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“From Bethlehem to Emmaus”

by
Rachel Benjamin

SYNOPSIS

Bethlehem means nothing without Calvary and the empty tomb. This script recounts the miracle of Christmas through the eyes of two disciples who have witnessed the resurrection of Jesus. Recounting the messianic prophecies, these disciples testify to how the scriptures point to Jesus' birth and ultimately his victory on the cross.

Themes: Christmas, Disciples, Hope, Resurrection, Easter, Ensemble, Prison Ministry

CAST

Captain- a highly decorated Roman official, interested in learning more about Jesus

Guard- a Roman soldier charged with guarding prisoners of The Way

Benjamin- a disciple of Jesus. He walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

Cleopas- a disciple of Jesus. He walked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus.

Leah- a follower of The Way. She is also in prison with Benjamin and Cleopas.

Adam- the first created man. Paradise was lost when he and Eve ate the forbidden fruit.

Ruth- a Moabite widow, who remarries a kinsman redeemer in the town of Bethlehem. She is also the grandmother of King David.

Moses- a leader of Israel. He led the Israelites during their Exodus from Egypt.

Sarah- the wife of Abraham and mother of Isaac.

Asher- the brother of Joseph, one of Jacob's 12 sons.

Abigail- Noah's wife.

Isaiah- a prophet who spoke God's message to Israel.

This script is designed for 5 actors to play all of the roles.

Actor 1 – Captain

Actor 2 – Guard, Moses, Isaiah

Actor 3 – Benjamin, Asher

Actor 4 – Cleopas, Adam

Actor 5 – Leah, Ruth, Sarah, Abigail

If you would like a larger cast:

*All of the Bible characters can be played by individual actors

*There can be more prisoners in the prison

PROPS

Swords (2)
Rag for Captain (*Handkerchief would be fine*)
2 Stools
Crate
Apple
Scarf
Bucket
Paint brush

WHY

Luke 24:13-35, Isaiah 61:1, Isaiah 9:2, Isaiah 7:14, Isaiah 49:8, Job 19:25, Psalm 22, Zep 3:17, Matthew 24:37-39, Genesis 3

COSTUMES

All of the characters should be in costumes that align with Bible times.

*Captain and Guard- Roman soldier garb, with a sword. Captain's costume should be more elaborate than the guards – showing a higher rank. Captain should wear a dark hooded robe that he can remove once he enters the prison.

*Prisoners should be in dirty, ragged clothing. If they are also portraying Bible characters they should be in cloaks that are quickly and easily removed.

*If the character playing Leah is also playing all three of the woman Bible characters, her costume changes are imperative to portraying her character changes. I have listed suggestions; however, the most important thing is that all 4 characters have a different look.

Leah- hair raggedly pulled back, wearing a dirty cloak

Ruth- hair completely down, with a colorful scarf used as a headband

Sarah- hair pulled back in a tight bun. The prison cloak should be removed to reveal a modest, Old Testament dress.

Abigail- hair half back. She is not wearing the cloak, thus revealing the Old Testament dress, however the cloak should be over her legs, serving as a blanket.

LIGHTING

Light design is imperative to the staging of this script. There needs to be distinct differences in the lighting choices between the prison scenes and the Bible story scenes. Since the implication is that the prisoners are telling the Bible stories. I would suggest the following:

*The prison should dull and grimy. The light design should be full stage blues and purples.

*The Bible stories should be crisp yellows and oranges, and/or spotlights.

The difficult scenes will be the ones where the dialogue goes back and forth between the prison and the Bible story. For these I would suggest having the prison lights on for the full scene and simply turning on and off a strong spotlight. For these scenes the characters will also need to go in and out of soft freezes depending on when they are speaking.

MUSIC

These are simply suggestions as to what I think would best work judging on the content of the scenes. Feel free to change these suggestions to best fit your needs.

Christmas music was suggested, but simply change the worship songs if performing for an Easter program.

ORDER OF SHOW

The script is intentionally not in Biblical chronological order. For one thing there is no reference in scripture that Jesus only explained the scriptures in 'correct' order. Secondly, it helps make the script more interesting if the audience doesn't know which story is coming next.

****It should be noted that it is intentional that some of the characters remain unknown to the audience until halfway through their monologues. This is designed to keep the audience engaged. ****

SET

Keep this simple. There should be a large doorframe downstage right. There needs to be one worn crate, on which Leah and the other prisoners can sit as well as 2 worn short stools.

Since all characters remain on stage for the entirety of the script, the needed props should be 'hidden' on stage. For example, the apple and scarf can be inside the crate. The bucket and brush can simply be next to the doorframe, slightly hidden on the upstage side.

HOW

If you choose to double cast (one actor play two characters) spend time talking through and processing the two characters you are playing. They should be different in the way they carry themselves, the way they speak, and their mannerisms. Think through questions for each character like "Where am I just coming from? What led me to this point in time? What's my relationship with everyone else on stage?"

TIME

20 minutes (*script alone without music*) / With music 60 minutes (*depending on your musical selection*)

The stage is bare except for a large doorframe downstage right and two stools and one worn crate upstage. The doorframe is slightly angled toward stage left.

Guard stands in front of the doorframe, on watch. He wears typical Roman soldier attire and is armed with a sword.

Cleopas, Benjamin and Leah are huddled together upstage left, inside the prison, in an attempt to keep warm. They are wearing ragged cloaks.

SCENE 1

Captain enters from behind the audience and moves towards the downstage right entrance. He wears a dark hooded robe.

As Captain approaches Guard, Guard reaches threateningly for his sword.

Guard: Stop right there.

Captain: I've come to see two of your prisoners.

Guard: You've got the wrong prison.

Captain: I need information that they have.

Guard: Regarding what?

Captain: Whom. Regarding whom. They have information about a man referred to as the snake crusher.

Guard: *(laughs)* Sounds like a gladiator.

Captain: Might as well be for all the trouble he's caused.

Guard: We don't allow visitors so close to an execution.

Captain ignores him and tries to enter the prison.

Guard stops him, threateningly.

Guard: These prisoners are followers of The Way. We suggested they disperse and stop meeting. They didn't. We invited them to deny their ridiculous beliefs. They didn't. Two were beheaded this morning. One yesterday. Tomorrow we'll see how the executioner is feeling. *(Threateningly)* Have you come to join them?

Captain pulls off his hood and throws part of his robe over his shoulder revealing a highly decorated Roman soldier, clearly outranking Guard.

Guard takes a knee in respect.

Guard: Captain, I...I didn't recognize you.

Captain: Let me pass.

Guard: I was given strict orders.

Captain: I outrank anyone who could possibly have given you that order. Let me pass. I won't ask again.

Captain reaches for his sword. Guard stands and moves aside. Prisoners disperse as Captain enters the prison cell. Captain puts a rag over his nose to dull the smell.

Captain: Which one of you is Benjamin?

Benjamin slowly moves toward Captain.

Benjamin: I am, sir.

Captain: Is your friend still alive?

Cleopas joins them centerstage.

Cleopas: I'm Cleopas, sir.

Captain: Good. I'm not too late. I have questions for you about a man you refer to as the snake crusher.

Benjamin and Cleopas remain silent.

Benjamin moves his foot on the ground, creating a semi-circle in the dirt floor, the sign early Christians used to identify each other.

Captain doesn't move.

Captain: *(not recognizing the sign, he responds as if they're being obstinate)*
You're already in prison awaiting your execution. What more could I do to you? *(Pause)* Unless, of course, you're ready to admit your foolishness and deny this ridiculous claim.

Benjamin: What do you want to know about him?

Cleopas: His message? His miracles? His trial, death and r—

Captain: *(dismissively)* I've heard all of that. No, I want more details about your specific encounter with him.

Pause.

Benjamin: Which time?

Captain: Don't play games with me. You know which time I'm referring to. (*Slight pause.*) Fine. I want to hear what he told you when he met you on the road to Emmaus.

Cleopas: You believe us then?

Captain: Do I believe you? No.

Benjamin: Then you're here to mock us?

Captain: Maybe. Your claim is absurd enough to be mocked. You suggest he died, rose three days later and then walked with you from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

Weighted pause.

Captain: Impossible.

Benjamin: If you don't believe we saw him, then why ask us what he said?

Captain: That's my concern, not yours.

Slight pause as Benjamin and Cleopas look at each other.

Captain: I'm waiting. And I'm not someone you want to keep waiting.

Cleopas: He told us that he had come to proclaim liberty to the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.

Captain laughs.

Captain: (*mockingly*) Then he was a false prophet. (*Gesturing toward the entrance*) No one's here to free you.

Pause.

Captain: That's it? He told you he would release you from prison – and yet here you are. This is the faith you so willingly die for? (*Pause*) There's more you're not telling me. Why not?

Benjamin: Do you have the ears to hear it?

Weighted beat.

Captain softly laughs and discreetly looks back at the Guard.

Captain: I don't know. (*Sincerely*) But I want to.

Benjamin looks at Cleopas and slowly nods.

Cleopas: He told us: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

Benjamin: The light has shined on those who lived in the land of the shadow of death.

Cleopas: The virgin will conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name—

Benjamin: Immanuel, God with us.

Pause.

Captain: I don't understand.

Benjamin: Neither did we.

Cleopas: For a really long time.

Benjamin: Like 700 years long time.

Cleopas: That's why he met us on the road to Emmaus.

Benjamin: So that he could explain what it all meant.

Music Suggestion: Hark the Harold Angles Sing

SCENE 2 (ADAM)

Benjamin: Starting with Moses and the prophets he explained the scriptures to us.

Benjamin grabs a stool and sits down. He motions for Captain to sit next to him.

Captain, takes off his robe, cautiously grabs the other stool and sits next to him.

Cleopas: He explained that the Messiah would take what was broken and one day restore it. Just as Isaiah said, "In the time of my favor, I will answer you and in the day of deliverance I will help you; I will protect you and make you a covenant for the people, to restore the land."

Captain looks confused.

Benjamin: *(trying to help)* Let's start at the beginning.

Captain: His birth?

Cleopas: Mankind's birth.

Lights dimly fade.

Cleopas takes off his prison cloak. Underneath he is bare chested, wearing a vest, tie and ripped shorts. He grabs an apple from upstage and moves downstage.

Spotlight on Cleopas, now 'Adam.'

Adam should, at first, appear light-hearted, as if telling his story to a friend. He speaks directly to the audience.

Adam: An apple a day keeps the doctor away. Who came up with that saying? It's not true. At least it wasn't for me. The apple seemed to usher in the need for doctors. My life was full of light and adventure and excitement and good food. Really good food. And I didn't have to work for it—or pay for it—or even make it. If we wanted to cook it always turned out good. Now, Eve can cook all day long and it's burnt or bland or...I digress. There was more lost than just good food.

As he says this next line, he acts uncomfortable, adjusting his vest.

None of this restrictive clothing. There was a world before vests and shirts and ties.

He grabs his tie and tries to loosen it. Referring to the tie.

A daily reminder that we're all going to die. There was life before death. There was light before darkness.

Beat. He becomes more resolute and solemn.

I do like the belts...the ones made out of snake skins. I like making those.

Adam crushes the apple in his hand.

That snake. One day. One day that snake will get what's coming to him. We were promised One who will come and who will crush the snake. And when he does, paradise will be restored.

Beat. Trying to keep it light-hearted once again.

All of this because of an apple. *(Admittedly)* Well, I guess, it's not just the apple. Disobedience played a part. I tell you what, a little pre-marital counseling might have helped. The woman the Lord gave me...I mean, I like an opinionated woman, but she can be convincing.

Beat.

(Regretfully) It was my fault. I was the head. The leader. And I willingly disobeyed. *(Sardonic laugh)* Disobey God. That sounds so...foolish. What was I thinking?

Slight pause.

(Admittedly ashamed) Sin came thru me. One man caused all of this.

Beat.

(Increasingly hopeful) But one day...one day...we're promised that another One will come. Sin thru one man, and one day...*life* thru another. He'll fix this mess that I've made. He'll crush the snake. He'll show us the way back home. One day. One day, the One who will *restore* all things will come and his birth will change everything.

Lights down.

Cleopas puts back on his prison cloak.

Music Suggestion: The First Noel

SCENE 3 (RUTH)

Cleopas is seated on the ground, Captain on a stool, and Benjamin is pacing.

Benjamin: The prophecies said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.

Captain: Why Bethlehem?

Cleopas: The town of King David.

Captain: David. Your prized king. I find it odd that he was the grandson of a Moabite girl.

Benjamin: For not claiming our faith, you know an awful lot about it.

Cleopas: She was a *redeemed* Moabite.

Captain: Technically, thru marriage, I guess.

Cleopas: Let's discuss the story of Ruth.

Captain: This Moabite has nothing to do with your Messiah.

Benjamin: Of course, she does. Her story is a picture of his heart.

Captain: How so?

Lights dimly fade as Benjamin, Captain and Cleopas remain in a soft freeze.

Leah, remaining in her prison cloak, takes down her hair and puts on a colorful scarf as a headband. She moves downstage left.

Spotlight downstage left on Leah, now 'Ruth.'

Ruth speaks directly to the audience.

Ruth: As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and in the end, he will stand upon the earth. My mother-in-law taught that passage to me. There was a time I didn't know what it meant or even had the hope to believe that it was true. There was a time when I thought I was happy. But when the walls came crashing in, I found that my life was empty and hollow. Widowed, childless, alone. except for Naomi. I begged for her to let me go with her back to Bethlehem, her home.

Beat.

We came to Bethlehem poor. Less than poor, defeated and hungry. I was hoping not to starve to death. I never thought about hoping to be happy again or discover purpose or hoping to find love.

Ruth remains in a soft freeze.

Lights up centerstage on Benjamin, Captain and Cleopas.

Captain: *(annoyed)* This is a love story.

Cleopas: What were you expecting?

Captain: I don't know. Stories of wrath, vengeance, war...I find love stories nauseating.

Cleopas: Then your time here will be brief.

Captain: Why is that?

Cleopas: The scriptures all speak to one story.

Captain: Which is?

Benjamin: God's pursuit of his children and the price he paid to *redeem* his church. It's one big love story.

Captain: I'll try and stay awake.

Lights dim on centerstage.

Ruth unfreezes.

Ruth: The first time I saw Boaz I was gleaning grain in his field. He was tall and strong and kind. I remember his eyes. Dark, deep yet gentle. I never thought he'd see me. Really see me. Why should he? I was a stranger. An outsider. A Moabite. Israel's enemy. But he did see me. He reached out and helped me. He gave me a new name, a new home, a new identity. He was my provider and deliverer and my *redeemer* from a life of darkness and hopelessness. Naomi says that one day the Messiah will come and will redeem his chosen, the way that Boaz redeemed us.

Beat.

I know that my Redeemer lives and one day his birth will change everything.

Lights down.

Leah takes off the scarf and moves back upstage.

Music Suggestion: Angels We Have Heard On High

SCENE 4 (MOSES)

Benjamin and Captain sit on stools facing each other. Cleopas sits on the ground next to Benjamin.

Leah coughs, huddled upstage left.

Captain covers his mouth with a cloth.

Captain: It's a wonder you aren't already dead from the filth of this forsaken place.

Pause.

Captain: Do you honestly think your God can rescue you?

Cleopas: *(quoting scripture)* My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Benjamin: Why are you so far from helping me, and from the words of my groaning?

Cleopas: My God, I cry out in the daytime, but you don't answer, in the night season, and am not silent.

Benjamin: But you are holy; you who inhabit the praises of Israel.

Cleopas: Our fathers trusted in you.

Both: And you delivered them.

Captain: One of your prophets?

Cleopas: The psalmist.

Leah coughs again.

Captain: Your Messiah cried those words during his death, and he wasn't rescued. *(Mockingly)* You're not more important than him, are you?

Benjamin: How do you know that? How do you know what he said when he was dying? *(Slight pause; with angered understanding)* How do you know that?

Benjamin stands, knocking over his stool, and lunges at Captain. Captain stands up and steps back drawing his sword. Guard enters, drawing his sword. Cleopas puts his hand on Benjamin's shoulder. Benjamin stops. Captain raises his hand, motioning for the Guard to stop.

Captain: *(to Benjamin)* You wish for your execution to come sooner?

Benjamin slowly steps back. Captain nods to Guard. Captain and Guard put away their swords. Guard returns to his station.

Weighted pause.

Cleopas: You were there? At the Messiah's death?

Captain: God didn't show up then. What makes you so sure he'll show up for you now?

Cleopas: My God hasn't forsaken me. He didn't forsake the Messiah.

Benjamin: When he spoke those words, he was pointing us to that Psalm.

Captain: You think the Psalmist is talking about your Messiah?

Benjamin: He's prophesying about the snake crusher. The rescuer.

Cleopas: Our great deliverer.

Lights dimly fade as Benjamin, Captain and Cleopas remain in a soft freeze centerstage.

Guard puts on an old cloak and stands in the entrance of the prison cell. Guard acts as if the prison cell doorframe is the doorframe of a house.

Spotlight downstage right on Guard, now 'Moses.'

Moses speaks directly to the audience.

Moses: Passover. We call it the Passover. I am that I am, the God of Israel has promised to deliver us. He told us to take a lamb. A year-old male lamb, without defect. The lamb was to live with us for 14 days. Enough time, just enough time for him to wriggle his way into our affections. Enough time for the sacrifice to hurt. I mean, you never get used to the smell, but that little guy...he was cute. And tonight, the 14th night, we sacrifice him, at twilight. Shed his blood. And we are to paint our doorframes, the top, the sides, with the blood of the lamb.

Looks up to the sky.

The Angel of the Lord will see the blood and pass over our houses, and our sons will be spared. Our exodus from Egyptian captivity ensured. This is his promise. These are his instructions.

He grabs a bucket and brush, and as he says the rest of the monologue, he paints the doorframe.

So, we sacrifice the lamb. Put the blood on the door, the blood that will cover us and give us life. Then we wait. Wait through the long night. We wait for deliverance. Since the beginning, the snake's deceptive lie, we have been promised a deliverer who will free us. So, we wait. One day our deliverer will come, and his birth will change everything.

Lights down.

Guard takes off cloak and resumes his Guard pose.

Music Suggestion: Silent Night

SCENE 5 (SARAH)

Cleopas, Benjamin and Captain are sitting on the two stools and the worn crate.

Leah takes off her prison cloak, revealing modest Old Testament attire. Her hair is pulled back in a bun. She moves downstage left.

Spotlight on Leah, now 'Sarah.'

Sarah speaks directly to the audience.

Sarah: He said God told him to sacrifice our son.

Leah remains in a soft freeze.

Lights up on Cleopas, Benjamin and Captain.

Captain: I don't understand this story.

Benjamin: God is a holy God. He can't look on sin. Atonement must be paid.

Captain: In blood?

Cleopas: In blood.

Captain: A good Father would never do that. No father would kill his own child.

Cleopas: What if the son willingly offered his life as a sacrifice?

Captain: Why would anyone do that?

Benjamin: Love. This is a love story.

Captain: *(slightly annoyed)* That's right.

Cleopas: All of scripture...they're all love stories.

Benjamin: And love allows us to trust when trust seems impossible.

Lights down on prison.

Sarah continues.

Sarah: He said God told him to sacrifice our son. I told him he heard wrong. I thought he must have. This was Isaac—our laughter, the child of the promise. Sacrifice him?

Beat. Sarah responds as if Abraham has just told her.

(confused) Wait. (Louder more obstinate) What?

Beat. Regaining composure and continuing to tell her story. Again talking to the audience.

Abraham insisted that God had spoken, and when God speaks we immediately are to obey. I wanted to take a couple days—a couple years, a few decades to make sure. *(Almost defeatedly)* But Abraham trusted God, and so He obeyed Him. Immediately. Abraham and Isaac set off first thing in the morning for a three-day journey. They came to the place where God showed him, and Isaac walked the mountain carrying the very wood Abraham would lay him on.

Beat.

Isaac was strong. He was young. He didn't have to lay down. He could've run away. *(Shaking her head)* At times, Isaac is too much like Abraham. Isaac trusted Abraham, and so he obeyed him. *(Getting choked up)* He laid on the wood, allowing himself to be sacrificed. It was then, at the moment when all seemed lost...when God didn't seem to be good...when we didn't—we couldn't understand. At the place of absolute surrender, that God provided.

She begins to cry.

(Hopeful) Of course, he did; he is Jehovah-Jireh, our provider. God brought a substitute for Isaac—a ram caught in the thicket. One day, the Messiah will come, and he will make atonement for our sins. He will provide a sacrifice in our place. One day, our provider—our substitute—will come and his birth will change everything.

Lights down.

Leah puts back on her prison cloak.

Music Suggestion: O Holy Night

SCENE 6 (ASHER)

Cleopas is sitting on a stool. Benjamin is seated on the ground, leaning against the crate. Captain stands.

Benjamin: Yahweh, your God, is among you, a mighty one who will save.

Cleopas: He will rejoice over you with joy. He will calm you in his love. He will rejoice over you with singing.

Captain: Zephaniah.

Benjamin and Cleopas look surprised.

Benjamin: You know the prophet's writings?

Captain: I've become familiar with that one. Though I find it...ironic.

Cleopas: How so?

Captain: If what you say is true, if this snake crusher was the Messiah—his own children, his chosen, his very brothers helped kill him. And yet you still claim he rejoices over you with song. How is that even possible?

Cleopas: How is that possible? On the cross, he answered that very question.

Benjamin: Father, *forgive* them for they know not what they do.

Lights dimly fade on prison.

Benjamin takes his prison cloak and turns it inside out, revealing an elaborate robe.

Spotlight on Benjamin, now 'Asher.'

Asher speaks directly to the audience.

Asher: Brothers. Ever have a brother? Love them, hate them. Best of friends, worst of enemies.

Asher moves downstage.

(Admittedly) I wasn't a good brother. I mean let's face it, I was a horrible brother. A murdering kind of brother. Criminal. In my defense he was annoying. How many times can you say: Your sister is not a punching bag! Don't bite the dog! That's not a tissue! He was an annoying kid.

Beat.

'I want to kill him.' It wasn't just an expression I used when he would scare the sheep, making more work for us, or mock us with his dreams

or flaunt his coat just to infuriate us. (*Admittedly*) I wanted to kill him. Literally. I tried to kill him. Judah convinced us to sell him into slavery rather than have blood on our hands. The money was good. They paid us in silver. So, we sold him—not that that was any better. We didn't exactly take the high road.

Beat.

For years I would be haunted by that moment. How could all of us even sleep through the night? Live our lives as if nothing had happened? We had betrayed our brother...our flesh and blood. (*Ashamed*) But we did. We kept living. Laughing. Celebrating.

Beat.

My father had clearly lost a part of himself the day we lied and told him his son was dead. For years I struggled to look my father in the eye. We hadn't just betrayed our brother, we had lied to our Father, betraying him as well.

Beat.

And then it happened. A famine. Our children were starving. We took a trip to Egypt, praying to find food, just enough to survive. Instead, we found our brother.

Slight pause.

Joseph. We found Joseph. We had no idea it was him. I mean we had sold him into slavery and there he was standing in charge of the whole land of Egypt. We didn't recognize him, of course. But when he told us who he was my first thought was: we're going to die. Forget about getting food for our families, we're not going to make it home.

Beat.

And then...he forgave us. I mean, I think he had forgiven us years before. I still can't—I—I don't know if I could have forgiven me. In some ways I hadn't forgiven myself. And there he was, arms open wide not just offering us mercy but grace. Favor. Blessing. Food and (*referring to his elaborate robe*) riches far beyond anything we had imagined.

Beat.

My father speaks of the day when our Messiah will come. He says the Messiah will forgive the way my brother forgave...with open arms and merciful grace. One day, the One who will forgive us will come and his birth will change everything.

Lights down.

Benjamin takes off his robe, turns it inside out- back into the prison cloak.

Music Suggestion: God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

SCENE 7 (ABIGAIL)

Leah moves downstage left and grabs a worn crate. She sits on it, taking off her prison cloak and putting it over her as a blanket.

Spotlight on Leah, now 'Abigail.'

Abigail speaks directly to the audience.

Abigail: One way to be saved. There was one way to be saved. Opinions didn't matter. It wasn't like we could have a group vote. Feelings were hurt, people were offended, our message was misunderstood. We were misquoted and made fun of and mocked. But it didn't change the truth. Kayaks and paddles and canoes weren't going to cut it. There was one way to be saved and all they had to do was get on the ark. *(Looking around her, as if she is on the ark)* Just get on.

Abigail pulls the blanket closer, as if cold.

Lights up on Benjamin, Captain and Cleopas.

Abigail remains in a soft freeze.

Cleopas: As the days of Noah were, so will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Benjamin: For in those days which were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark.

Cleopas: And they didn't know until the flood came and took them all away—

Benjamin: So, will the coming of the Son of Man be.

Pause.

Captain: Your Messiah's words don't make any sense. You claim this Son of Man has already come.

Cleopas: For the first time. He came to fulfill the prophet's writings and to pave a way for us to be with the Father.

Benjamin: But before he left, he gave us the promise that he will come again.

Cleopas: And like Noah, he left us with a mission.

Captain: Which is?

Benjamin: To tell people to get on the boat.

Lights dimly fade on Benjamin, Captain and Cleopas.

Abigail continues.

Abigail: They thought he was crazy. My husband has his moments. After years and years of waiting, I thought maybe he had heard wrong. But he was sure he didn't. So, no one else's opinion mattered. He had heard from the Lord. The Creator of heaven and earth. And when the God of heaven's armies speaks, there's nothing left to do but obey. Simple obedience. No matter the perceived crazy.

Beat.

The funny thing is, looking back, it looked like rain, smelled like rain, you could almost taste the rain. But it's hard to believe, when you don't know what rain is.

Beat.

We do now.

She rocks as if the ark has been tossed by a wave.

And I don't like it. But one day...one day, like we were spared, a Savior will come and will spare God's faithful once again. And the Savior's birth will change everything.

Lights down.

Leah returns upstage and puts back on her prison cloak.

Music Suggestion: O Come All Ye Faithful

SCENE 8 (ISAIAH)

Guard takes off his Roman soldier garb. Underneath he is wearing a simple Old Testament tunic.

Spotlight on Guard, now 'Isaiah.'

Isaiah speaks directly to the audience.

Isaiah: Captivity. Destruction. Devastation. How could we expect anything less? He is a holy God. I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. Holy is the Lord God Almighty. We have mocked him and provoked him and disobeyed. We have refused to trust Him or abide by his laws. How can we say He is not justified in condemning us?

Isaiah remains in a soft freeze.

Lights up on Benjamin, Captain and Cleopas.

Captain: Depressing.

Cleopas: Truthful.

Captain: And this prophecy is supposedly hopeful? How?

Benjamin, Captain and Cleopas remain in a soft freeze.

Isaiah continues.

Isaiah: But he will not accuse us forever, nor will he always be angry. His arm is not too short to ransom us. He will make a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland. He will blot out our transgressions and redeem his people. He will rescue us and by his wounds we will be healed.

Isaiah remains in a soft freeze.

Captain: By his wounds? This prophet knew your Messiah would be wounded?

Benjamin: Yes. Wounded willingly.

Captain: Why willingly come here? To a world you claim is broken and wretched only to be wounded.

Cleopas: He came to be with us.

Captain: Be with you?

Benjamin: To live with us.

Captain: God wanting to live with us humans?

Benjamin: Yes.

Captain: Why?

Benjamin: Because—

Captain: *(interrupting)* Because this is a love story.

Both: They're all love stories.

Captain: I'm starting to see the trend.

Lights dimly fade on Benjamin, Captain and Cleopas.

Isaiah continues.

Isaiah: One day a child will be born. He will be called Wonderful Counselor,
Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. One day Immanuel will
come— God with us —and his birth will change everything.

Lights down.

Guard puts back on his Roman soldier attire.

Music Suggestion: O Come O Come Emmanuel

SCENE 9

Captain: I think I have the information that I came for.

Benjamin: There's so much more to tell you.

Captain: I have requested an accounting of all the events of his life.

Benjamin: From who?

Captain: A doctor. A friend of one of your leaders.

Cleopas: Luke?

Captain: Yes.

Cleopas and Benjamin look at each other, confused.

Cleopas: Luke is much more eloquent than we are.

Captain: *(teasingly)* I certainly hope so.

Benjamin: If Luke is writing to you—stories that we don't even know—why come here?

Captain: There are some things that you can't read about.

Beat.

Captain: I had to see it for myself.

Cleopas: What do you mean? What did you have to see?

Beat.

Captain: Do you know why public execution is so popular among the Romans?

Benjamin: *(bitterly)* They enjoy it.

Captain: No. Executions instill fear. Death scares people. But if the people are no longer afraid to die, executions lose their effectiveness.

Cleopas: You want to scare us?

Captain: You await certain death. You must know from my uniform that I have the power to free you...if you would just deny this story of yours.

Beat.

Captain: Instead, you give me details. You're not afraid to die.

Cleopas: Should we be?

Captain: How are you not afraid of this prison? (*Whispering*) If it were me, I'd be groveling about now.

Benjamin: You can't free me because I'm already free.

Captain: (*laughs*) And you claim I'm the one in chains, right? (*Shaking his head*) The paradox continues.

Cleopas: The Messiah changed everything.

Captain: (*mockingly*) He set the world upside down. (*Beat*) Why do you still follow him? Don't you know we killed your snake crusher?

Cleopas: And three days after you killed him, he crushed the snake.

Beat.

Captain: (*admittedly*) I've heard about you martyrs—Christians unwilling to deny their Christ even to the point of death. (*Beat*) Luke can write to me about your Torah, your prophets, and the details of your Messiah's life. But I admit, I had to see a martyr for myself. I wanted to look you in the eye and see if it was true.

Cleopas stands and looks Captain in the eye.

Cleopas: And what do you see?

Captain: (*admittedly*) Hope. (*Beat*) Impossible as it may seem. I see hope.

Beat.

Benjamin: Join us.

Captain: (*quickly*) No. (*Captain glances at Guard; quieter*) Not yet. (*Weighted pause; grabs his robe; quietly*) Thank you for speaking with me. (*Turns and starts to leave*)

Cleopas: Captain, study what Luke sends you.

Captain turns back to Benjamin and Cleopas.

Captain: Maybe then all my questions will be answered?

Benjamin: Maybe then you'll finally see the truth.

Captain: Which is?

Cleopas: The Messiah lives. The scriptures have been fulfilled.

Benjamin: Jesus' birth changed everything.

Music Suggestion: Joy to the World