A2

Paul Schrader

from the novel by
Nikos Kazantzakis

Charlot-Winkler Productions, Inc.

Gutter: 1015 West Washington Boulevard

Culver City, California

1. Third Revision
August 12, 1983

41. 386.8 lbs. body weight

80. 70 kg

15. 300-yd. AL

16. 100-yd. L

96. 100-yd. L

18. 70 lbs.

11. Exploit your inner strength and be proud of your accomplishments.

9. At your leisure, read a book in class.

3. Have breakfast at 9 a.m. and lunch at 12 midnight.

2. Be able to pull 150 lbs. or more.

1. Do not use a copier.
"It is not God who will save us -- it is we who will save God, by battling, by creating and transmuting matter into spirit."

-- Nikos Kazantzakis

Saviors of God
1  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. 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 awaken. 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:

2  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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
JUDAS (CONT'D)
is not like all the others.
I feel it. 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. Painting,
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 kill-
ing Jews. And you're not ashamed.
You don't even have any pride.

(CONTINUED)
JESUS
No, I don't have any pride. I
don't go to Synagogue. I disobey
the commandments. I work on the
Sabbath. Your Messiah? 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
death by now. You think Zealots
are murderers? We're path-
finders, 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 cross-
bar resting against a wall. The crowd is taunting
him with cries of "Crossmaker!," "Traitor," "Co-
operator," "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.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

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.

(CONTINUED)
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 railed 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 con-
demned 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?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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)


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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

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?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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

(CONTINUED)
Continued:

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 Bedouin, 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:
13 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:

14 LATER - IT'S DARK

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

Jesus stands, enters Magdalene's room.

CUT TO:

15 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, for-
give me.' Well it's not that easy.
Just because you need forgiveness
don't ask me to do it.

(CONTINUED)
15 CONTINUED:

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:

16 LATER

Mary takes a casserole from the fire, pours it into

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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.
16 CONTINUED: (2)

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:

17 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:

18 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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.

By who?

JEROBOAM
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.

(CONTINUED)
20 CONTINUED:

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:

21 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.

Jerroboam shouts a prayer over the howling wind, but
we cannot hear it. (SEE PG. 20A FOR JEROBOAM'S
PRAYER). 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:

22 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 treat-
ed 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.

(CONTINUED)
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.
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 mé?

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.'

Jeroaboam is speechless.
22 CONTINUED: (3)

JESUS
Do you want to ask me any-
thing else?

JEROBOAM
No.

CUT TO:

23 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.

SNAKE/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.

(follow hand around and to lips 36 fps) 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.

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.

(continues)
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:

24 EXT. DESERT MONASTERY - NIGHT

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

CUT TO:

25 INT. JESUS' HUT - NIGHT

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

(CONTINUED)
25 CONTINUED:

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

CUT TO:

26 EXT. MONASTERY - HUT - NIGHT

An arm grabs Jesus from behind and throws him against.

(CONTINUED)
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.

(Continued)
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.

(continued)
26 CONTINUED: (4)

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:

27 EXT. GALILEE - DAY

Judas and Jesus walk across the plain toward Magdala.

CUT TO:

28 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.

(CONTINUED)
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.

ZEBEDEE pushes his way through the crowd.

ZEBEDEE
You heard what he said, idiot. Move.

JESUS
No. I don't want this.

ZEBEDEE
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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

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 your 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:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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 is 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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

ZEBEDEE (CONT'D)
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 per-
petual 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 starv-
ing. 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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
JESUS (CONT'D)
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.

(CONTINUED)
Now the crowd is really with him.

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

He indicates a couple of sceptics 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:
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?

(continued)
30 CONTINUED: (2)

JESUS
Maybe the current changed.
(pause)
Zebedee, let your sons come
with me. They can fish for
men.

CUT TO:

31 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:

32 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 them-
selves. 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.

(_CONTINUED)
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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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
(MORE)
JUDAS (CONT'D)
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.
33 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:

34 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. (SEE PG 39-A FOR HIS OFFSCREEN VOICE.) 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:

35 EXT./INT. BAPTIST'S CAVE - DAY

Jesus and Judas approach. They enter a small cave like

(CONTINUED)
INSERT:

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)
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. 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.

(CONTINUED)
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:

36 EXT. RIVER OF JORDAN - NIGHT

Jesus and the Baptist sit in the cave by a fire built

(CONTINUED)
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?

(CONTINUED)
36 CONTINUED: (2)

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
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:

37 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:

38 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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.

39 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?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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:
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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

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 wait-ing 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

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

his mouth. The blood splashes down his chest.

ANGEL
(smilng)
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. MAY 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?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)
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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

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 nook 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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!

(CONTINUED)
44 CONTINUED: (2)

PETER
I don't know now.
(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 footsteps 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

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:

45 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 (CONTINUED)
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:
47 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:

48 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:

49 LATER

The ceremony is over. People are dancing. Jesus, the (CONTINUED)
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:

50 LATER

Jesus, a little drunk and very happy, dances with men and women.

(CONTINUED)
50 CONTINUED:

Magdalene watches him, a mixture of reverence and longing on her face.

CUT TO:

51 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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
JESUS (CONT'D)

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!

(Continued)
51 CONTINUED: (2)

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:

52 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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 grandchildren 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:

54 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
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JESUS (CONT'D)

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. Sudden-
dly, 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 desicated 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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?
CONTINUED:

PETER
The money-changers? It's 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 SADDUCEES, steps out of the temple.

RABBI
Nazarene, what are you doing?

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

RABBI
You expect people to pay
the tax in Roman coins?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
RABBI (CONT'D)
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? Be-
cause I am the fulfillment
of the old law and the be-
ginning of the new.

SADDUCEE
(shocked)
Watch what you're saying.

Peter, becoming concerned with the drift of this argu-
ment, 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!

(CONTINUED)
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 destroy-
ed in three days. One stone
won't be left standing on
another. You think God be-
longs only to you?! He
doesn't! God's an immortal
spirit and belongs to every-
body -- 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!

(CONTINUED)
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.
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 . . .

(Continued)
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.

Is that it?

PILATE
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.

(CONTINUED)
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:

57 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:

58 EXT. OUTSIDE JERUSALEM - NIGHT

Judas, who has been looking for Jesus, finds him alone

(CONTINUED)
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.

(continued)
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 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
58 CONTINUED: (3)

JUDAS (CONT'D)
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.

(CONTINUED)
58 CONTINUED: (4).

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

CUT TO:

59 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, Nathanael 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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
PHILIP (CONT'D)

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 -- with-
cut 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

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)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

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.

(CONTINUED)
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.

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. 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.

(CONTINUED)
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?

(CONTINUED)
61  CONTINUED:  (3)

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

CUT TO:

62  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 an-
other 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.

(Continued)
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. 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

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:

63

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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

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 (MORE)
Pilate (Cont'd)
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 (MORE)
CONTINUED: (3)

SADDUCEE (CONT’D)
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:

66 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:

67 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:

68 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:

69 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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).

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

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?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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 COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

They walk through the pleasant landscape of the Jordan

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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 . . .

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JESUS (CONT'D)

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.

(CONTINUED)
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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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 hasn't been washing clothes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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 repainging 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 preach-
ing in the townsquare. The voice attracts Jesus' attention.
He calls to his eldest son.
CONTINUED:

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 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
PAUL (CONT'D)

born. 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.

(MORE)
CONTINUED: (3)

JESUS (CONT'D)
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

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
PAUL (CONT'D)
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 every-
one 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. 
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 town square 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, unchanz ed 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

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 (MORE) (CONTINUED)
JESUS (CONT'D)
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.

(CONTINUED)
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 ...

(CONTINUED)
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 Guardian 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.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (5)

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 entrance way.

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.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JESUS (CONT'D)
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