESUS

I have love.

SERPENT

Look into my eyes, look at my breasts...

The Serpent's voice dissolves into the soft, comforting voice of Mary Magdalene.

SERPENT

... Do you recognize them? Say the word. Nod your head and we'll be in my bed together.

Jesus looks up, eyes glaring.

SERPENT

(compassionately  
)

Oh, Jesus.

The Serpent suddenly explodes, leaving no trace. Jesus places his head between his legs and begins to sob, as if he has lost a loved one.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

FADE IN. Another week has passed. Jesus' clothes are torn and tattered by the desert winds. He awakens.

JESUS (V.O.)

After ten days the hunger  
went away.

He hears a sound. A LION stands at the edge of the circle.

LION

Welcome, Jesus.  
Congratulations. You've  
overcome the small  
temptations of a woman, a  
family. We're both bigger  
than that. A woman's not  
enough, we need the whole  
world.

JESUS

Who are you?

LION

I'm you. I'm your heart.  
Your heart is so hungry.  
It pretends to be humble  
but it secretly wants to  
conquer the world. I will  
set my four feet down, one  
in Babylon, one in  
Jerusalem, one in  
Alexandria, the last in  
Rome.

JESUS

I've never wanted a  
kingdom on earth. The  
Kingdom of Heaven's good  
enough for me.

The Lion's voice transforms into Judas':

LION

You're a liar. You've  
always wanted power. When  
you were making crosses  
for the Romans in  
Nazareth, your head was  
exploding with dreams of  
power. You said it was  
God, but you really wanted  
to rule others. Now you  
will. Any country you  
want. All countries. You  
will rule Babylon. You  
will rule Jerusalem. You  
will rule Alexandria. You  
will even rule Rome.

Jesus, shaking, reaches out toward the Lion.

JESUS

Liar! Step into my circle  
so I can pull out your  
tongue.

The Lion steps into the circle, and, as he does,  
disappears.

FADE OUT:

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

FADE IN. Jesus lies sleeping. Another week has past.  
He's a wasted skeleton.

An ARCHANGEL stands at the circle's edge. The Angel  
appears as a normal ten-year-old boy speaking in the  
voice of a young girl. Jesus strains to see through his  
swollen eyelids:

JESUS

Archangel... go farther  
back. You're blinding me.

ARCHANGEL

I'm the one you've been  
waiting for. Remember when  
you were a child, you  
cried, 'Make me a God.  
God, make me a God.'

JESUS

But I was just a child  
then.

ARCHANGEL

Adonai. You are God. The Baptist knew it. It's time you admit it. I salute you, Son, only Son of God. Join me in power. We will rule together over the living and the dead. You'll give life and take life. You'll sit on the throne and I'll sit at your hand. Imagine how strong we could be together.

Jesus suddenly realizes who he's talking to:

JESUS

Satan!

The ripe tree from Jesus' dream appears behind the Archangel. The Angel offers an apple.

Jesus bites into the apple: it turns into blood in his mouth. The blood splashes down his chest.

ANGEL

(smiling)

We'll see each other again.

The Archangel turns and leaves. Jesus picks up a stick at his feet. The stick is an ax.

We see from over Jesus' shoulder. John the Baptist crouches down into the frame, puts his hand on Jesus' shoulder and speaks:

THE BAPTIST

Don't be afraid. You are the One. I was the one who came before you. My work is finished. Now I can die. The Lord wants me to tell you to stand up, his day is here. Take the ax. Run and carry the message to men.

Jesus rises and strikes at the root of the tree with an ax. Entire scene turns red.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY AND MARTHA'S - DAY

MARY and MARTHA, sisters in their early thirties, are working in their house. Mary sits at a weaving loom; Martha near the fire.

The door opens. An emaciated figure in tattered clothes stands silhouetted in the doorway. The sisters turn, aghast.

JESUS

I'm a foreigner. From  
Galilee. I need rest. The  
door was open. Excuse  
me... I...

MARY

We're alone. Our brother  
Lazarus is out.

MARTHA

What difference does that  
make? Come in. Don't  
listen to her. She's  
afraid of her own shadow.  
I'm Martha and this is my  
sister, Mary. There's not  
much here, but you're  
welcome to it. Who are  
you?

JESUS

Jesus of Nazareth.

MARTHA

(laughing,  
teasing)  
A good man?

JESUS

Yes, good.

Jesus staggers over to the hearth.

JESUS

(smiles as he  
sits)  
... I do my best.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY AND MARTHA'S - NIGHT

Jesus, washed and wearing a new tunic, eats bread and olives. Martha hands him a wine flask. Sitting by the fire, they almost look like a family. Jesus raises his pot of wine in a toast.

JESUS

Martha. Mary. I swear to you if there's another flood and if it's up to me to invite you into the ark, I'd do it. You'd both be on it. Because tonight a stranger came to your door. You fed him, dressed him, made him comfortable, spoke kindly to him, and the Kingdom of Heaven came down and went in his heart.

They drink. Mary and Martha look at Jesus flirtatiously.

MARY

Go on.

JESUS

(eating)

What should I say? Silence is good, It says everything.

MARY

It doesn't say everything to me. A kind word now and then helps.

MARTHA

Do you have a wife?

JESUS

(thinks)

No.

MARY

If you only knew what goes through a woman's mind when she weaves. You'd pity her, Jesus.

JESUS

I do know. I was once a woman, in another life, and I used to weave.

MARY

And what did you think about?

JESUS

God. And you?

MARTHA

God. But we think about men more.

MARY

God is a man after all. And men can be husbands.

Jesus smiles, but deliberately chooses not to pursue this subject. There is a brief silence.

JESUS

You know the Baptist? He died, didn't he?

MARY

He was killed... by Herod. You didn't know?

JESUS

No... I knew.

MARTHA

They say the King was drunk and cut off his head to satisfy a little girl... It happened in his palace in Jerusalem.

MARY

No, at his palace in Tiberias.

JESUS

(not listening)  
Jerusalem.

MARTHA

Is that where you're going, to Jerusalem?

MARY

I envy you.

JESUS

Not now. Eventually.

CUT TO:

INT. ROMAN CAVES - NIGHT

The disciples sit around a pool of water and two small fires. Other fires and groups of people are scattered around and behind them throughout the cave. One group plays music. The cave walls are washed in blue-green light; a brilliant streak of violent red cuts across the rock of the back wall.

JAMES

Now they say they're going to kill everyone who was baptized.

PHILIP

Nobody told you to get baptized.

PETER

You were baptized too. You begged for it. So be quiet.

JAMES

I can just imagine Galilee right now. The sea... I hear the fishing is so good that you just touch the nets and the fish jump in.

NATHANIEL

Don't talk about fish. It reminds me of my sheep. I don't know what's happened to them.

PETER

Maybe we should wait for him in Galilee.

JAMES

We promised the Master we'd wait here for him.

NATHANIEL

That was a month ago. He  
talks to the Baptist, then  
disappears.

JOHN

Brothers. I don't  
understand you. Think of  
the last words the Baptist  
said. He said 'Jesus of  
Nazareth, leave the  
desert. I am finished.  
Return to mankind!'

PHILIP

How do you know the  
Baptist really said that?

JOHN

(insisting)

Everybody says he did. But  
even if he didn't say it,  
those words are important  
because people believe  
them. I don't want to  
blaspheme, but what if our  
Master... what if he's the  
one?

JAMES

What one?

JOHN

The one.

There is silence.

PHILIP

But we don't know if the  
Baptist really said that.  
I mean, what if...

They argue.

JUDAS

(interrupting)

We're waiting here!

PETER

I don't know now.

(MORE)

PETER (CONT'D)

(pause)

I don't think we should go to Galilee. We should wait here, maybe.

JUDAS

(to Peter,  
sarcastic)

Changed your mind when you heard what John said, uh? 'The one?' That's what I like about you Peter, nobody can change your mind. Not you. What good are you?!

The apostles in front of Judas suddenly look past him. Judas turns and stands up.

John sinks to his knees.

JOHN

Master.

Reverse angle shows Jesus standing before them.

PETER

Rabbi. John heard your foot-steps in his heart... in a way... and we were just preparing to welcome you.

JESUS

Were you baptized?

PETER

Yes.

JESUS

John baptized with water and they killed him. Now I'll baptize with fire.

JUDAS

Is that what the Baptist told you?

JESUS

I have an invitation for you.

Momentary silence.

PETER

Is there a celebration?

JESUS

No, I'm not inviting you  
to a celebration. I'm  
inviting you to a war.

Jesus is standing at the edge of the pool. He reaches into his chest and rips out his own heart. He offers it at arm's length to the disciples. Blood drips from the ventricles.

JESUS

This is my heart. Take it.  
I lead the way to the  
Kingdom of God. The  
Kingdom of God's inside  
us. It's the Devil's  
kingdom that's outside,  
all around us. We'll turn  
an ax against the Devil's  
kingdom, against the  
world. If you have sheep,  
give them away. If you  
have nets, let them rot.  
If you have a family,  
children, leave them  
behind.

CAMERA tilts down following drops of heart blood which are dripping into the pool. The water begins to glow red.

Jesus now stands before them no longer holding his heart, but the ax the Baptist gave him in the desert.

JESUS

I once believed in love,  
now I carry this. Who's  
with me?

Judas falls to his knees in the water and kisses Jesus' feet.

JUDAS

Adonai!

CUT TO:

EXT. SAMARIA - DAY

Jesus and his followers (they have grown in number) walk through the Samaritan lowlands.

The group advances with determination and purpose. Judas walks at Jesus' right; Peter at his left. Women and children follow them.

They come upon pits dug into the ground. The soil is colored a strong green. Suddenly, bare arms come up out of some of the pits. Heads pop up from others. Then, seven deranged men and women, their naked bodies colored green from the soil, crawl out of the pits and run toward Jesus. They flail at him, some fall at his feet. Some beg in jibberish.

Judas and Peter try to ward them off. Jesus is angry - not at the men, but at the evil spirits that possess them.

He slaps one man, kicks another: he grabs one by the head and pushes on him causing him to fall:

JESUS

Satan! Leave them! Get  
out!

Judas and Peter hold Jesus as he touches each of the insane people. They are in the thick of what looks like a brawl. At one point, Jesus almost faints but is carried forward by the two apostles. Jesus shouts as he touches the possessed. After they have been confronted by Jesus, they grow suddenly calm. Some are confused, some praise Jesus. Jesus is held by the apostles, partially for protection and partially for strength.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANOTHER SAMARIA COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

A BLINDMAN, led by his BROTHER and SISTER, approach Jesus and the disciples. His reputation has spread through the countryside.

Jesus stops. He takes ground herbal powder from his sleeve and mixes it with sand. He spits into the mixture, then applies it to the Blind Man's eyes.

JESUS

Moses, Elijah, Isaiah -  
touch my mouth, touch my  
lips.

Jesus kisses the man's mud-caked eyes. The clay falls from the Blind Man's eyes. His gruesomely deformed eyes are now normal: he can see.

JESUS

Go to the temple. Let the  
high priests see you.

CUT TO:

EXT CANA - DAY

On a small hillside. A group of children, at the right of the frame, sees Jesus and the disciples approaching to the left along a path below. They giggle and run away to announce Jesus' arrival. A couple wave at him as they go.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANA - NIGHT

Six virgins, carrying lit lamps, sing a psalm at the wedding of Nathaniel's cousin. It's a festive, happy occasion.

Jesus exchanges small talk with a group waiting for the ceremony to begin. Everyone is in high spirits.

Mary Magdalene steps next to Jesus. She looks like a changed woman: simply dressed, radiant.

Jesus smiles and takes her hand. An OLD MAN says to Mary:

OLD MAN

You don't belong at a  
wedding. We're here to  
celebrate purity.

JESUS

Listen to me. What do you  
think the Kingdom of  
Heaven's like? It's like a  
wedding. God's the  
Bridegroom and Man's soul  
is the Bride. The wedding  
takes place in Heaven and  
everyone's invited.

(points to Mary)

God's Kingdom is large  
enough for everybody.

OLD MAN

Nazarene, that's against  
the law.

JESUS

The Law is against my  
heart.

CUT TO:

LATER

The ceremony is over. People are dancing. Jesus, the disciples and the guests are laughing, drinking and swapping stories. (MS SEE PG. 219 BOOK) Jesus' hand rests on Magdalene's shoulder. The wine has loosened everyone's spirits. Nathaniel is nearby frantically talking with his wife and two other family members.

JAMES

Nathaniel, what's wrong.

NATHANIEL

(walks over,  
mortified)

I didn't buy enough wine.  
More people came and  
stayed late and now we've  
run out.

Jesus points to several large vats:

JESUS

What's in those?

NATHANIEL

Water.

JESUS

No. It's wine.

NATHANIEL

No, no. It's water.

JESUS

Go over there and make  
sure. It's wine, I'm  
telling you.

Nathaniel, still unconvinced, goes over to a vat and tastes.

NATHANIEL

You're right. It is wine.

JAMES

(as a joke)

It's another miracle.

CUT TO:

LATER

Jesus, a little drunk and very happy, dances with men and women. Magdalene watches him, a mixture of reverence and longing on her face.

CUT TO:

EXT. NAZARETH - DAY

Sabbath. The faithful, fresh from synagogue, mill about under the date palms in the manner of churchmen over the centuries.

These are not common people. On the contrary, they represent the Jewish hierarchy: the severely moral Pharisees, Sadducees, in collusion with the Romans; and the landowners and shopkeepers who supported the synagogue.

Jesus calls out:

JESUS

Brothers! Sisters! My old  
friends! Listen to me!  
Listen to me.

The churchmen, curious, gather around.

JESUS

(continuing)

The prophet was talking  
about me. God talked to me  
in the desert. He gave me  
a great secret and told me  
to bring it to you -  
didn't you hear me coming?  
I ran here first - to  
Nazareth - where I grew  
up - to give you the news.  
The Lord's Kingdom is  
here.

VILLAGER #1

(taunting)

You do miracles. Do a miracle for us, make us believe in you. Otherwise, go away!

JESUS

(impassioned)

The Messiah doesn't need miracles. He is the miracle. The Day of the Lord is here. Are you ready? I've come to tear down the world around you. The old world will be replaced by the new world. The Kingdom of Heaven! The Kingdom of God! So call the poor and give them your food. What do you care about your possessions? Your gold and silver will rust and their rust will eat your flesh like fire. Flood and fire will come down, and the new Ark will float above the flames. I hold the keys and I open the Ark and I select. My brothers of Nazareth, you're the first I invite. Come and enter.

The villagers boo and laugh. Some children put stones in their hands.

VILLAGER #1

A boat. We're in the desert and he tells us about a boat.

VILLAGER #2

Aren't you the son of Mary? Right? Who are you to tell us about God.

VILLAGER #3

You made better crosses  
than speeches.

(to companion as  
he walks away)

Go get somebody from his  
family. This is  
embarrassing.

JESUS

What are you laughing at?  
Everything you have will  
burn!! Soon! Leave your  
homes! Come with me to  
Jerusalem!

VILLAGER #2

This is what happens when  
a man doesn't marry. The  
semen backs up into his  
brain.

Someone throws a stone; it grazes Jesus' head, drawing  
blood.

VILLAGER #4

Go home! You're full of  
devils.

JESUS

(wiping blood  
from his brow)

This is my home!

Peter and Judas rush to Jesus' defense. Judas puts his  
hand to his dagger.

VILLAGER #2

Kill him!

He throws another rock.

PETER

What are you doing that  
for? That's a shame.

VILLAGER #2

He's a sorcerer. He's  
calling the fire to come  
down on us!

POOR VILLAGER

Don't touch him! God's  
Kingdom is for the poor.  
It's our Kingdom!

The rich and poor scuffle. Judas, Jesus, Peter and the others, all disgusted, break free from the brawl. Jesus looks back, confused and angry.

JESUS

(yelling back at  
crowd)

If I could touch every  
stone, breathe on every  
twig, they would rise up  
and join me! Come with me!  
Jerusalem is falling. I  
can feel it!

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE NAZARETH - DAY

Jesus and his followers head across the plain toward Samaria. He turns to Judas who walks at his side:

JESUS

See these misfits. They're  
crippled, they're blind,  
they're poor. That's our  
army. They shout and the  
Old Jerusalem will fall.

JUDAS

We'll need more men than  
this.

JESUS

God will provide them.  
We're going to build a New  
Jerusalem.

Mary comes out of the crowd near him and grabs Jesus' arm.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

Son. Please. Come back  
with me.

JESUS

Who are you woman?

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

You know who I am. Don't  
you recognize me? I'm your  
mother.

JESUS

I have no mother. I have  
no family. Only my father  
who's in heaven. Get away  
from me.

He shakes off her arm. She trips, Jesus keeps walking,  
followed by the disciples. Peter and a WOMAN help Mary  
to her feet. Peter walks on as Mary and the woman turn  
back to town.

WOMAN

Mary... why are you  
crying? Didn't you see  
them?

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

See what?

WOMAN

When he spoke to you,  
thousands of blue wings,  
behind him, I swear to you  
Mary, there were armies of  
angels.

MARY (MOTHER OF JESUS)

I didn't see anything.  
What good are angels to  
me? I wanted children and  
grand-children behind him,  
not angels.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALONG THE JORDAN RIVER - DAY

Jesus and his ragtag "army" continue their southward  
march.

Martha and Mary, dressed in black, approach Jesus.

MARTHA

Rabbi, forgive us. Our  
brother Lazarus is very  
sick.

MARY

We heard you've healed the  
sick, made cripples walk,  
that you preformed  
miracles...

JESUS

(interrupts)

Take me to him.

CUT TO:

LAZARUS' TOMB - SUNSET

Jesus, Mary, Martha and the disciples stand before the  
tomb, which is sealed by a large boulder. There is a  
small crowd of mourners nearby.

JESUS

When was he buried?

BETHANY WOMAN

Three days ago.

JESUS

Roll the stone away.

Judas and Peter elicit the help of two others and lean  
their shoulders to it.

JESUS (V.O.)

What can I do? How much  
can I do?

The stone moves: a hideous stench gusts from the tomb.  
Some disciples turn their faces: others put  
handkerchiefs to their noses.

Jesus stands at the entrance of the tomb and yells. His  
voice echoes: a wild, strange cry, like something from  
another world.

JESUS

Lazarus! In the name of  
the prophets, in the name  
of Jeremiah and my Father,  
in the name of most Holy  
God, I demand that you  
rise and come out!

At first, nothing. Then we begin to hear a soft rustling inside the tomb. Jesus is apprehensive. He stares at the tomb's entrance. Suddenly a decomposed skeletal human hand reaches out. The crowd gasps. Jesus, startled, jumps. Slowly, Jesus reaches out, moves a bit closer and clasps the corpses' hand. He is terrified. Suddenly, the corpse pulls back as if to yank Jesus into the tomb. Jesus is more frightened. He stands his ground. Then, Jesus decides to pull and the corpse comes out. The disciples and the crowd are stunned. The desiccated figure, Lazarus, is covered head to toe in white burial cloth. His free hand slowly unwraps the cloth from his face. Strips of rotting flesh hang loose. Lazarus embraces Jesus.

LAZARUS

Adonai.

Jesus is shocked by his own miracle.

JESUS (V.O.)

Is the power of God so  
strong? If it can raise  
the dead, can it also move  
mountains? Can it destroy  
Rome? Tear the world in  
half? God help me.

Jesus embraces Lazarus.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEMPLE AT JERUSALEM - EARLY MORNING SUNRISE

Jesus and his companions are walking along the ruins. ("Excavations in Jerusalem") The city wall is behind them.

Then from above, ("St. Steven's Gate") they enter the Roman ruins. An arch towers above them, a pool below them. some inhabitants of the ruins watch.

They enter the temple plaza.

Jesus enters the temple grounds with his central core of disciples. They have come to worship.

But they are stopped cold by the sight that greets them. Arranged all around the stairs that lead to the temple are money-changers, merchants, beggars and whores. A tall, shiny bronze statue of Tiberius towers over the plaza floor, which is stained with the blood of sacrificial animals. Jesus turns to Peter.

JESUS

We came here to pray. What is this?

PETER

The money-changers? Its' for the temple tax... for the feast.

Jesus calmly addresses a money-changer.

JESUS

How's the exchange today? Making a good profit?

MONEY-CHANGER

Fair. Can I help you?

Jesus stares for a moment and then with one violent blow sends the counter filled with coins sailing into the money- changer's face.

Jesus, now enraged, strides past the booths, overturning the tables. Scales, weights and coins from all over the world scatter in every direction. The vendors rush to retrieve their money.

Other vendors and customers turn on Jesus. Judas, Peter and the others forcibly fight them off. Jesus calls out:

JESUS

This is my Father's house.  
It's a place for worship,  
not a bank, or a market.

The disciples circle Jesus for his protection. The RABBI, surrounded by SADDUCESS, steps out of the temple.

RABBI

Nazarene, what are you doing?

JESUS

God doesn't need a grand house. He doesn't need cyprus and bloody animals. He doesn't need shekels.

RABBI

You expect people to pay  
the tax in Roman coins?  
They have images of false  
gods on them. You want  
pagan gods in the temple?  
All foreign coins have to  
be changed to shekels.  
That the law.

JESUS

I abolish the law. I give  
a new law and a new hope!

RABBI

What, did God change his  
mind about the old law?

JESUS

(exasperated)

No, no. He just thinks our  
hearts are ready now to  
hold more.

RABBI

(not listening)

This chaos is your new  
law? How can you  
presume...

JESUS

How can I presume? Because  
I am the fulfillment of  
the old law and the  
beginning of the new.

SADDUCEE

(shocked)

Watch what you're saying.

Peter, becoming concerned with the drift of this  
argument, whispers to Jesus.

PETER

Maybe we should go...

Jesus pushes him away.

JESUS

When I say, 'I,' Rabbi, I  
am saying 'God.'

RABBI

That's blasphemy!

JESUS

Didn't you hear? I'm the Saint of Blasphemy. Don't make any mistakes. I haven't come to bring peace, I've come to bring a sword.

SADDUCEE

Talking like that will get you killed.

JESUS

I'm sick of all of you. This temple will be destroyed in three days. One stone won't be left standing on another. You think God belongs only to you?! He doesn't! God's an immortal spirit and belongs to everybody - to the whole world. You're not special! God is not an Israelite!

Even the disciples are shocked by this heresy. They escort Jesus out of the temple grounds for his own safety.

As they reach the bottom of the temple steps they are mobbed. The beggars press on Jesus, pulling at his arms and legs.

MOB MEMBER #1

Magician! Heal me.

MOB MEMBER #2

Cure us. Make us rich.

MOB MEMBER #3

Heal me. Do a miracle. You want me to enter the Kingdom of Heaven crippled like this?

JESUS

(pushes them  
away)

Get away. You sicken me.  
You're selfish! You're  
full of hate! God won't  
help you.

MOB MEMBER #1

Cure us or you won't leave  
this city alive!

JESUS

You don't demand from God!

The disciples intervene and pull Jesus away. The mob follows. Suddenly, four Roman Calvary men stampede into the mob whipping beggars and everyone else. Jesus and the disciples break loose from the fray.

ROMAN OFFICER

You, all of you stop.  
Which one of you is Jesus  
of Nazareth?

The disciples groan.

JESUS

I am.

ROMAN OFFICER

Come with us. The  
Procurator wants to see  
you.

The calvarymen lead Jesus away, leaving the disciples behind.

As they watch him go, SAUL, a Zealot, comes up behind Judas and draws him aside.

SAUL

We need you. What are you  
doing with this magician?  
First you were supposed to  
kill him. Now he acts like  
a prophet and you follow  
him.

JUDAS

What are you saying?  
Didn't you just hear him?

SAUL

I heard him. He talks  
about a new law, he talks  
about using a sword. But  
we took an oath to use the  
sword against Rome. I  
don't see anything against  
Rome here. All I see here  
is Jew against Jew.

Judas walks away from him.

CUT TO:

INT. ROMAN THEATRE - DAY

The Roman soldiers escort Jesus into the open theatre.

Pilate confers with two soldiers at a table near the  
stage. He watches a play in rehearsal. (See Director,  
Production Designer, and Costumer for details of play.)

Pilate is informed of Jesus' presence and turns to him.

PILATE

Are you Jesus of Nazareth,  
King of the Jews?

JESUS

I'm no king.

PILATE

You aren't the Messiah?  
They say you are. You say  
you are.

JESUS

My kingdom's not on this  
earth.

PILATE

Oh? Where is it then? In  
the air, maybe?

JESUS

In heaven.

PILATE

Good. Keep it there. They  
tell me you do miracles.  
Is this good magic or bad  
magic? Can you do a trick  
for us?

JESUS

I'm not a pet. I don't do tricks.

PILATE

That's disappointing. I was hoping to see something.

JESUS

The prophet Daniel had a vision. A huge statue had a gold head, and silver shoulders...

PILATE

(interrupts)

Don't tell me stories. I'm not a dumb Jew.

JESUS

Listen. Learn.

PILATE

(daring him)

Go ahead. Teach me something.

JESUS

The stomach was bronze, the legs were iron, the feet were clay. A stone was thrown. The clay feet broke and the statue collapsed.

PILATE

Is that it?

JESUS

God is the thrower. I'm the stone. Rome is the statue.

PILATE

Clearly. But that's how you're going to bring down the Roman Empire? One stone? Only you?

Jesus starts to speak, then stops.

JESUS (V.O.)  
God, give me the answer. I  
don't know what to say.

PILATE  
No answer?

JESUS (V.O.)  
Please speak to me. I need  
words.

A pain suddenly surges through the back of Jesus' neck.  
His knees buckle. For a moment he seems crippled.

PILATE  
You're not a stone. You're  
excrement. Get him out of  
here.

Jesus is confused, humiliated, and in pain. Soldiers  
start to lead him out.

PILATE  
And my wife dreams about  
you. She should see you  
now.

Pilate turns back to the play.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARY AND MARTHA'S HOUSE - DAY

Lazarus, his back to us, is resting and looking out over  
the valley. His hand reaches for a cup of water. The  
fingers are more whole. He seems to be healing.

It is midday, Lazarus thinks he is by himself.

VOICE  
Lazarus. Lazarus.

He turns in the direction of the voice. We see Saul, the  
Zealot who spoke to Judas in the temple at Jerusalem.

SAUL  
Feeling better?

LAZARUS  
I like the light.

SAUL

What was it like? Which is better, life or death?

LAZARUS

Well, I was a little surprised. There wasn't that much difference...

SAUL

Well, let me help you make up your mind.

Another arm comes in from behind and grabs Lazarus around the neck. Saul pulls a sword and very professionally plunges it into Lazarus' chest, ripping upwards towards his heart.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE JERUSALEM - NIGHT

Judas, who has been looking for Jesus, finds him alone on the road leading out of the city. He sits beside him.

JUDAS

I've been looking all over for you. For two days. We're really worried about you. I have to tell you. They killed Lazarus.

Jesus collects his thoughts.

JESUS

Who?

JUDAS

Zealots.

JESUS

Your people. Why?

JUDAS

Because he was the living proof of your power. Zealots say you're paid by the Romans to tell the people only heaven is important. Not their life now. Not being dominated by Romans. That's very dangerous.

JESUS

(quietly)

Yes. It make everything clearer.

JUDAS

Clearer? What are you talking about, clearer? It just makes everything worse. We want a revolution, the Zealots want a revolution but now they're against us. We can't let that happen. We need them.

JESUS

Do you want to join them, then?

JUDAS

No. They're my brothers, but you're my master.

JESUS

You are the strongest, aren't you? Of all my friends, you're the strongest. I have to tell you something.

JUDAS

Tell me whatever you want. You can depend on me.

JESUS

You know why I came to Jerusalem?

JUDAS

This is where we're going to fight. This is where the revolution's going to happen.

Jesus nods.

JESUS

Last night Isaiah came to me.

JUDAS

(eager)

What did he say?

JESUS

He opened his book and I read in giant letters: 'He has borne our faults; he was wounded for our transgressions. He was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. Despised and rejected by all, he went forward without resisting, like a lamb led to the slaughter.'

JUDAS

(pause)

So? What does that have to do with you?

JESUS

Judas. I'm the lamb. I'm the one who is going to die.

JUDAS

What do you mean, die? Die? Did you change your mind again.

JESUS

No.

Judas jumps up.

JUDAS

Then what are you talking about? That can't be. If you're the Messiah, why do you have to die?

JESUS

Don't shout. You'll understand soon. At first I didn't understand myself.

JUDAS

Every day you have a  
different plan. I can't  
believe it. First it's  
love, then it's the ax,  
now you have to die. What  
good could that do. We  
need you alive.

JESUS

I can't help it. God only  
talks to me a little at a  
time. He only shows me as  
much as I have to know.  
Now I finally understand.  
All my life. All my life  
I've been followed. By  
footsteps. By voices. By  
headaches. By shadows. And  
you know what the shadow  
is? It's the cross. I have  
to die on the cross. And I  
have to die willingly...  
We need courage, Judas. We  
need faith. I'm the  
fulfillment of the  
prophecy. The cross is the  
way I have to take.

Judas is dumbfounded, and his anger is mounting.

JESUS

So we go to Jerusalem. We  
go back to the temple.  
Whatever happens there  
will put me on the cross.

JUDAS

(barely  
controlling his  
anger)

And after you die on the  
cross? What happens then?

JESUS

I'll come back to judge  
the living and the dead.

JUDAS

(pause)

I don't believe you.

JESUS  
If you don't believe,  
nobody will. You have to  
believe. You're the  
strongest.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE JERUSALEM - DAY

A blazing sun. Jesus and the disciples on the march.  
Following close behind is an entourage of twenty toughs.

James turns to Judas.

JAMES  
I'm worried he's going to  
change his mind again.

JUDAS  
No he won't. We're taking  
the temple.

JAMES  
What if we don't.

JUDAS  
We'll die.

JAMES  
(looking around)  
There aren't many of us.  
And nobody back there  
looks like a soldier.

JUDAS  
God will provide.

Near them, Nathaniel and Philip are talking.

NATHANIEL  
What do you want?

PHILIP  
What do you mean?

NATHANIEL  
When we build the New  
Jerusalem and set up the  
new government.

PHILIP

(thinks)

Well, I guess I'd like more sheep. You know, my other sheep, I don't even know where they are now. This time I want a large herd. I'd hire other shepherds to take care of them. You know, Laban, that man who has a large farm north of Tiberias? I'd like one like that.

NATHANIEL

Yeah.

PHILIP

How about you?

NATHANIEL

First, I'd like to be able to worship in the temple. I mean really worship - without Roman banners and soldiers standing around.

PHILIP

(nods)

Of course. But what else?

Behind them, John, Andrew and Thomas argue.

THOMAS

I'm not afraid.

JOHN

Then don't act like it.

THOMAS

I'll do anything the Master asks... anything but get crucified.

ANDREW

You're a coward.

THOMAS

Call me a coward after you've been hanging up there for two days and the crows come and suck out your eyes.

JOHN

I made my decision. If you  
can't make yours, leave  
now before we enter the  
Kingdom.

THOMAS

(touches his  
chest)

I'm ready. I have my  
knife.

Peter passes by and rushes a little anxiously to catch  
up with Jesus, who is walking at the front of the line.

PETER

I've been talking with the  
others, and listening, and  
a lot of us are a little  
concerned, we're  
wondering... well... will  
you have legions of angels  
meeting us there? Or  
anyone? Besides who's  
here?

Jesus doesn't answer, but he puts his arm around Peter's  
shoulder.

CUT TO:

EXT. JERUSALEM - DAY

Jesus and his followers - about a hundred strong - pass  
through "The excavations around Jerusalem." The city  
wall is behind them. More people begin to join the  
ranks.

They enter "St. Stephen's Gate" (the arch over a pool of  
water). The mob grows around them. Some have palm  
branches.

They are now in the "Underground City." Jesus is riding  
a donkey. Women and children wave palm branches, throw  
flowers, lay down palms and shawls in Jesus' path. They  
cheer "Rosanna, Rosanna."

A new chant - abetted by Judas and his followers - goes  
up: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

The procession reaches the temple plaza. Jesus dismounts  
and looks around.

Outside the temple walls, stalls occupy every nook and cranny. Hundreds of people are selling, buying, bargaining, hawking their wares: merchants, money-changers, innkeepers, prostitutes.

Jesus, full of rage, followed by the disciples, sweeps down on the wine stands and workshops, overturning the tables, striking the tradesmen with his goad. (determined crane - MS)

JESUS

Get out! Away!

Jesus mounts the temple steps. Smoke seems to be coming from his body. This is his moment.

Behind him, everyone loots stalls and routs merchants with great enthusiasm, as if Jesus' solitary act of anger last time in the temple had now become an example for mob action.

On the top of the temple steps, Jesus pauses momentarily.

JESUS (V.O.)

Lord, I hope this is what you want. Please let it happen quickly, while I have the strength.

Now he turns to face the mob.

JESUS

I am here to set fire to the world! In the desert The Baptist said, 'Repent, Repent! The day of the Lord is coming!' but I'm saying it's too late to repent. The Day of the Lord's already here! I am the Day of the Lord. I come with the baptism of fire!

The poor in the mob yell: "Fire! Fire - burn it all down!"

The TEMPLE GUARDS (usually Levites) grab their lances and swords. Judas' cohorts draw their weapons.

Suddenly, there is a blast of trumpets. ROMAN SENTRIES, heavily armed, appear on top of the temple walls. There are dozens of them, and they are ready to fight.

The people look up. Jesus stops. Peter is still rallying the crowd, lighted torch in his hand.

PETER

Let's go! Now's the time!

The crowd looks from the Romans to Jesus. For the moment, the crowd is still with him. Judas whispers urgently to Jesus.

JUDAS

They're all with you!  
They're waiting for your  
signal! Give it!

Peter looks over at Jesus.

PETER

Come on! Now!

Jesus looks from the Romans on the wall to the ground.

JESUS (V.O.)

Please. I'm waiting too.  
Put the ax in my hands.  
Not the cross. Let me die  
like this.

JOHN

If you don't give the sign  
now, we're finished. We'll  
be killed for what we did  
today.

PHILIP

We came here to fight, not  
to die!

Jesus remains still.

JUDAS

Master, we knew they would  
be strong! We knew it  
would be like this.

The Roman Soldiers swarm off the walls and start down into the temple.

Jesus looks at his hands: blood oozes from his palms. He closes his fists to hide the stigmata and raises his eyes to Judas.

JESUS  
Judas. Come beside me.

Judas puts his arm around Jesus. The crowd, confused and furious, starts to scatter. Some of them throw things at the disciples as they all scramble to avoid the violence of the Roman soldiers.

JESUS  
(to Judas)  
Stay by my side.

The other disciples swarm around Jesus and Judas and form a wedge. As the Roman soldiers disperse through the temple courtyard, Jesus and the disciples are swept by the frantic crowd into a side street leading to the Underground City below the temple.

CUT TO:

EXT. JERUSALEM - SUNSET

Passover preparations are underway. At twilight we see the "excavations in Jerusalem." Over a hundred people in black move across them. Large candles cover the entire site.

We see now elderly Jews cleansing themselves at the ritual baths. The steam rises to the sky.

The "Underground City" is teeming with men, women, children, (animals) preparing for the celebration. They wear black and white shawls and are bathed in candlelight. Psalms, music and voices are heard.

Jesus and Judas are walking and watching carefully. They stop at a selected spot between two trees.

JUDAS  
There's got to be  
something else you can do.

JESUS  
I wish there was. At the  
temple I prayed. I prayed  
to die. But it's not God's  
will.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

I have to die on the cross. I prayed out of weakness and I'm weakening even more. You've got to give me strength.

JUDAS

I won't let you die.

JESUS

You've got to. There's no other way. The world around us is Satan's world. It will be destroyed! The world of God will come! But only by my dying! By my sacrifice on the cross! Forget everything else! Understand that.

JUDAS

No I can't. I'm not strong enough.

JESUS

You are. You're the strongest. You're part of God's plan too. You once made me a promise. You said if I ever strayed, if I ever shied away from revolution, you would kill me. Remember?

Judas nods.

JESUS

I've strayed, haven't I?

JUDAS

Yes.

JESUS

Then you have to keep your word. You have to kill me.

JUDAS

If God wants that, then let God do it. I won't.

JESUS

He will do it. Through you. The Temple Guards want to arrest me where there aren't any crowds. Tonight we'll be in Gethsemane. Arrange for them to find me. It will be terrible. But only for three days. Only three days! Then I'll come back. We'll all be together in triumph.

JUDAS

No.

JESUS

You've got to! Don't abandon me now. Without you, the world can't be saved, There'll be no redemption. Without us together, the sacrifice can't be made.

JUDAS

Could you betray God? If you were me, could you betray your Master?

JESUS

No. That's why God gave me the easier job... to be crucified.

CUT TO:

INT. UPPER ROOM - NIGHT

Three seven-branched candelabra illuminate the lamb, wine and unleavened bread.

The disciples are seated on cushions on the ground. Food is brought in from an adjacent room.

Mary, Martha and Magdalene have all come to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival with Jesus and his disciples and prepare the ritual meal.

Jesus fills the disciples cups from a pitcher of salt water.

JESUS

Our ancestors in Egypt  
celebrated Passover before  
they escaped to the  
freedom of the desert. On  
this Passover we come out  
of another kind of slavery  
and enter another kind of  
freedom.

PHILIP

Oh, please. We're hiding  
here like criminals, we  
can't go out the door, and  
even if we could we  
wouldn't want to because  
we've been so humiliated,  
we'd like to respect  
you...

JOHN

Respect him? We love him.

PHILIP

...yes, alright, yes, we  
love him, that goes  
without saying, but at  
least he could...

JESUS

(interrupting)

First... first... first we  
drink salt water to  
remember the tears and  
pain our ancestors  
suffered in the land of  
Israel.

Jesus swallows his drink in a single gulp; Judas is the  
first to do likewise. Mary brings a tray of bitter  
herbs. As the disciples eat, Jesus watches.

JESUS

Tonight we go further.  
This passover celebrates  
the passage from death to  
eternal life. I'll lead  
the way, you will follow.  
John, you know the  
prophets.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

Isaiah says, 'He had  
neither beauty nor luster  
that we should turn our  
eyes to him. He was  
despised and rejected by  
men...'

JOHN

(continues)

'...But he took on himself  
all our pains. He was  
wounded for our  
transgressions, he was  
bruised for our  
inequities, and with his  
stripes we are healed.'

JESUS

(interrupting)

'...He was scourged and he  
was afflicted. Yet, like a  
lamb led to the slaughter,  
he opened not his mouth.'

(a beat)

My dear, wonderful  
friends. I am the lamb.  
And I won't open my mouth.  
They've been leading me to  
the slaughter ever since I  
was born.

The disciples exchange fearful glances.

PETER

If you die, I'll die  
first. Because I'll be at  
your side.

JESUS

Be quiet. What did you  
have before I found you?  
All of you. Nothing.

(no answer)

Now you have God's love -  
and eternal life. Don't  
worry. You won't die yet.  
There's still a lot of  
work to do. We haven't  
come to rule, but to  
serve. In three days I'll  
rise from the dead to lead  
you.

The disciples stare in shocked silence. Jesus has either gone completely mad - or he is the Messiah.

Jesus breaks the bread loaves and passes them around. He pours wine for the others:

JESUS

Eat, this is my body.  
Drink, this is my blood. I  
will be in you always.

As they do, the bread and the wine transubstantiate into flesh and blood in their mouths. They blanch and cough; some blood falls on the table. Peter removes the substance from his mouth with his hand and examines it: it has the consistency of blood and flesh. This is literally hard for all the disciples to swallow. But they all persevere, and, finally, they all manage to do it. As they wipe their bloody mouths, John starts to weep. Jesus turns and looks at Judas.

Judas exits... Peter shouts angrily after him:.

PETER

Judas, where are you  
going?  
(to Jesus)  
Where's he going?

JESUS

Don't get in the way.  
Tonight we'll go to  
Gethsemane to pray.

CUT TO:

EXT. GETHSEMANE - NIGHT

As they climb the steep hills of Gethsemane, Jesus leaves most of his group behind and proceeds with Peter, James and John. Passing through thick, gnarled olive groves, they reach a clearing marked by three boulders. (looks like a Henry Moore sculpture). The leaves glisten on the trees all around them.

JESUS

Wait for me here.

Jesus walks alone until he finds a secluded spot. Pulling his tunic around him, he kneels beneath an ancient tree.

JESUS

Father, Father in heaven.  
Father on earth. The world  
you created that we can  
see is beautiful. But the  
world you created that we  
can't see is beautiful  
too. I don't know -  
forgive me - Father, I  
don't know which is the  
more beautiful.

Jesus scoops up a handful of soil and smells it. "What  
perfume" he thinks. Then as he rubs the soil on his  
cheeks, neck and lips, he speaks.

JESUS

This is my body too.  
Together we will die.

Jesus' body weakens. He starts to sweat.

JESUS

Abba, Father, we've been  
together a long time. I  
never asked to be chosen,  
but, I always obeyed.  
You've done many miracles  
for others. You opened the  
Red Sea for Moses. You  
saved Noah. You took  
Elijah directly to heaven  
in a fiery chariot. Now  
you ask me to be  
crucified. Can I ask you  
one last time? Do I have  
to die? Is there any other  
way? Do I have to drink  
from this cup? Can't you  
take it away from me?

Jesus waits for an answer that doesn't come. The wind  
blows through the olive trees.

Jesus looks over, sees Peter, James and John asleep.

Now, in front of him, a GUARDIAN ANGEL in the form of  
one of the sleeping disciples appears and sets a clay  
cup before Jesus.

JESUS

Is this your answer?

The Angel drinks from the cup then hands it to Jesus.

Jesus reaches for the cup, but the Angel no longer holds it. His hand is empty. Then, slowly, the Angel's hand reaches forward and lightly caresses the top of Jesus' head to comfort him.

JESUS  
Your will be done. I only  
ask for strength.

Jesus wipes the sweat and tears from his face and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. GETHSEMANE - NIGHT

At the three-point rock Jesus finds Peter, James and John fast asleep. John's head rests peacefully on his brother's chest. Peter lies flat with his arms outstretched. Jesus is tempted not to wake them.

JESUS  
(softly)  
Couldn't you stay awake  
with me for just an hour?

Peter is the first to awake.

PETER  
I'm sorry.

Jesus hears the sound of soldiers in the distance.

JESUS  
It doesn't matter. It's  
too late.

Jesus hears the evening nightingale overheard. A feeling of peace sweeps over him. He smiles at James and John as they awaken. (moving camera here to end of scene?)

Judas and a band of Romans and armed Temple Guards carrying long torches burst into the clearing. Peter pulls his dagger; Jesus pushes him back. Judas greets his master.

JUDAS  
Welcome, Rabbi.

Judas kisses him fiercely on the mouth. Jesus gratefully embraces his faithful disciple. Tears stream down Judas' cheek.

Peter attacks and slices off one of the Temple Guard's ears.

Jesus pushes Judas unwillingly away. He turns to Peter, touches the knife simply (36 f.p.s.).

JESUS

No. You live by this, you  
die by it.

The knife falls to the ground (36 f.p.s.). Two guards grab Peter but he wrestles them off and runs away. Jesus picks up the severed ear (36 f.p.s.) and miraculously restores it to the Levite (36 f.p.s.).

JESUS

Welcome. You're the  
messengers of God. Let's  
go.

CUT TO:

INT. ANTONIA - DAY

Jesus again stands before Pilate. He is bloody, beaten, exhausted from lack of sleep. A clique of Temple Guards, Pharisees and Sadducees stand in one corner of the hall.

PILATE

You're back.  
(pause)  
Hello.  
(pause)  
So now you're a king. Is  
that right?

Jesus stares at the sky.

PILATE

Don't look in the air.  
Look at me. Answer me. I  
can crucify you. You know  
that? Now... are you a  
king?

JESUS

Some say so.

PILATE

Ah yes. Well last time you took that line with me, you fooled me. I don't like to be fooled. What you did in the temple makes it very clear. You're just another of these religious revolutionaries making difficulties. You take the people into the desert, you talk about God, love, mercy and the new kingdom, but you're just the same as the Zealots. You all promise glory and bring death. There's a new Messiah every week and a new one dies every week and Rome continues.

JESUS

Remember the statue. And the stone. And the clay feet.

PILATE

How could I forget. Still think your kingdom will replace Rome?

JESUS

No. My kingdom is not on earth.

PILATE

No, it wouldn't be. You're a little smarter than the others. After all, what's a revolution on earth compared to a revolution in people's hearts?

JESUS

It's a revolution that will come with love, not by the sword.

PILATE

Either way it's dangerous.  
It's against Rome. It's  
against the way the world  
is. And either way, I  
don't care. Sword or love,  
it's all the same. I don't  
care how you want to  
change things. We don't  
want them changed. So you  
know what has to happen.  
We have a small space for  
you up on Golgotha. Right  
next to the bones of your  
predecessors. Three  
thousand skulls there,  
very likely more by now.  
Maybe you people should go  
out and count them  
sometime. Maybe then you'd  
learn your lesson. But  
probably not.

Pilate looks over at the Pharisees and Sadducees.

PILATE

Do you gentlemen have  
anything to add?

SADDUCEE

We can't condone the  
killing of any Jew. But  
everything this man does  
and everything he says  
could lead to revolution.  
We don't want revolution.  
Action against a power  
like Rome is hopeless. It  
invites reprisals that  
would mean the extinction  
of the Jewish people. It's  
the death of one man  
against the death of  
millions. There's no  
alternative for us.

PHARISEE

Many of our own people  
believe this man is being  
paid by Rome anyway.

PILATE

Fine. It's agreed.  
(to Jesus)  
But just so people  
appreciate your rank,  
we'll write it all out for  
them. "King of the Jews."

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTONIA - DAY

Direct overhead angle: We see down a thick column. Jesus is tied to it, naked. (obscured nudity) He is scourged.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTONIA - LATER

Weakened, bloody, naked (obscured nudity), Jesus is being swung by the arm like a rag doll into a solid wall (pan). Closer, we see his face as it hits the wall, smashing his nose.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTONIA - LATER

Close of a crown of thorns (rather, a skullcap of them), being hit onto his head with the broad edge of a sword.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTONIA - LATER

In the distance, Roman soldiers lead Jesus onto the balcony overlooking the temple plaza and present him to the awaiting mob. His tunic is drenched with blood.

The crowd watching this ceremony is literally divided against itself. Half is cheering and carousing, a real lynch mob. The other half is angry and shouting to stop the crucifixion. Soldiers manage to contain these little pockets of action.

PETER stands watching with his back pressed against a wall. A BEGGAR turns to him.

BEGGAR

I've seen you. You're one  
of his followers.

PETER

No. It must be somebody  
else.

BEGGAR

No, it's you.

PETER

You don't know what you're  
talking about.

Peter turns quickly and disappears into the crowd.

CUT TO:

EXT. JERUSALEM STREETS (UNDERGROUND CITY) - DAY

Peter is running down an alley when, turning a corner,  
he runs into Philip, also fleeing.

They don't even speak. After a fleeting recognition,  
they sprint in opposite directions.

CUT TO:

EXT. JERUSALEM (THE EXCAVATIONS IN JERUSALEM AND  
AVDAT) - DAY

Roman soldiers lead Jesus through the peasant streets  
outside Golgtha. The blood has dried on his tunic. He  
still wears his thorny "crown."

The cross-bar Jesus carries scrapes alongside the walls  
of the houses because the paths are extremely narrow.  
(high angle looking down on these open roofed dwellings  
and the narrow passageways.) They are jammed with people  
(36-48 f.p.s.). Men, women, children, (animals), in the  
windows and open doorways try to get a glimpse of Jesus.  
The atmosphere has changed. Now it's just another show.  
A multiple crucifixion: Laughter. Ridicule. Figs for  
sale. Jesus weakens. He's knees buckle, the weight of  
the cross-bar throws him off balance and he falls. A  
Roman soldier pulls him back up by a rope around his  
neck.

We see close shots of people, their faces. Their eyes, (36- 48 f.p.s.). Some turn away. Some cry. Some are mocking. One woman in a window, her head covered with a shawl, turns away (moving, 36-48 f.p.s.).

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLGOTHA (ADVAT) - DAY

Golgotha, the hill of the skull. The rocks are bleached white. There are many crosses, most of them with no cross-bars. Some are simply trees with no branches (see DeMassina). One or two crosses bear half-eaten decomposed corpses. On the ground, we see human skulls and bones, skeletal arms and hands mixed with the rocks.

A curious crowd has already assembled at the crucifixion site. Toward the rear, afraid to approach, Magdalene, Mary, Martha and Jesus' Mother stand in a tight group.

The Romans bring Jesus to the peak of the hill and strip him. Two other criminals are prepared for crucifixion.

Jesus looks at the rough-hewn cross laid before him (P.O.V. move in?). He searches the crowd.

JESUS (V.O.)  
Mother? Magdalene? Where  
are you?

He sees his Mother and tries to gesture to her.

JESUS (V.O.)  
(continuing)  
Forgive me for being a bad  
son.

TWO SOLDIERS grab Jesus by the arms:

FIRST SOLDIER  
Alright, You Majesty, on  
your throne.

They stretch Jesus out on the cross while slave laborers finish preparing the post hole for the cross.

JESUS (V.O.)  
Don't desert me here.  
Don't leave me.

The Soldiers place the crude spikes against Jesus' wrists. The sound of METAL AGAINST METAL rings out as the hammer comes down. (see nail driven through from behind wood).

A bloody mist sprays on Jesus' face. He grimaces but does not cry out.

Martha and the three Marys hide their faces. Near Jesus, the other criminals are being impaled. (trees, see DeMassina)

The Romans fasten ropes around Jesus' arms. The spikes alone will not support his weight.

It takes three soldiers to hoist Jesus' cross upright. Now, suddenly, he is above the masses. All of Jerusalem is within view.

His body jars in to place. The pain is excruciating. His fellow criminals howl in agony.

Jesus surveys the mob: a sea of hostile faces. He finds Magdalene, Mary, Martha and his Mother standing together.

The Sadducees are satisfied; the Romans are complacent. Groups of townspeople and schoolboys point out the sufferings of the condemned men.

JESUS (V.O.)  
(continuing)  
Father, forgive them.

The sky changes color. A fierce wind blows across the rocky hill.

Writhing on the cross, Jesus looks to heaven and screams:

JESUS  
Eli, Eli...

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLGOTHA - DAY

The sky turns a pleasant pale blue. Jesus looks up at the thick white cumulous clouds floating on the horizon. Birds sing in the distance.

He thinks: Am I dead? No, the crowd is still there, SILENT. On either side of Jesus, his fellow criminals writhe in silent agony.

An old man appears before him, standing.

JESUS

Who are you?

The man does not answer.

JESUS

Are you my father?

ANGEL

No, but I was sent by him.  
I'm the angel who guards  
you.

He is now closer to Jesus.

ANGEL

Your father is the God of  
Mercy, not punishment. He  
saw you and said, 'Aren't  
you his Guardian Angel?  
Well, go down and save  
him. He's suffered  
enough.' Remember when he  
told Abraham to sacrifice  
his son? Just as Abraham  
lifted his knife, God  
saved Isaac. If he saved  
Abraham's son, don't you  
think he'd want to save  
his own? He tested you,  
and he's pleased. He  
doesn't want your blood.  
He said, "Let him die in a  
dream. But let him have  
his life." Come with me.

JESUS

All this pain is a dream?

ANGEL

Just a dream.

In three separate shots, the Angel takes out the nails  
in Jesus' body.

First, the Angel extracts the nail in the feet, then kisses the wound, stopping the flow of blood.

Then, the Angel does the same to the left hand.

Then, the same is done on the right hand.

In a moment Jesus and the Guardian Angel are standing at the foot of the cross. They pass through the silent crowd unnoticed. Jesus looks over his shoulder: his cross is empty. He begins to understand.

JESUS  
I don't have to be  
sacrificed.

ANGEL  
No. No you don't.

Jesus smiles. This is finally the answer he's been waiting for. He is free of God.

JESUS  
I'm not the Messiah.

ANGEL  
No. No you're not.

JESUS  
Thank God.

They start to walk away from the cross down the hill. We still see the crucifixion site in the background.

JESUS  
What about all the others?

ANGEL  
Don't look behind, God  
gave you the gift of life.  
Look ahead.

JESUS  
But what about the people?  
What will happen?

ANGEL  
They can see you  
crucified. Or they'll see  
you dead. Or they can see  
you any way they want.

JESUS

What happens later if they  
see me alive?

ANGEL

They'll see any one you  
want them to see. Even  
you. If you want.

JESUS

Where are the disciples?

ANGEL

Oh, they were frightened  
and ran away.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUDEAN COUNRYSIDE - DAY

They walk through the pleasant landscape of the Jordan  
Valley. All is quiet, peaceful. A light morning fog  
envelops them.

JESUS

Is this the Kingdom of God  
I spoke about?

ANGEL

(laughing)  
No, this is earth.

JESUS

Why has it changed so  
much?

ANGEL

It hasn't changed, you  
have. Now, you can see its  
real beauty. Harmony  
between the earth and the  
heart, that's the Kingdom  
of Heaven. Maybe you'll  
find this hard to believe.  
But we angels often look  
down on man and envy you.

Ahead (possibly in a wooded area), Jesus sees a group in  
ceremonial dress. Virgins dressed in white, merchants  
carrying incense and gifts,

JESUS

What is this?

ANGEL

A wedding ceremony.

JESUS

Who's getting married?

ANGEL

You are.

Mary Magdalene, dressed in white, steps from the group. Jesus' face bursts into a smile. He rushes into her arms.

JESUS

What's wrong? Why are you crying?

MAGDALENE

I'm thanking God for bringing you here.

He holds her tight.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUDEAN HOUSE - NIGHT

A small hut in wooded area. Moonlight shimmers off the river and a fog filters through the wooded area.

The Guardian Angel sits on a stool in front of the door.

CUT TO:

INT. JUDEAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Jesus and Magdalene make love on blankets spread over straw.

He kisses her breasts, her lips. He kisses her abdomen below the navel, taking in the sweat and scent of her body as he did the soil in Gethsemane.

MAGDALENE

We can have a child.

JESUS

Yes.

Jesus continues kissing her body.

The Guardian Angel steps into the darkened room, stands over their bed and makes a strange sign in the air that may be a blessing.

ANGEL

Bless you, children.

They look at him for a brief moment, then resume kissing. The Angel withdraws quietly to a corner and sits, guarding.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUDEAN HOUSE - DAY

The house shows sign of domestication. Magdalene sits outside in the sun. She is several months pregnant.

She sits with her back to the camera, very much in the manner of Lazarus in a previous scene. The camera dollies in. She turns and smiles.

A shadow of a hand falls down across her face and bosom onto her belly.

MAGDALENE

Death is kind.

Her own hands hug her stomach lightly as she starts to fall over. She dies as if she's gone to sleep.

CUT TO:

EXT. JUDEAN HOUSE - DAY

Jesus' face in grief. He's kneeling over the body of Magdalene.

JESUS

Magdalene...

The Angel comes into the frame. Jesus gets up and grabs an ax. The Angel stops him.

ANGEL

Where are you going?

Jesus doesn't answer but starts to walk - determined. The Guardian Angel calls after him.

ANGEL

Who are you going to kill,  
Jesus?

Jesus keeps walking.

ANGEL

God. Are you going to kill  
God?

Jesus stops and looks back.

ANGEL

It was God who killed her.

The Guardian Angel holds him in his arms and caresses  
his hair and shoulders as he leads him away.

ANGEL

God took her at the height  
of her happiness. Now  
she's immortal. She won't  
see her love fade or her  
flesh rot away. Can she be  
happier? I was there the  
whole time he was killing  
her and I saw what  
happened.

They sit on a bench near the house.

JESUS

But it wasn't right... it  
wasn't right for him to  
kill her.

ANGEL

You didn't question God  
when he let you live. You  
can't question why he let  
her die. Be patient. Trust  
in God's way. Listen, only  
one woman exists in the  
world, one woman with many  
faces. This one falls, the  
next one gets up. Mary  
Magdalene died, Mary,  
Lazarus' sister lives.  
She's Magdalene with a  
different face. She's  
carrying your greatest joy  
inside her. Your son. Come  
with me.

The Guardian Angel helps Jesus to his feet. They exit frame.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARY AND MARTHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We are moving in to a close view of their doorway, Jesus' and the Guardian Angel's P.O.V. as they approach.

ANGEL (V.O.)

This is the way the Savior  
comes: gradually - from  
embrace to embrace - from  
son to son. This is the  
road.

JESUS (V.O.)

I understand...

Martha enters the doorway, looks out and sees them.

MARTHA

Oh, Mary look!

Mary joins her in the doorway. Both women wear black, as do most people in these Bethany scenes.

CUT TO:

INT. MARY AND MARTHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jesus enters. The Guardian Angel remains outside.

Mary touches Jesus' chest.

MARY

Rabbi, I want to see if  
it's really you.

MARTHA

It's real flesh - like us.  
Don't you see? And look,  
there's a shadow on our  
doorstep.

Jesus turns and goes to the doorway. From outside, over the Guardian Angel's shoulder, we see Jesus approach. Mary and Martha remain in the background.

JESUS  
(to Guardian  
Angel)  
Come in.

ANGEL  
Come here.

Jesus leans forward to listen.

ANGEL  
Master, I'm sorry about  
Magdalene. I'll never  
leave you alone again.  
I'll always protect you. I  
don't want you to take the  
wrong road again and get  
lost.

Martha walks over to them.

MARTHA  
You must be hungry. I'll  
cook for you and your  
friend.

The Angel goes into the home with them.

CUT TO:

INT MARY AND MARTHA'S HOUSE - NIGHT (LATER)

They all sit around the fire. Jesus cleans his bowl with  
a piece of bread. He smiles at Mary.

MARTHA  
Rabbi, I like your friend.

JESUS  
(expansive)  
Nothing was enough for me  
before. And now look at  
this. Can you believe it?  
A small house is big  
enough for me, some bread,  
some friends. I'm not  
going to fight with God  
anymore. I'm not going to  
build crosses anymore. I'm  
going to build cradles and  
beds.

Mary reaches out to touch Jesus. He takes her hand. Martha, noticing this, gets up and leaves quietly. Mary and Jesus embrace. The Angel watches.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARY AND MARTHA'S - DAY

Years have passed. An older Jesus sits out front hewing a chair. Two children play nearby.

ANGEL

Are you satisfied with me?  
Do you have any  
complaints?

Jesus stops working, sets the chair on its' side.

JESUS

None.  
(pause)  
I'm ashamed when I think  
of it.

ANGEL

Of what?

JESUS

What a twisted road I took  
to find God.

ANGEL

Don't worry. I won't leave  
you. I like you.

Jesus rests in the sunlight. Martha walks over to them. She has been washing clothes.

JESUS

Where's Mary?

MARTHA

In the olive groves. She  
won't be back until this  
evening.

Martha pauses a moment, then takes Jesus' hand.

MARTHA

(continuing)

Let's go inside. It's too  
hot out here.

Martha goes inside.

MARTHA

Come inside.

Jesus looks towards Martha, then the Guardian Angel.

ANGEL

There's only one woman in  
the world. Go inside.

Jesus stands.

JESUS

(to the Guardian  
Angel)

Watch the children.

The Angel smiles as Jesus enters the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. BETHANY - DAY

Years have passed. Jesus and Martha return from the market with four of their children, ages two through ten. Jesus carries the youngest, who is laughing, under his arm, like a bundle. The Guardian Angel walks with them.

Ahead, Mary sits in front of the house repairing a dress. Two girls play with straw dolls in the dirt beside her.

The two youngest children, boys, race toward Mary. One snatches a doll from one of the girls as they race off again. Mary scolds them as they go.

From the distance, we hear the SOUND of someone preaching in the townsquare. The voice attracts Jesus' attention. He calls to his eldest son.

JESUS

Don't forget to thank God  
for the food and make sure  
you save me some.

ANGEL

Aren't you going to  
dinner?

JESUS

I'll be back soon. I want  
to hear what he's saying.

ANGEL

You don't have to go  
there...

They walk off, arguing in a friendly way.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOWNSQUARE - DAY

Paul - who we recognize as the Zealot Saul who killed  
Lazarus - preaches to a handful of villagers. Standing  
straight, radiating confidence, he speaks with the  
evangelistic fervor of a born-again Christian.

PAUL

I used to be a sinner. The  
worst sinner. I did  
everything. Whored, drank,  
murdered. I killed anyone  
who violated the Law of  
Moses. Then, I was struck  
by a burning light and a  
voice called to me, 'Saul,  
why are you persecuting  
me? Why are you against  
me?' 'Who are you?' I  
said. 'Jesus,' the voice  
said, and he gave me my  
sight. I opened my eyes  
and I was baptized and  
became Paul. I bring the  
good news to every  
country.

Jesus comes closer, the Angel by his side.

PAUL

I bring this news. About  
Jesus of Nazareth. He  
wasn't the son of Mary, he  
was the son of God. His  
mother was a virgin. The  
angel Gabriel came to  
earth and put God's seed  
in her womb. That's how he  
was born.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

He took on our sins, he  
was tortured, crucified -  
but three days later he  
rose again and was taken  
up to heaven. Death was  
conquered, praise God!  
Death was conquered, sins  
were forgiven and the  
Kingdom of Heaven's now  
open to everyone.

Jesus can restrain himself no longer. He calls out:

JESUS

Did you ever see this  
resurrected Jesus of  
Nazareth? I mean, with  
your own eyes?

PAUL

No. But I saw a blinding  
flash of light and I heard  
his voice.

JESUS

You're a liar!

PAUL

His disciples saw him.  
They were hiding in an  
attic with the doors  
locked when suddenly he  
appeared. Only one,  
Thomas, wasn't convinced  
but he put his fingers in  
his wounds and gave Jesus  
some fish, which he ate.

JESUS

Liar!

(to people  
around him)

He's a liar!

Disgusted, Jesus turns and walks away. His angel  
follows.

In the background, Paul comes after him.

Jesus feels Paul's footsteps drawing closer. He's about  
to explode. Suddenly, he turns on his heel, grabs Paul  
by the shoulders and shakes him violently.

JESUS

(continuing)

You're a liar! I'm Jesus of Nazareth. I was never crucified. I never came back from the dead. I'm a man like everyone else. Why are you spreading these lies?

ANGEL

Quiet.

PAUL

What are you talking about?

JESUS

I'm the son of Mary and Joseph, who preached in Galilee. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were my disciples. We marched on Jerusalem, they brought me before Pilate, but God saved me.

Jesus' Angel doesn't like this conversation; he tugs violently at his sleeve. Jesus shoves him aside. Paul takes Jesus around a corner where they won't be seen.

PAUL

No he didn't!

JESUS

Now I live like a man. I have a family. I eat, work, have children. Do you understand what I'm saying? Don't go around the world spreading these lies about me.

(shouts)

Because, I'll tell everyone the truth.

Now it's Paul's turn to explode.

PAUL

Look around you! Look at these people. Do you see the suffering and unhappiness in this world? Their only hope is the Resurrected Jesus. I don't care whether you're Jesus or not. The Resurrected Jesus will save the world - that's what matters.

JESUS

The world can't be saved by lies.

PAUL

I created the truth. I make it out of longing and faith. I don't struggle to find truth - I build it. If it's necessary to crucify you to save the world, then I'll crucify you. And I'll resurrect you too, whether you like it or not.

JESUS

I won't let you. I'll tell everyone the truth.

PAUL

Shout all you want. Who'll believe you? You started all this, now it can't be stopped. The faithful will grab you and call you a blasphemer and throw you in a fire.

JESUS

No, that wouldn't happen.

PAUL

How do you know? You don't know how much people need God.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

You don't know what a joy  
it is to hold the cross,  
to put hope in the hearts  
of men, to suffer, to be  
killed - all for the sake  
of Christ. Jesus Christ.  
Jesus of Nazareth, Son of  
God. Messiah.

Jesus is listening intently now.

PAUL

(continuing)

Not you. Not for your  
sake.

(pause)

I'm glad I met you. Now I  
can forget you. My Jesus  
is much more powerful.

Paul returns to the townsquare to preach. Jesus,  
exhausted, dazed, starts back toward his house. The  
Guardian Angel faithfully follows.

CUT TO:

EXT HOUSE - DAY

At the house, Mary and Martha wait for him. Jesus  
embraces them. His Angel takes his hand. Jesus turns to  
his "family."

JESUS

Don't ever leave me. I'm  
happy here.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARY AND MARTHA'S - DAY

Jesus, now in his 50's, sits in the vine arbor beside  
the house. His Guardian Angel, unchanged by time, sits  
beside him. Jesus turns to him:

JESUS

Remember when Mary and I  
planted these vines - how  
many years have we been  
eating these grapes?

ANGEL

I don't remember.

JESUS

(reflecting)

In my hands her hair  
became white... Mary,  
white... in my hands...  
she became white.

ANGEL

You know, this will all  
have to pass soon.

JESUS

Why? Are you leaving me?

ANGEL

Yes. We have to go on.  
You've grown old. You've  
done well. We've both done  
well.

The Angel looks at Jesus who has suddenly aged to his 80's. Jesus does not react to this transformation.

Now SOUNDS of yelling and screaming come from the street. A woman's WAIL pierces the air. Jesus and the Angel turn to look.

Mary and Martha, aged similarly, rush from the house. Jesus and the Angel stand.

JESUS

What is it?

MARTHA

They're burning Jerusalem.  
The city is destroyed.

MARY

The Romans are killing  
everyone.

Jesus takes them by their arms.

JESUS

Let's go inside.

They go inside, but Jesus peers out the entrance. We see people running away. CAMERA tilts up to the sky, which is red from the flames of Jerusalem. (SPECIAL EFFECT).

CUT TO:

INT. MARY AND MARTHA'S - NIGHT

Jesus lies dying. He is facing the entrance, in which we can see glimmers of the still-burning sky.

Mary and Martha stand close around him. Jesus is in no pain. He seems to be at peace.

Suddenly looming in the entranceway, silhouetted against the red sky, is the figure of an old man. He starts down the few stone steps into the room where Jesus lies. He is followed by two other men. The Guardian Angel recognizes them instantly and starts toward them.

PETER

Let us through. We're sent  
by God.

(to Jesus)

He told us you would show  
yourself to us. He said  
you were dying.

JESUS

Is that Peter? I can't  
tell. That is Peter. What  
happened to you?

PETER

The years.

JESUS

The years?

(he points)

This one I know. No matter  
how old you get, I know.  
This is Philip. You were  
the best of all shepherds,  
because you had no sheep.  
They were all in your  
head.

PHILIP

Have I changed so little  
in all this time?

JESUS

Only for the better, I  
hope.

Jesus points to the mutilated man standing next to Peter. The man's face is a mask of injury: he is missing his nose, and one eye, and one ear.

JESUS

And you? They cut out your  
eye, your ear. Your  
face... who are you?

JOHN

(bows)

Rabbi.

JESUS

John!

JOHN

The Romans tortured me and  
cut away my face. I saw  
Jerusalem burn. I saw the  
Ark of the Covenant taken  
from the temple.

JESUS

The ark?

PHILIP

The Temple's destroyed,  
just as you predicted.

PETER

There's somebody else.  
Outside.

PHILIP

Him you'll know. Be  
careful, he's still angry.

Judas is silhouetted in the entranceway.

JESUS

Judas!

(Judas doesn't  
answer)

Judas, come in. Do you  
hear me? I've missed you  
so much.

Now Judas advances slowly.

PETER

He hears you. He's just  
not going to say anything.

JOHN

He's been fighting in  
Jerusalem. Look at his  
hands. There's still blood  
on them.

PHILIP

(warning  
protectively)  
Judas...

The other disciples stand up.

PETER

(reprimanding)  
Judas, the Master is  
speaking to you. Answer  
him.

JUDAS

Traitor!

Everyone freezes.

JUDAS

Traitor. Your place was on  
the cross. That's where  
God put you. But when  
death got too close you  
ran away, you got scared  
and ran away and hid  
yourself in the life of  
some... man. We did what  
we were supposed to do.  
You didn't. You're a  
coward.

PETER

Don't you have any  
respect.

JUDAS

For him? He was supposed  
to save man. But all he  
did is save himself.

JESUS

No. You just don't understand...

JUDAS

Understand? Rabbi, you broke my heart. Sometimes I curse the day I ever met you. We held the world in our hands. Remember what you said to me? You took me in your arms, do you remember? And you begged me. "Betray me, betray me. I have to be crucified. I have to be resurrected to save the world."

The wounds in Jesus' hands and feet begin to bleed.

JUDAS

(continuing)

"I am the lamb," you said. "Death is the door. Judas, my brother, don't be afraid. Help me go through the door." And I loved you so much I went and betrayed you. But you... you... what are you doing here? What business do you have here? With women, with children... what's good for a man isn't good enough for God. Why weren't you crucified?

Judas is crying.

PETER

Look at his wounds, Judas. He's bleeding. You're hurting him, that's enough.

JUDAS

He was going to be the New Covenant. Now there's no more Israel.

JESUS

But my Guardian Angel...

JUDAS

Your Guradian Angel! Look  
at him!

All their eyes turn to the Guardian Angel. As they watch  
he transforms into a death figure in a black monk's  
habit.

JUDAS

Satan.

Judas looks back at Jesus.

JUDAS

If you die this way, you  
die like a man. If you die  
like that, you deny God.  
Your Father. Then there's  
no sacrifice. Then there's  
no salvation.

Jesus looks over at Mary and Martha, then back at the  
disciples. They have disappeared.

He looks again, and for the last time, at Mary and  
Martha. Now they are gone too.

He is left alone in the room with the death figure.

DEATH FIGURE

I told you we would meet  
again.

Jesus starts to try to pull himself up off the floor.  
The death figure stands in front of him.

DEATH FIGURE

There's nothing you can  
do. You lived this life.  
You accepted it. It's over  
now. Just finish it and  
die like a man.

But Jesus starts to crawl across the floor.

He crawls past the death figure, who watches, turning to  
see Jesus leave through the entranceway.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARY AND MARTHA'S - NIGHT

Jesus crawls into the deserted street. The village is still.

There is a red glow in the distance: Jerusalem is burning.

He surveys the empty street. Blood still stains his hands and feet.

The old man gets on his hands and knees in the middle of the road. He lifts his head toward heaven.

JESUS

Abba, father, will you  
still listen to me? Are  
you still there? Will you  
listen to a selfish,  
unfaithful son? I fought  
you when you called. I  
resisted. I thought I knew  
more. I didn't want to be  
your son. Can you forgive  
me? I didn't fight hard  
enough. I want to take  
your hand; I want to save  
my fellow men. Father,  
take me back. Make a  
feast. Welcome me home. I  
want to be your son. I  
want to pay the price. I  
want to be crucified and  
rise again. I want to be  
the Messiah.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLGOTHA - DAY

Jesus is back on the cross, 37 years before. The CAMERA tracks rapidly up his side stopping on his face.

He has regained his 33 year-old Nazarene form.

All that we have seen since he last cried out in pain has taken place inside a second. He finished his cry.

JESUS

... lama sabachthani!

Jesus looks around, realizes where he is. The past thirty-seven years have been a dream. He has resisted the last temptation. He looks to heaven and says:

JESUS  
It is finished.

THE END