

40 Days

by

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TITLE CARD:

Jesus showed himself alive after his suffering... being seen by them for forty days.

Acts 1:3

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. ON A MOUNTAININSIDE - NIGHT

CREDITS ROLL

Three men, striving to remain unseen and looking toward the summit to be sure of it, are moving from tree to tree and bush to bush, slowly making their way up.

CUT to a clearing higher on the mountain. Wide view.

JESUS, MAN #1 and MAN #2 are seated on rocks in a fairly wide, open area. They are sharing a meal. (No dialog.)

CUT to the three men continuing slowly up the mountainside, still trying to remain unseen and unheard, but also engrossed in their conversation.

JOHN

I know it very well... The Lord said to *my* lord... sit at my right hand, as I turn your enemies into your footstool.

PETER

He will send forth his mighty scepter (motioning toward the top). Rule in the midst of your enemies.

JAMES

The Lord has sworn and will not change. You are a priest *forever*.

CUT to the clearing, where JESUS, MAN #1 and MAN #2 are sitting...

MAN #1
A messiah? Like Samson or Gideon,
smashing their enemies?

JESUS
I'm afraid so. As they see it,
their piety obliges God to drive
out the Romans.

MAN #2
The fact that you've done nothing
violent?

JESUS
Means only that I haven't found the
right time. People are healed and
they see me as magical.

MAN #2
Many healings?

JESUS
Not very, and I charge them not to
tell anyone, but I can't turn them
away... they suffer terribly here.

MAN #2
I know...

CUT back to the three men continuing to proceed stealthily,
motioning to each other to be quiet as they approach the
clearing, which they can see above them.

CREDITS END

PETER, JAMES and JOHN reach the clearing. PETER looks up and
sees the fire.

PETER
(Looks to the others and smiles)
Come, let us go up to the mountain
of the Lord.

PETER runs up a few steps and onto the clearing. JAMES and JOHN follow. MAN #1 and MAN #2 see them, are horrified, and stand. Jesus is in the process of drinking from a mug, and so his attention shifts a couple of seconds later. MAN #1 and MAN #2 wait to follow JESUS' lead.

JESUS

(rising, horrified) Oh, no... no...

PETER

(reacting to Jesus) Master, it is
good for us to be here. We can
build three shrines! One for you,
one for...

MAN #2

(booming, but with exasperation)
Just *listen* to him!

MAN #1 looks at though he's emitting something. PETER, JAMES and JOHN fall unconscious. MAN #2 and Jesus, followed by MAN #1, shake their heads in grief.

MAN #1

(turns to JESUS) I gave them a
sensory overload. They'll be asleep
for a while. To them it was a
tingling and an intense whiteness.

JESUS, MAN #1 and MAN #2 each arrange one of the men, who have fallen in heaps, placing them on their sides.

CUT to JESUS, MAN #1 and MAN #2

The three are seated again at the fire, but not eating or drinking. PETER, JAMES and JOHN are unconscious in the foreground, casting shadows on the ground and especially upon JESUS. The camera should linger long enough to make the imagery clear.

JESUS leans forward, his elbows on his knees, head lowered. He looks up at MAN #1 and MAN #2.

JESUS

After this... (drops his head momentarily) After seeing you, I don't think I'll be able to teach it out of them. They'll be convinced I'm the divine deliverer who will expel Rome, if only they please God.

MAN #2

We would have options if you, yourself, weren't most of the message.

JESUS

(laughs sadly) So, making a public disgrace of myself won't work?

MAN #2

(smiles) No. They will remember some of your sayings, but their images of your substance is the greater part.

JESUS

(shaking his head) How they can mix that with gruesome war...

MAN #1

Which...

JESUS looks up at MAN #1 and smiles sadly.

JESUS

Which is why I came in the first place. They need to get past their idolatry, or at least start to... and this was the most effective place and time... I know. (becoming somber) But to nullify their images of a violent savior, I'll have to be physically defeated... to die. (pause) And as you say, I have to maintain my personal integrity at the same time. Otherwise I'll unwind the necessary images they hold. (another pause, then he lifts his head and looks at both MAN #1 and MAN #2) And so I'll step into a nightmare.

They sit silently, thinking of the horror JESUS is about to enter, but knowing no better option. They are deeply sorry and anguished.

JESUS

Well... (standing) They'll wake soon enough. If they see you again it may be worse.

MAN #1 and MAN #2 each hug JESUS with respect and pathos in their faces.

MAN #2

The third morning, very early?

JESUS

(nodding) The usual place at Capernaum.

MAN #1 and MAN #2 nod their acknowledgement and head back up the mountain, disappearing into the brush. JESUS cleans up as PETER, JAMES and JOHN begin to stir.

CUT to a lower portion of the mountain. JESUS, PETER, JAMES and JOHN trudge along silently. Jesus slows, stops and turns to the three.

JESUS
Tell no one what you saw.

Sharp pain in their faces shows that this will be impossible for them. Jesus, exasperated, takes a deep breath and exhales in resignation.

JESUS
Until I have risen.

JESUS speaks and stares in such a way that it requires an agreement. The pain in PETER, JAMES and JOHN's faces recedes, replaced by confusion. JESUS continues to wait, staring at them. Then they nod their agreement. JESUS turns and continues walking, They follow, approaching and entering a small cabin, where they'll spend the night.

FADE TO BLACK, THE SOUND OF A STREAM RISES.

EXT. AT THE BASE OF THE MOUNTAIN, MORNING

JESUS, JAMES, JOHN and PETER approach a cabin where the other nine are waiting. They rise and follow, Jesus alone in front and the rest a number of steps behind. He walks to a nearby path, continues several steps, then turns to the twelve, who are just turning onto the path.

JESUS
Wait here for a while, then follow.
I need to be alone this morning.
I'll stop at noon and wait for you.

JESUS turns and walks on. The twelve look at each other, questioning. Shrugging their shoulders, they sit on some grass and wait. We see JESUS, walking away into woods and placing his hands on his head (interlaced fingers) as he struggles with his thoughts.

CUT to JESUS, walking on a barren road, seemingly in the middle of nowhere, nothing but trees, scrub, brush and dirt to be seen. Then, a fawn appears, following him at a distance and slowly getting closer till they are almost parallel, the fawn off the right side of the dirt road. JESUS notices, moves to the left side of the road, to avoid frightening the animal, continues at a steady pace, shakes his head and laughs, as at irony.

JESUS

So, in my troubles you're the one
I can talk to? (laughs again and
continues walking) Well, it works.
There's no one here I can confide
in; my troubles would only confuse
them worse.

The odd pair continue walking together, both with their heads down, as if mirroring each other. JESUS laughs at the absurdity and decides to go with it, for both the intellectual exercise and for the comic absurdity. He resumes speaking.

JESUS

What's bothering me? Well, I'll
tell you: I'm about to hand myself
to professional killers. Yes,
that's right; I'm going to hand
myself over to professional thugs
so they can maliciously break my
body, until I die.

The two continue in silence. JESUS turns his head to the fawn and continues.

JESUS

No, of course I don't like the prospect, that I can assure you. I'm a man who's never even been sick, you understand. But the only solution to my problem - the only one I can find - is to drink deep from the cup of suffering. (pause) But the question... the thing that's really bothering me... is this: Is it worth it? Will it, in the end, be worth what I have to pay?

Again the two are walking. JESUS turns one more time.

JESUS

You don't know either? (pause) Ah well. (pause) A difficult world, you say? Yes, it's a primitive world here... a tough one... and for me it's about to get a lot tougher.

The fawn runs back into the woods. JESUS stops to watch it as far as he can, raises his hand, waves, then laughs and calls after the animal.

JESUS

Thank you for the conversation, my friend.

JESUS smiles, takes a deep breath and loses the smile, then resumes walking, back in deep thought.

CUT back to the twelve as they walk down the road.

ANDREW moves next to PETER and leans in.

ANDREW

(Eagerly) What did you find?

PETER

(Troubled, blankly, facing forward)
We can't say.

ANDREW

What? Why?

PETER

(turns to ANDREW, blank faced and almost frightened) We just can't say yet.

ANDREW separates from Peter, double-takes, then starts the nine whispering, excitedly.

CUT to the twelve following the road into a town.

JESUS is sitting on the town well, waiting for them. As they reach him, he stands. It is clear that he has been thinking through the horrors facing him the whole morning. They all freeze in place. JESUS speaks with intensity.

JESUS

The son of man... the son of *man*... has been thrust into the hands of men.
And they will kill him.

JESUS turns and continues through the town. The twelve are confused. They hurry to get some water from the well and then scurry to catch up with JESUS.

INT. A LARGE MAIN ROOM OF A HOUSE

CAPERNAUM, JESUS' HOUSE

People mill about a comfortable but not opulent home, eating and conversing in a buffet-type of setting. A couple of older women are bringing food, water and wine back and forth from the kitchen. JESUS is offering food to his guests and talking with them as he does. MARTHA, about 20 years old, carries a pitcher out to the table. JESUS notices her, hands his tray to a friend, and hurries to her as she's turning back to the kitchen.

JESUS

Martha! I didn't know you were here.

MARTHA

I've been helping in the kitchen.

JESUS

What brings you all the way out to
Galilee?

MARTHA

I... I'm not sure.

JESUS looks at her as she lowers her eyes in embarrassment.
He guides her to a quiet corner and sits her on a bench. He
sits on the edge of a couch across from her.

JESUS

Tell me, Martha.

MARTHA

(looking up) I really don't know
why, but I felt I needed to be here
now. (her vision is fully inward
now, she rambles) I felt that you
would be in some sort of distress...

She catches herself, embarrassed that she implied he might
be vulnerable in some way.

MARTHA

Not that you...

JESUS takes both of her hands in his. She immediately stops
talking and waits, her lips quivering, as if laboring to
speak and laboring not to speak at the same time.

JESUS

Martha... Martha... you were right.

She looks up, dumbfounded. He smiles. Tears
are in his eyes.

JESUS

You were right, Martha. A terrible moment of choosing was thrust upon me. The right choice is clear, but it comes with a horrible price...
I've been wondering if the results would be worth the price.

She is crying, and clearly loves him.

MARTHA

Master, I don't understand, but if there is anything I can do to help... tell me.

Tears streaming down his face now.

JESUS

You already have, Martha... It's worth it... *you* are worth it (he lifts her hands and kisses them)... and people like you are worth it. You've already helped more than you could possibly know.

Slowly, he dries her eyes and then his own. He stands and walks her back to the kitchen, kisses her head, takes a slow, deep breath, then another, and then returns to serving.

CUT to the same scene, a bit later.

JESUS is still serving and talking. An old and well-dressed man walks up to him, stands close and leans in.

JOSEPH

Your students are sitting in front, debating who will be the most highly placed, once you become the great ruler.

JESUS hangs his head in sorrow.

JOSEPH

I'm sorry, but I thought you should know.

JESUS

(sad smile and patting JOSEPH on the shoulder) Thank you Joseph, I appreciate it.

JESUS steps slowly away from JOSEPH, scanning the room and seeing a woman with a child. He walks to her. She is pleased to see him.

JESUS

Esther, may I borrow your son for a moment? I'd like to take him in front and make my students consider him.

ESTHER

(standing and handing him the child) Of course.

JESUS takes the boy and coos to him a bit. Then he gets serious again and heads out toward the twelve.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE - EVENING

The twelve are sitting, a few torches providing light. They go immediately stiff and silent upon seeing JESUS. He pulls up a stray chair, sits and puts the boy on his lap facing the twelve, compelling them to look at him. Once their attention is fully focused, he speaks.

JESUS

Whoever cannot grasp the way of God
as if he were a little child... shall not enter into it.

We waits for them to absorb his words, but they aren't getting the point.

JESUS

You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise power over them. (pauses) But so shall it *not* be among you. (gesturing toward the gathering) Do you not see that I am one who serves?

ESTHER is watching from the door. JESUS notices her, nods his thanks, and grasps the boy to return him. She steps up and takes her son. JESUS turns back to the twelve.

JESUS

Salt... potency... is good. But if the salt has given up its *own* force, of what use is it? It's fit for nothing and will be trampled under foot. So have salt (pointing) *within* yourselves... and be at peace with one another.

FADE, music rising/resolving and carrying us into the next scene.

EXT. LOOKING TOWARD THE HOUSE - EARLY MORNING, STILL DARK

JESUS quietly opens the front door, exits, and heads to a nearby hill, visible in the distance. PETER, sleeping on a couch, beneath a fur covering. He is visible through the window, and is awakened by the movement and rises up on one elbow, watching JESUS leave. He is ready to get up and follow, but then his face falls in defeat and he lays back down, staring at the ceiling. As the camera pulls out, we see a fire-red/orange streak of sunlight on a cloud, interposed between the hill JESUS is climbing and PETER lying under his fur. (This is an echo of Adam, having been expelled from the Garden and kept out with a flaming sword. And again the camera should linger long enough to make the point.)

CUT to JESUS sitting on the hill with MAN #1 and MAN #2, overlooking the house on the edge of Capernaum. (A town of perhaps 1,500.)

MAN #1

I know you've made your decision,
but how do you feel about it?

JESUS

Not very good. I'll do it, but
stepping into abuse and death
troubles me... bodily.

MAN #1

It would have to.

MAN #2

And what of your students?

JESUS

I told them "they will kill me" and
it rolled right off. The shock of
this will be profound for them.

MAN #2

Even if they lose some of your
words, they'll retain what you are.

MAN #1

And they'll be free of the
conqueror idol. That, beyond all
else, has to be removed. If it
remained nearly everything would be
corrupted. Even those seeking a
pure path would soon enough find it
in pure dominance and pure
subjection.

Again they sit in some anguish.

MAN #2

Are you happy with the scenario of
getting you out of Jerusalem and
back to the mountain in Galilee?

JESUS

Yes. It's a good plan.

MAN #2

Then we'll prepare it.

CUT to the house on the edge of Capernaum (P.O.V. the men on the hill).

The twelve and the women are waking and preparing for the day.

CUT back to JESUS, MAN #1 and MAN #2 on the hill.

MAN #1

From here you'll go around to Jericho (motioning), then into Judea?

JESUS

Yes. I don't want to give the Romans an opportunity before the time. (shaking his head and barely believing what he's saying) The crowds will be there for Passover, and if I am forced to destroy that image, the more public the better.

FADE to the rising sounds of a crowd.

EXT. A WIDE ROMAN-PAVED ROAD (STONE) WITH MANY PEOPLE (PROMINENTLY FAMILIES) WALKING TO JERUSALEM FOR PASSOVER.

The twelve follow JESUS as he walks with the crowd, talking to people as he goes. He is happy, greeting adults who recognize him, holding hands with a child, conversing openly and gladly and enjoying them. (partially muffled dialog). The twelve are increasingly agitated as they observe this, and begin to whisper one to another.

PHILLIP

(leaning in) Andrew, why is he showing himself openly? They'll know... the Saducees, the Romans... they'll all know.

ANDREW

I don't understand it, Phillip... I
don't understand it and I don't
like it.

PHILLIP

(motioning) Ask your brother.

JESUS, who has been talking to an older child, pats him/her on his head and sends them back toward their parents. He stops and turns to the agitated twelve, who stop and stand in place.

JESUS

Observe! (gesturing) We are going up to Jerusalem, where the son of man will be delivered to the chief priests. They will hand him to the Romans, and he will be killed.

They are beginning to wonder if he means it, and start worrying about their own safety.

JESUS

And afterward, *you will meet me in Galilee.* (a command, almost staccato)

JESUS turns back around and begins walking. He closes his eyes, takes a breath, and is happy again, waiving at someone nearby and smiling.

FADE as ominous music rises.

EXT. A LARGE GARDEN – LATE NIGHT

Ominous music continues to rise. This section, through the crucifixion, is filmed almost as a music video, but not with fast cuts.

JESUS sits apart from the others on a low rock wall, leaning forward, his elbows on his knees and his head in his hands, in severe emotional distress. He is a man stepping into torture and death, and he knows it all too well. He is seen weeping.

JESUS

My father... if there is any other
way... if this can pass from me...

A group of armed men approaches and JUDAS, previously seen among the twelve, runs to him (JESUS stands) and hugs him.

JUDAS

Master! (Kisses him, European
style)

The eleven pull back and scatter as armed men rush and arrest JESUS (like a swarm of modern policemen), who closes his eyes and breathes deeply, preparing to absorb their blows.

FADE slowly, to the sounds of shoving and blows.

SOLDIER (V.O.)

Don't resist!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE AUXILIARY GATE (THE NON-PRETTY GATE WHERE DELIVERIES ARE MADE) OF A SMALLISH PALACE. LATE NIGHT.

PETER, JAMES, JOHN and ANDREW skulk up to the gate, where menial workers are warming themselves at a fire.

PETER and ANDREW push their faces into the gate (between its bars), trying to see what's going on... but cannot. JAMES and JOHN are on tip-toe behind them, trying to see or hear anything they can. In the distance we see a group of men watching something, but whatever they are focusing upon is hidden from our view. (A few, indistinct but loud voices are heard.) A cart is removed from the far section of fence, allowing JAMES and JOHN to move up and see better, but none of them can actually see any of the action. An imposing, armed man comes up behind them.

PALACE GUARD

You... You were with him, weren't
you?

JAMES and JOHN are shocked and back slowly away and out of the frame. ANDREW slips out the other way. PETER is stuck behind a loaded cart coming out of the gate. He is trapped and terrified.

FADE to a change in the music.

EXT. AT THE SIDE OF ANOTHER ROMAN PALACE, EARLY MORNING.

JAMES and JOHN are again peering through an iron-bar gate and seeing only the back/side of the crowd. As before, they hear crowd noise, but cannot tell what is happening.

FADE to another change in the music.

EXT. A NASTY-LOOKING HILL (SCRUB VEGETATION, SEVERAL MOSTLY-DEAD TREES) WITHIN VIEW OF JERUSALEM, MORNING

FROM A DISTANCE. A team of twenty Roman soldiers (arrayed like modern riot police) encircle and protect a smaller group, ready to repel anyone who approaches (The crowd stays a safe distance back.) Details are a bit difficult to make out (they have ropes, a set of pulleys, etc.), but the soldiers have one man already on a cross, his arms tied and a spike through each of his ankles (one on either side of the tree). Another victim is on the ground, crying, with a soldier's knee on his neck. Yet another is being tied to a cross. We hear hammering and screaming, but cannot see from which of them the scream comes.

CUT to JAMES and JOHN, some distance away, trying to sneak closer, but wary of another group of Roman soldiers carefully surveying the approaches (mainly the city gates), watching for an attack by Jesus' followers.

CUT back to the hill.

We see three men crucified on trees. We can see that one of them is JESUS, with spikes through not only each of his ankles, but his wrists as well. The camera zooms in just far enough and just long enough to see blood pulsing and streaming down his forearms and from each ankle down the dead tree. The amount of blood loss makes it clear that he will be dead soon. Then it pulls back.

Note: We want the viewers straining to see precisely, just as the disciples would have. This whole sequence is from the disciples' viewpoint.

CUT to JOHN and JAMES' P.O.V.

We get a different and slightly closer view of the hill for a moment, and then a young man enters the frame, walking directly toward JESUS, looking at him intently and weeping. A soldier barks at him and steps toward him. The young man moves sideways. The soldier barks more, but the young man keeps moving sideways. The soldier can't let go of his dominance rage and follows. The commander turns around, sees a hole opening in his line, and screams at the entire team, ordering "Pull back and hold" in Latin.

BOSS SOLDIER
Trahеrе et tenеrе!

The troop steps backward up the hill. (they have been facing outward)

BOSS SOLDIER
Eum! Eum! ("Get him" in Latin)

The two soldiers near the young man try to grab him, but the young man is fast; he eludes the short sword of the first soldier. The second, closing fast, can only grab his robe before the young man is past him. The soldier pulls the robe with all his strength. The young man spins, backing away, and the robe is pulled over his head (like we'd yank off someone's shirt), and he runs away from the soldiers and off the hill, naked. The two soldiers try to follow, but run like old men, looking ridiculous.

FADE slowly to white, music concluding and the sounds of birds and breeze rising

EXT. A GARDEN-LIKE SETTING WITH A LARGE WALL BEHIND - EARLY MORNING, SUN JUST BARELY RISING

FADE in slowing. An opening is seen in the wall, like a small doorway (roughly 30" wide and 40" high). A round stone in a track can be seen slowly oscillating, as if rolled from the opening seconds ago.

CUT to a view into the tomb.

MAN #1 and MAN #2 are unwinding Jesus' burial wrappings. Unexpectedly, JESUS sits up. Music is crucial here, but it should be something other than triumphant. This is not a moment of triumph, it is part of a mission. They turn him so he's sitting on the edge of the slab and continue unwrapping him. They take off the final wrappings (discrete shots) and pull a shirt onto his torso then wrap his wrists and ankles with strips of cloth. Then they place trousers and sandals on him, stand him up and secure the garments.

CUT back to a wider view.

MAN #1 and MAN #2 (who carries a fairly large bag over his shoulder) help JESUS out of the small doorway. (It's bottom is about 18" above grade.) He is pale and appears sick or frail. Jesus takes a few difficult steps and PETER bursts out from behind tress or bushes, just ten or twelve feet away. JESUS (whose face is oddly bruised) stares into Peter's face. PETER breaks down weeping. MAN #2 puts him out again.

MAN #1

Go. I'll stay here and keep anyone from following.

MAN #2

(taking Jesus' upper arm and leading him away) I'll get him through the gate and onto the trail, then return.

MAN #1 drags PETER ten or fifteen steps, over a ridge and out of sight. Then he hurries to the entrance of the tomb, watching for anyone else who might come. JESUS and MAN #2 walk/limp down the road to a turn, after which they'll be out of sight from the tomb.

EXT. A SMALL, DIRT ROAD OUTSIDE THE CITY - EARLY MORNING,
SUN STILL RISING

MAN #2 and JESUS are continuing, a little bit faster. MAN #2 guides JESUS off the road and behind some nearby brush. He hands JESUS an Arabic-style head-piece/wrapping as a disguise and they jointly put it on him. MAN #2 then carefully rubs cosmetics into his face, covering the bruises, but careful to leave him looking like an old man. Then he places the bag over Jesus' shoulder and checks him out.

MAN #2

Travel gently. You're back, but it will still be some time before those wounds heal. (motioning to his wrists and ankles)

JESUS pulls back the windings on one wrist/forearm (we see a deep, dark hole). He turns his forearm (with some discomfort) and pulls back the wrapping on the other side as we see that it is open clean through. He pulls the wrappings back into place and focuses again on MAN #2.

MAN #2

(looking at him carefully and proceeding slowly, because Jesus is still re-orienting and weak)
There's a cart trail just ahead, running north into the hills. Stay on that trail and we'll make sure no one pursues you.

MAN #2 digs into the bag and pulls out a fairly large wineskin.

MAN #2

Drink your water (pats the wineskin), get some food later today, and rest more than usual. You'll find everything you'll need, including plenty of coins, in the bag.

JESUS nods an acknowledgement, then continues on alone, turning onto the cart trail and into wooded hills. He has a pronounced and odd limp, definitely looks like an old man, and would be hard to recognize as himself.

FADE

EXT. THE CART TRAIL THROUGH THE WOODED HILLS - AFTERNOON

The sun beginning to decline, two men are passing JESUS on the trail, sad and consumed with their conversation.

CLEOPAS

There was never anyone like him.
Who else could possibly be the
messiah?

ARISTARCHUS

No one I've ever seen, and no one
I've ever heard of.

JESUS

What are you discussing?

ARISTARCHUS

The execution.

JESUS

Which execution?

CLEOPAS

(slowing to match JESUS, whom they presume to be an old man) Jesus of Nazareth. The messiah... or so we thought.

JESUS

You wished for him to use violence
on your behalf?

ARISTARCHUS

On God's behalf, for us.

JESUS

Then you wish for God to be like
violent Rome, only more so?

CLEOPAS and ARISTARCHUS are confused and don't answer.

JESUS

Which do you suppose is more
important, for God to be powerful,
or to be good?

They still don't know what to say.

JESUS

Would you prefer God to be fully
good but less powerful, or fully
powerful but less good?

ARISTARCHUS

He necessarily must be all good,
all powerful and all knowing. The
scriptures say so.

JESUS

Do they? Have you never read of
God, in the Garden, not knowing
where Adam had gone? Or God, in the
days of Noah, repenting that he had
made man?

CLEOPAS and ARISTARCHUS are almost frozen in consideration
of these thoughts.

FADE to the sounds of plates, utensils and water being
poured.

INT. A HOUSE IN THE EVENING. A KITCHEN/DINING AREA - EVENING

CLEOPAS, ARISTARCHUS and JESUS are seated and finishing a
meal (fairly low light), as the wife of CLEOPAS is removing
plates, etc.

JESUS

Have you considered *why* Eve ate
from the tree?

ARISTARCHUS

No further than we were taught.

JESUS

Before she took the fruit, Eve must
have believed that she was *unable*
to become like God. Otherwise the
fruit wouldn't have been necessary.

CLOEPAS

But was she? Was she able?

ARISTARCHUS

Wait... hadn't God already said that
they were not just good, but very
good?

CLEOPAS

Yes... he did.

JESUS

What might have happened to Adam
and Eve if they had *believed* that
they were good... and had grown
accordingly?

JESUS stands and straightens his garments, preparing to
leave.

CLEOPAS

Please wait, friend. I've never had
a conversation like this. (stands)
We have sparse arrangements, but we
can find a place for you to sleep.

JESUS

You are kind, but I will continue
onward.

CLEOPAS

(standing) It's late... (sees that JESUS is proceeding and changes his tone) Is there anything we can do to help you on your way?

JESUS

(turns part way back to him) I would like to clean myself, if that is possible.

CLEOPAS

(leading JESUS toward a bathroom) Please, we have more than enough water and anything else you need.

JESUS nods in appreciation, glad that the still haven't recognized him, and heads into the bathroom.

CUT to the bathroom interior.

JESUS removes his costume, washes his head, hair and face, then washes and checks his wrists and ankles. He examines his face in the mirror. He is looking healthier and younger, though still far from normal. His odd bruises are again showing. Finished washing, he pulls a large, warm cloak with a hood from his bag and puts it on. Then he puts the bag over his shoulder and opens the door, ready for the road.

CUT back to the main room.

CLEOPAS, his wife and ARISTARCHUS are sitting at the table, talking intensely (muffled dialog). JESUS emerges and moves immediately out the door (which is adjacent to him and some distance from them). All three stare, frozen in place, trying to comprehend that the face they just saw really was JESUS' face. But before they can bring themselves to act, JESUS has limped into the night.

FADE

EXT. FROM A DISTANCE, A WIDER DIRT ROAD IN AN OPEN SPACE - A BRIGHT MORNING

JESUS, again in his disguise, waves down a northward cart and holds up two coins. The cart stops and JESUS, head lowered and limping, approaches the driver. The two speak briefly (not discernible at this distance). Then JESUS hands him the coins and takes a seat at the rear of the cart. The driver, thinking him to be an old man, watches until he has settled in comfortably, then proceeds. JESUS arranges himself to be as inconspicuous as possible.

FADE

EXT. ON THE ORIGINAL MOUNTAININSIDE, DIFFERENT P.O.V., WIND BLOWS (HEARD AND SEEN) - AN OVERCAST, CLOUDY DAY

GALILEE, 4 DAYS LATER

Slow shots. Forlorn music starts very low, emerging out of the wind. JESUS, wearing his heavy cloak, sits alone, scanning the valley in front of him. We see that the bruises on his face are partly healed. He unwraps and re-wraps his ankles, we see that they are closed but still nasty. He finishes wrapping, takes a swig of water, then re-scans the hillside and valley below. (camera pans) There is a visible pathway through the valley and up to the mountain, but no one on it for a great distance. He takes a deep breath, followed by a long and disappointed sigh. He sits; silent, alone, abandoned, watching and waiting, disappointed and forlorn.

MAN #1 (V.O.)
You have waited how long?

JESUS turns to see MAN #1 and MAN #2 coming out of the brush, from higher up on the mountain. They come and sit next to him, also looking out over the valley and sharing his disappointment.

JESUS
This is my second day. They're not coming.

MAN #2
They aren't, I'm sorry.

They continue sitting, looking outward, not at each other.

MAN #2

You were planning to send them out
in pairs again?

JESUS

At least two times, while I built a
shelter here (pointing)... teaching
them between missions.

MAN #1

(with great concern) You can't go
back to Judea... the Romans would do
it all again. Even being seen in
the core of Galilee would mean a
second death. (JESUS nods) Without
them, what will you do?

JESUS

(sorrowful smile) I'll start by
buying a donkey from the farmer
across the valley (points) and go
to the Phoenicians for a while. As
you said (looking to MAN #2), the
wounds need to heal, and I know an
inn near Ptolamais where no one
will recognize me.

MAN #2

And after that?

JESUS

After that I'll go to the north.
The Jews there are ignored by Rome
and ignored by Jerusalem. I can
find good ground... and a lot less
hazard.

MAN #1

(again concerned) There will still
be danger.

JESUS

For how long do you suspect I can teach, restricting myself to smaller places and moving on every day or two?

MAN #1

A month, perhaps, but not much longer.

JESUS

I don't think it's enough time.

MAN #1

It may not be.

MAN #2

Which means you need to reclaim your students at some point.

JESUS

Why "at some point"?

MAN #2

I don't think they'll recover from this for some time. Terrified Rome will be after them, you dead, but your brilliant image still in their minds... that's a lot for such people to unwind.

JESUS

So, I have to finish my recovery, teach as much as possible before Rome comes and kills me again, and somehow get my students back to their right minds before I leave.
(ironic laugh)

MAN #2

(stands) I'll get that donkey. (wry smile)

All three laugh at the absurdity of it all. MAN #2 pulls some coins out of JESUS' bag and heads down the mountain. MAN #1 sits next to JESUS, again scanning the valley. They look forlorn.

JESUS
Will it work? Will it be enough?

MAN #1 pats his friend's leg, staring out into the valley.

FADE to the faint sound of chairs being moved and tables being set.

INT. A ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF AN INN, A DINING AREA BELOW. WINDOWS WIDE OPEN IN THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN STYLE - DAY

JESUS lays on a bed looking out the open window of his room. He appears to be spending a lot of time in this room (water, bread, cheese and fruit on a table), eating, sleeping and recovering. Then there is knock at his door. He rises, opens it (the dining area of the inn is visible below) and is surprised to see his brother JAMES #2. This is not the JAMES from earlier. This is JESUS' younger brother and acts a bit like a kid brother. JAMES #2 sees JESUS' face and freezes, mouth open, slack jawed and blank.

JESUS
James! You truly surprised me. Only
you could have found me here.
(small smile)

JAMES #2
(Blank-faced) I watched you die.

JESUS takes his arm and guides him into the room, making sure no one overheard and closing the door behind him.

JESUS
Yes, but I'm better now. (Pause)
And it's fortuitous that you came.

FADE to the sound of wind and gulls.

EXT. A ROAD OVERLOOKING THE MEDITERRANEAN, AN OVERCAST DAY - DUSK

JESUS and JAMES #2 walk, JESUS limping only slightly.

JESUS

The hard part of this is that you can't tell anyone about it for at least another month.

JAMES #2

(smiles) You know I can do that.

JESUS

(remembering something and chuckling) Yes. What I need you to do is find my group in Jerusalem - they're probably staying with Mary the widow; do you remember how to find her house?

JAMES #2

I remember.

JESUS

Good. Don't tell them you saw me - it would be dangerous - and say little, but find out what they're doing, and if possible why.

JAMES #2

I can do that.

JESUS

(smiling) Then let's get some sleep and you can begin in the morning.

FADE to the rising sounds of a dining hall.

INT. THE DINING AREA OF THE INN, BRIGHT AND FULL OF PHOENICIANS (MOSTLY MEN) EATING. WINDOWS AGAIN WIDE IN THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN STYLE - MORNING

JESUS and JAMES #2 are at a table, eating heartily. The HOSTESS walks to the table and addresses JESUS.

HOSTESS
Your animal is ready, sir.

JESUS
Thank you. I'll gather him as soon
as I'm done here.

The HOSTESS acknowledges and walks away. JESUS breaks off a piece of bread, dips it in some olive oil on his plate, and turns back to JAMES #2, who seems to have something on his mind.

JAMES #2
I want to be sure I understand
this... You'll be at the lower tip of
Lake Hula every sabbath morning?

JESUS
Probably. But if I'm not, write
what you find, wrap it well and
push it between the two big rocks
you'll find there.

JAMES #2
And they sit one on top of the
other?

JESUS
(nods) You won't miss them.

JAMES #2
Then it will be done.

FADE

EXT. A WORK CAMP, MEN BRINGING IN THE WHEAT HARVEST - LATE AFTERNOON

JESUS sits on a low ridge, 40 meters or so from the laborers, observing them. (His wrists and ankles are still wrapped.) He scans the area, carefully. Then he stands and scans once more. He walks to the primary group, 20-30 men. Several more stand to the side bundling the stalks; among these is BENJAMIN. JESUS stops, waits for a few of the men to look at him and begins loudly. (Reduces his volume once he has their attention.) He communicates with gestures and with emphasis.

JESUS

Listen! Listen! ... As a sower scatters his seeds, some fall on the road, and the birds devour it. Others fall on rocky soil, and so they spring up but then wither. Others fall among thorns, which choke them before they can yield any grain. But other seeds fall on good ground, and produce abundantly.

JESUS pauses, intently watching the faces in front of him. Then, when the moment is right, he continues, holding up one finger to focus them.

JESUS

Many are called, but few will be chosen.

JESUS is still for a beat, then walks several feet to his right, turns back and resumes speaking.

JESUS

The measure you mete out is what is measured back to you. If you forgive, you will be forgiven. If you condemn, you will be condemned.

JESUS pauses, then holds up a finger to re-focus them.

JESUS

*By your words you will be
justified, and by your words you
will be condemned.*

JESUS sees BENJAMIN and pauses for a moment, considering him. BENJAMIN stares back. JESUS continues, still looking at BENJAMIN.

JESUS

And if you clean the inside of the cup, the outside will become clean also.

FADE to the sounds of a child ("Mama, Mama") trying to get it's mother's attention.

EXT. AT A WELL NEXT TO A SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

JESUS is sitting on the small wall around the village well, helping a twelve year-old girl pull up water and speaking to a group of about fifteen people (mainly women and children, some sitting on carts, some on the ground. The mother being petitioned picks up the child (a toddler), holds him/her on her lap and pulls a piece of bread from her bag and hands it to him.

JESUS

(motioning to the mother) The way of the heavens is like yeast, which a woman took (gesturing, as if taking it into himself) and hid in three measures of wheat, until the whole of it was risen.

JESUS pauses again, to let the image sink in to the audience.

JESUS

And again, the way of the heavens is like a man planting seeds. He sows, then returns home and sleeps, and rises, day after day, and the seed springs up, he knows not how. For the earth produces of itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear.

JESUS pauses again, to let the image sink in to the audience. The camera pans to an older, slightly more groomed and obviously intelligent woman, who is standing off to the side of the group.

MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN

Teacher, I am certain that I understand you, but what you teach is... of a different type than the law of Moses.

JESUS

(smiles) Consider also that no one sews unshrunk cloth onto an old garment, because the patch will tear from the garment and make it worse. Neither do we put new wine into old wineskins; or else the skins burst and the wine is spilled.

JESUS pauses again, to let the images sink into them, and hopefully to create connections. Then he considers his crowd and stands to dismiss them.

JESUS

But you have families depending upon you, and so I will stop. I will be here at the same hour tomorrow, and then I will move to the next village.

The ladies disperse with their children, jars and bags. The MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN and an old man walk to Jesus, to ask further questions.

CUT to JESUS, standing with the old man some feet away from the well.

JESUS is clasping the old man's hand and sending him off. He looks at the town and people engaged in purposeful activities and smiles. He pulls a ceramic mug from his bag (holding about a pint, no handle), fills it with water and drinks. He shakes out the last drops, places it back in his bag, and heads out of town.

CUT to a different P.O.V.

As JESUS walks from the town, BENJAMIN approaches and joins him.

BENJAMIN

You story of the sower was longer today than four days ago in the fields. Did you think it would be better for these hearers?

JESUS

(stops and looks at him, faint smile) You remember very well, don't you?

BENJAMIN

(surprised and a little embarrassed) Yes... I guess I do.

JESUS

Stay with me today?

BENJAMIN

(surprised, excited) Yes. I should tell my wife, but I can be back very fast.

JESUS

(smiling and patting him on the back) Tend to your family, my friend. I'll be on that hill waiting for you. (gesturing and camera briefly pans)

BENJAMIN hurries off and JESUS walks toward the hill.

FADE

INT. THE LARGE ROOM OF A FINE, WELL-FURNISHED HOME - DAY

A very well-dressed man with an arrogant air, sits at a table, eating with another man and his wife (also richly dressed). Multiple servants tend to them. A musician sits in the corner of the room, playing a lyre.

RICH WIFE

Are the priests still being so obstinate toward the procurator?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Yes, they continue to display the arrogance of their narrow minds. The procurator is a fool, of course, but the priests barely try to work with him. If they had more sense, they could use him to gain a better audience with the emperor and actually improve things for their people.

RICH MAN

The soldiers behaved better this year?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

So far as I could tell, yes. They were mostly Roman-trained Jews and Phoenicians, but they understood the Latin barked at them and obeyed well enough.

RICH WIFE

We heard there was an execution.
Was that true?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Yes, another self-styled messiah...
this one called Jesus of Nazareth.
But he was quickly arrested by the
priests, then given to the Romans
for execution.

RICH MAN

Wait... Jesus of Nazareth?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Yes. I suppose it was just the
right time for the masses to chase
their superstitions again.

RICH MAN

Jesus of Nazareth?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

(pompously) That is what I said.
Thrice now.

RICH MAN

You must be mistaken. We saw him
two days ago. He was teaching about
the way of the heavens, and well.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

(with disdain) That is not
possible.

RICH MAN

Impossible or no, we saw a teacher
of that name, and I think he's
presently in a nearby village.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

(angry and insulted, standing very
straight and tall) Take me! (turns
and addresses a guard at the door)
Gather all the servants!

FADE

EXT. ANOTHER TOWN WITH A RIDGE BEHIND THE OPEN AREA, FALLING OFF TO A STREAM - DAY

JESUS is teaching another small group featuring women, children and old men. BENJAMIN is standing discretely beside the crowd, not too far from Jesus.

JESUS

This is *my* commandment: That you love one another.

CUT to a wider angle.

We see JESUS, the crowd (or at least part of it) and dust rising in the distance. Within a few seconds they are all looking. JESUS motions to BENJAMIN, who approaches. JESUS pulls him close and whispers into his ear.

JESUS

Check it for me, please, Benjamin.
Be careful and quick.

JESUS

(turns to the crowd) Go to safety,
my friends. This may not be a
terror, but it's clearly not farm
carts.

The crowd leaves quickly. JESUS helps an old man up (by hooking the old man's upper arm, as JESUS is still protecting his wrist). He guides a couple of children to their mothers, and turns to watch BENJAMIN running up to the crest of the hill and putting his hand over his eyes to block the sun. He watches for a moment, then turns and runs back.

BENJAMIN

(slightly winded) It's a crowd of
at least twenty, some of them
armed, and the man leading it looks
rich and angry.

JESUS hitches up his bag and surveys the area. The camera pans slowly with him. BENJAMIN grabs JESUS' shoulder, the camera stops panning, and BENJAMIN turns JESUS to face the river, as he points to it.

BENJAMIN

Go to the river and follow it down
stream till you find a cave in a
bluff. Wait for me there. I'll take
you to my home.

JESUS nods and BENJAMIN runs back toward the crest of the hill.

CUT to JESUS, who is sliding down a steep hill.

He reaches the bottom and heads down stream, not bothering to wipe the dust off his backside.

CUT to BENJAMIN, who is reaching the top of the crest.

The DOCTOR OF THE LAW's mob is closing. BENJAMIN runs so that the mob can see him, heading away from the river.

CUT to JESUS hurrying down the bank of the stream.

Filming reminiscent of the iconic intro of The Fugitive television series. JESUS still cannot move terribly well. Some distance down he hides behind a tree. He unwraps one mud-covered ankle, dips it in the water to clean it, and re-wraps it. He looks back intently, then gets up and continues downstream as quickly as he can, approaching a small rapids.

FADE to the sound of rapids.

INT. IN BENJAMIN AND REBEKA'S HOUSE- NIGHT

The adults are eating and tending to the children, who are getting down to play, need to be brought back, etc. BENJAMIN pours wine into their glasses as they discuss.

JESUS

Yes. With the judgments you make,
you judge yourself.

REBEKA

Then it's not about keeping the
rules?

JESUS

Must the fig force itself to be a
fig?

BENJAMIN and REBEKA fail to grasp his point. After a few seconds, BENJAMIN decides to ignore his confusion and ask a follow-on question anyway.

BENJAMIN

And what of those who are thorns?

JESUS

The plants that are not planted by
my father will be rooted up.

REBEKA

Then it's fate? Are there no gates
of light that can open to us?

JESUS

(smiles, speaks brightly) Ask! You
will receive! Seek the light and
you will find the light! Those who
ask, receive.

CUT to the older child (DANIEL) running to the table.

DANIEL

Mama! Debra went on herself!

CUT back to the table, where REBEKA, clearly tired, forces herself to get up. JESUS leans in to BENJAMIN.

JESUS

Benjamin, give your wife a moment
of rest.

BENJAMIN

(resolutely) You're right.
(standing and motioning for Rebeka
to sit) I'll take care of it this
time.

Rebeka sits and takes a breath. BENJAMIN's dialog fades as
he leaves the frame.

BENJAMIN

Debra!

REBEKA

(persistent weariness shows in her
young face) Taking care of the
children every day, every night...
it's harder than I imagined it
would be. I took care of my younger
brother and sisters when I was a
girl, but I didn't carry an
ultimate burden like I do now.

JESUS

(nodding in sympathy) I had the
full responsibility of our
household for a time. It's a heavy
job, and there's no break from its
obligations.

They pause in silence and rest for a moment, as BENJAMIN
hurries back and forth through the kitchen, gathering wet
rags.

BENJAMIN

Daniel! Just wait! I'll be right
there.

JESUS

(turning again to REBEKA and
tilting his head, referring to
BENJAMIN) He remembers and reasons
exceptionally well.

REBEKA nods her agreement.

JESUS

That's of great value, but in a world like this, he has to spend so much effort defending his mind that he can't spend as much in other ways... sometimes in ways that are necessary for *you*.

REBEKA looks down and right, remembering instances. Nodding involuntarily.

JESUS

Forgive his omissions and try to supply what he can't. You'll make him better, and he'll make you and the children better. (sympathetic smile)

INT. BENJAMIN AND REBEKA'S HOUSE, AT THE FRONT DOOR - EARLY MORNING

All three are speaking quietly and glancing at the children's room, trying not to wake them. JESUS is arranging his bag, REBEKA hands him something (presumably some wrapped food) and BENJAMIN stands, considering what manner of man they have befriended.

JESUS

Thank you again, both of you, for your hospitality and for your friendship.

REBEKA

(hugs him briefly) You are welcome here any time.

BENJAMIN

(opens the door and hugs him briefly) Please do return. Day or night.

JESUS smiles warmly, then turns and heads away.

FADE

EXT. THE BASE OF LAKE HULA, TWO LARGE STONES, ONE UPON ANOTHER, IN THE BACKGROUND - MORNING

JESUS sits in a cluster of trees and bushes, watching the path to the stones. Camera pans and we see JAMES #2 approaching. JESUS rises to just below the level of the bushes and scans the area for anyone else. Seeing no one, he rises to his full height and steps out, waiting for JAMES #2. Upon his arrival, JESUS places his arm around his shoulder and walks him up a nearby hill and into the entrance of a small cave. They sit in shadows at the entrance, overlooking the area.

JAMES #2

You're walking better, but you still have your wounds wrapped... Do you mind if I see them?

JESUS

A little, but if it matters to you, you can look.

JESUS unwinds the wrappings on his wrists and shows JAMES #2. They are improving, but still fairly bad.

JESUS

The ankles are about the same.

JAMES #2

Thank you for letting me see.
(pause) Why does it bother you?

JESUS

The wounds were to my body, but the experience also wounded my soul. To see people descend to a pack of starving wolves, enjoying my body as their prey... that also requires time to heal, and remembering doesn't help.

JAMES #2

How does that happen?

JESUS

You've seen it: They come to see their group as the great one, and outsiders as mere things. Within *that*, malice appears as duty and loyalty. Soon enough they can kill, thinking that they do God a service.

JAMES #2

It's frightening.

JESUS

(smiles) It is, but I'd like to leave the subject now.

JAMES #2

I apologize.

JESUS

(still smiling) So, tell me about my students. What are they thinking and doing?

The noise of hooves is heard in the distance. JESUS holds his hand up to stop JAMES #2 and to direct him back from the cave entry. JESUS lowers himself and looks out. Camera pans to reveal a man riding a loaded cart pulled by two donkeys. He pauses for a moment, then sits back and motions to JAMES #2, who speaks quietly.

JAMES #2

The are at Widow Mary's house, in the big upper room. I stayed with them one day.

JESUS

And...

JAMES #2

It was hard to say any one thing about them. Simon, Andrew, John and James went fishing for a few days, then returned. The rest have done things too, but they come and go very carefully, still not sure the threat of execution has passed. And Simon swears that he saw you at the tomb, alive again.

JESUS

He did.

JAMES #2

Ah...

JESUS

Did they say anything about me being their messiah?

JAMES #2

Not directly, no... but I think they've given up the idea of being saved from Rome.

JESUS

What made you think that?

JAMES #2

Partly that they said nothing about it, and because they repeated, more than once, something you apparently said: "If they persecute you in this city, flee to another." People doing that kind of planning have probably given up on the defeat of Rome.

JESUS

Quite right. (pauses and looks out again) Well, we're clear again. Thank you for this, James.

JESUS stands, JAMES #2 follows, and they emerge from the cave. They walk several steps then stop.

JESUS
I won't see you again, James...

JAMES #2
Where...

JESUS
I'm leaving this world altogether.

JAMES #2 is speechless. JESUS hugs him warmly.

JESUS
Thank you for your help, my
brother. I will not forget it.

JAMES #2, more confused than anything, staggers off to the south, turning back every few steps to look again at JESUS, who is smiling and waving at him. Then JESUS turns and heads west, walking up to a tree line and continuing along it.

FADE

INT. THE LARGE ROOM OF THE FINE, WELL-FURNISHED HOME - NIGHT
Different P.O.V. than last time.

The DOCTOR OF THE LAW is furious, pacing the room. The RICH MAN and RICH WIFE sit at the table, waiting for him to speak. Again multiple servants tend to them.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW
(angry and loud) I went to three
villages! My servant went to four
more! They all saw this man, but we
cannot find him!

RICH MAN
Perhaps he has gone to Gamla, or
another of the more distant cities?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Yes, yes, of course possibilities...
and he certainly knew we were
pursuing him. (pauses) I will go
back to Jerusalem and find out,
particularly, who this man was and
what happened to him. Perhaps I can
learn who this impostor is... they
must have been associated.

RICH MAN

How can we help?

The DOCTOR OF THE LAW spins to face then at the table, with
a hot idea in his head.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Tell everyone I've given up... that
I've gone back home empty.

RICH WIFE

We can do that.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Good! I will leave in the morning.

Spins again to face his servant who is sitting at the door.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Make sure we'll be ready.

The servant hurries off and THE DOCTOR OF THE LAW turns back
to the RICH MAN and RICH WIFE at the table.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

We will destroy this superstition
before it has a chance to root.
These things will ruin us! The
masses who chase after these
teachers have no learning and no
idea what this world requires.
We'll kill this superstition, along
with all the primitive beliefs
they've carried through their
generations. Enough of it all!

FADE

EXT. DEEP WOODS. A SMALL STREAM IN THE DISTANCE AND THE
FRAME OF A SMALL HOUSE - DAY

JESUS is walking through the woods and notices the sound of a man struggling. He turns and walks to it, eventually seeing some wood beams through the trees, then a man struggling oddly with one of them. JESUS stops to observe and it becomes clear that the man has some type of physical impediment. JESUS continues his approach, taking in the scene very carefully. Reaching a place where the man can see him, he stops.

JESUS

Would you like some help?

BLUE

(stops struggling and lets the beam
fall) I'd have had that thing in
place four times already, but it
squirms like a snake every time I
grab it.

JESUS is confused, but we now see that BLUE has cerebral palsy (hands, etc.) and it dawns on JESUS that he's making a joke, in the style of comedian Josh Blue.

CUT to JESUS' face, which turns from concern to understanding, then to open laughter.

CUT back to previous P.O.V.

JESUS walks to BLUE, picks up the beam and guides it into place.

BLUE

People call me Blue.

JESUS

Why?

BLUE

Not a good reason... Because sometimes I have fits and turn blue.

JESUS sits and BLUE joins him.

JESUS

That was malicious of them.

BLUE

Yes, it was. (resolute) But now I don't care.

JESUS

Why?

BLUE

Because I will never see them again. I'll build a house, gather my own food and never go back.

JESUS

They *all* treated you that badly?

BLUE

No, my mother and grandmother loved me, but they are dead, both of them. And to the rest I am nothing but a load to carry... and they treat me like it.

JESUS

What a stupid loss for them.

BLUE is shocked to hear JESUS portray it that way.

BLUE
For them!?

JESUS
Yes. It was insult and torture to you, but we've already discussed that. And a stupid loss for them because of your many abilities, which you would have shared with them, had they treated you well.

BLUE is again shocked, and JESUS understands that reference to his "many abilities" has confused him. JESUS turns to look him in the eye.

JESUS
You have a type of affliction, this is true, and it does restrict you. But what you are - what we all are - is much more than that.

BLUE
I'm not sure I understand.

JESUS
(smiles) Then I'll explain. You see, you hear, you remember, you *understand...* and more than that, you *create*.

BLUE
I do?

JESUS
Of course you do! You created a joke as I approached; a joke that was both funny and benevolent. Do you think that ability is limited to one joke?

BLUE
No, of course not.

JESUS

And by what is your ability to
create limited?

BLUE

(thinks) Well... I'm not sure that it
really is limited.

JESUS

(smiles again) Neither am I.
(pause) This ability of yours, my
friend, is God-like in its scope,
and you've already learned to use
it in part. Those people were fools
to spit on it and drive it away.

FADE to the hum of multiple conversations.

INT. THE DINING AREA (FIRST LEVEL) OF A FAIRLY SHODDY INN.
CANDLES AND OIL LAMPS - NIGHT

The room is full of laborers, eating and drinking. JESUS sits at a large table, talking to half a dozen workmen, plus a few women, who may be either wives, daughters or taking a break from waiting on tables.

WORKMAN #1

And what, precisely, is this good
news?

JESUS

That the way of the heavens
(gesturing)... the way of God... has
come to you.

WORKMAN #1

Didn't Moses give us the way of
God?

JESUS

Moses gave you laws. They described
a way for *Israel* to live, not the
way God lives.

WORKMAN #2

And we can somehow live the way God lives?

JESUS

Haven't you read of the beginning, where God made man "in his image, and in his likeness"? Is it so strange then, that we might live similarly?

WOMAN #1

If the law doesn't deliver that to us, then what examples... what guides do we have?

JESUS

All that I've said, of course. But consider Abraham, who is said to have studied the heavens, and his son Isaac, whose custom was to go to the fields at night to meditate. (slight pause and looking up) Lying silently, beholding the infinite stars, knowing that nothing we see could have made what we see... reaching toward their unseen source... seeking.

JESUS gives them a moment to refocus on him - they had been literally looking up, imagining a sky full of stars - and only then resumes.

JESUS

Whoever so seeks, my friends, finds. And I have come to deliver this good news to you. The way of the heavens is here. Now.

JESUS rises, cinches up his cloak, pulls his bag over his shoulder, smiles at them all and walks off.

FADE to the crackling of a fire.

EXT. BLUE'S HOME SITE, NIGHT

BLUE is sitting at a fire, cooking with some difficulty.
BLUE hears JESUS approaching and stands, concerned.

JESUS

Fear not, my friend. It is I, your
assistant.

BLUE

I should fire you for frightening
me!

JESUS smiles, joins him at the fire, and surveys the
construction.

JESUS

You've made progress... (moves to
tend the food) May I?

BLUE

If you wish.

JESUS

(smiles) I do. (again looking
around) You have a considerable
area under a roof.

JESUS serves some food to BLUE.

JESUS

Don't be concerned for me, I've
already eaten.

BLUE eats.

JESUS

But I do have a negotiation for
you.

BLUE

Tell me, my working brother.

JESUS

I'll work for you tomorrow, if
you'll allow me to sleep in your
shelter.

BLUE

Yes, but will I have to feed you?

JESUS

(laughing) Only if I work well!

JESUS takes a swig from his wineskin. Then he gets serious.

JESUS

But there is one thing you should
know... There is a powerful man
searching for me. It's unlikely
that he'll find me here, but there
is some small risk to you.

BLUE

Searching for you why?

JESUS

(taking another swig) Because of my
teaching.

BLUE

(laughs to himself) Somehow, I can
believe that. (pause) But I don't
care. You're welcome to stay.

JESUS

Thank you.

CUT to the next morning.

BLUE is bringing pieces to JESUS, who puts them into place
and secures them like a skilled carpenter.

JESUS

I'd like to ask you something
seriously, Blue.

BLUE

All right.

JESUS

(stops working and looks BLUE in the face) If you could be cured of your affliction, would you do it?

BLUE

(blank-faced) What a strange thing to ask.

JESUS

I suppose it is, but you haven't answered.

BLUE sits and JESUS joins him.

BLUE

I've thought about that. On one hand it would make so many things easier and better. But on the other... (turns directly to JESUS) I don't want to be like them! At all! (half pause) And I wouldn't know how to pick the better of those choices... How would you choose?

JESUS

I'd start by forgiving them.

BLUE

Forgiving them!? (angry) As if it were agreeable for them to treat me as garbage!?

JESUS

Not at all.

BLUE

Then I don't understand.
(frustrated, then softens)

JESUS

They continue to torture you in
your memories... memories you repeat...
sufferings you repeat. But if you
can say, sincerely, "I will no
longer hold them to account for
what they've done," the root of
that suffering withers and dies...
and you become a greater being.

BLUE

Like it never happened at all?

JESUS

You can remember what manner of
beings they are. You can even
recall their actions if there's a
reason. But seeking to punish them,
you punish yourself.

BLUE

And what of justice?

JESUS

The abuses you suffered, Blue, came
from beings whom eternity will very
happily forget. And by believing
this, you drop your suffering and
fit yourself to a higher way of
being.

BLUE sits silently, considering. Then he looks back to
JESUS.

BLUE

You said that's what you'd do
first. What would you do after
that?

JESUS

I think I'd consider the utility of
leaving the affliction behind, and
remember that my mother and
grandmother didn't have it and yet
were kind, loving people.

Again BLUE sits, thinks, and then turns to JESUS.

BLUE

And I think I'd do the same.

JESUS

Then, my friend, when you can
really forgive them, the affliction
will leave you.

FADE

INT. THE LARGE ROOM OF THE FINE, WELL-FURNISHED HOME,
WINDOWS OPEN IN THE SOUTHERN EUROPEAN STYLE - DAY

Yet another P.O.V.

The RICH MAN enters to front door, carrying a bag. The servant follows, carrying two more. The RICH WIFE walks into the room from another part of the house and observes. The DOCTOR OF THE LAW, enjoying the pomp, walks in the door last, doesn't bother to close it and sits at the head of the table, waiting to be served.

The DOCTOR OF THE LAW's servant closes the door and the RICH WIFE waives him on with the bags, toward the guest rooms. The RICH MAN motions to his servants to bring refreshments, then both he and the RICH WIFE sit.

RICH MAN

Your journey must have been long.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Long and frustrating.

RICH WIFE

Did you learn anything?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Oh, I learned a great deal, mainly
that this impostor is exceedingly
dangerous.

RICH MAN

Why?

Bread, wine, oil and olives are brought to the table and glasses filled with wine from fine carafes.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Because this Jesus of Nazareth - an unschooled workman from a meaningless little place - *supported* neither Jerusalem or Rome and *opposed* neither Jerusalem or Rome.

RICH MAN

Then I don't understand. What else is there?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

As best I could tell, he was treating both as irrelevant... as off-scourings.

RICH MAN

A madman!

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Yes! But a madman who appealed to the rabble. And if someone continues in his name, it will appear to ignorant workers that Rome couldn't kill their great teacher. And that... That will undermine Rome's power. It will force them to send more officials and more soldiers, destroying everything we've done to make peace with the empire.

RICH MAN

But the man was killed, yes?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Very definitely. Rome knows how to kill. And the procurator was happy to kill a Jew without consequences. But the fools in the provinces won't care about reports from Jerusalem if their impossible dreams seem possible. Whatever people of understanding do to improve their situation, they poison it... and they always have. I tell you, this man must be stopped! Killed if necessary. The good of the nation demands it!

The DOCTOR OF THE LAW's servant walks back in and nods to him.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Go then, see if you can determine where he will be.

The servant heads out the door.

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

Our first duty is to turn the people away from him.

RICH MAN

How?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW

With priests. They will bring the people back to Moses. Even the lowest Jew believes that the law given by Moses stands above all. We'll make them understand that this false teacher slanders and insults Moses. I've already met with the high priests and they are sending trained men.

RICH WIFE

And if you capture him?

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DOCTOR OF THE LAW
We'll carry him to the Tetrach in
Caesaria Maratima.

RICH MAN
And if you can't?

DOCTOR OF THE LAW
Then I'll lead a mission to the
Tetrarch, and ask him to remove
this pestilence before it creates a
disaster.

FADE

EXT. A SWIFT STREAM IN A FAIRLY NARROW GORGE WITH MODERATELY STEEP SIDES. IT IS TRAVERSABLE, BUT NOT EASILY- AFTERNOON

JESUS sits in a boat that is tied to a tree. A sizable and growing crowd is listening.

JESUS
The time has arrived, and the
kingdom of the heavens has come to
you. (closing his eyes to
communicate the deep, internal
nature of his next statement) shift
your consciousness and take in this
good news.

JESUS pauses several seconds to make them consider it. The camera pans the crowd. Some warm to it and others scoff or are confused.

JESUS

(turns to the left side of the crowd from his perspective, slowly panning to the right) And this way of the heavens is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and planted in his field. It's the smallest of seeds, but when grown, it is greater than the herbs, and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in its branches.

CUT to two men in priestly garb, with the DOCTOR OF THE LAW above and behind them.

The two priests hurry toward the river, excitedly pointing to JESUS. The DOCTOR OF THE LAW follows slowly. JESUS scans all three of them. He discretely but immediately unties the rope that has been holding him in place, then begins letting it out. The men are now running toward him, though they progress slowly over the difficult terrain. JESUS is purposely projecting his voice, to be sure all of them are hearing it well.

JESUS

Beware of false teachers who come dressed as lambs, but who are, *inwardly*, ravening wolves. Good trees bring forth good fruit. Evil trees bring forth evil fruit.

He continues letting out the line and speaks yet louder. The sound of the river rises as he gets into the middle of it and it buffets his small boat.

JESUS

By their *fruits* you know them!

JESUS drops the rope and picks up a pole he has kept in the bottom on the boat. He pushes vigorously, still favoring his wrists. Soon enough, however, he is beyond the reach of any of them. He continues down the fast river into deep woods (music rising in an escape theme), looking back every so often and navigating carefully, using the pole to stay away from rocks, etc.

FADE, music and river noise fading a beat behind, overcome by the sound of water as it turns from surging to sloshing.

EXT. DOWNSTREAM ON THE SAME RIVER – DUSK

The river is wider and slower at this point. JESUS remains in the boat, but we can also see that it is badly damaged from going into and over rocks. It is, in fact, barely afloat. JESUS pushes it to the bank and grabs a branch or root to stop it. He steps out into a foot or two of water. We see that he is soaked from the escape. He pushes the boat back on its way downstream and trudges up the bank. He looks briefly upstream, but there is no one in sight. He walks to a high spot, finds a little path and stops to orient by the setting sun. He chooses his direction, walks to the right, and finds a fallen tree to sit upon. He is alone in an extremely remote place. He opens his bag, pulls out a towel and some fresh strips of cloth. He begins to dry and re-wrap his ankles, speaking to himself.

JESUS

Thus ends this chapter.

He continues cleaning and wrapping, stopping to stare off into space.

JESUS

It was a productive chapter, but I'll still have to recover the others... Somehow I'll have to reset their minds and recommit them to the work... and better this time.

He inspects his new wrappings, pulls out his coat, reloads his bag and stands. He puts on the coat and arranges himself, making sure he's ready to wander into the night.

JESUS

And... I'll need to do it right away.
My new wolf has smelled blood.

FADE slowly, to the rising sound of knocking.

EXT. BENJAMIN AND REBEKA'S HOUSE – LATE NIGHT

It is raining. JESUS, tired, dirty and wet, knocks on the door, trying not to simultaneously arouse the neighbors. One of his wrists is exposed. He tries to pull down his sleeve to cover it, which works only momentarily.

JESUS

Benjamin, Rebeka... it is I, Jesus of Nazareth, seeking your hospitality.

The door opens, BENJAMIN, bare-chested, is seen inside, motioning to invite him in. JESUS scans the entire area before entering, then comes in and bolts the door.

INT. BENJAMIN AND REBEKA'S HOUSE – LATE NIGHT

BENJAMIN motions for him to sit at the table. REBEKA, gathering a robe around herself comes into the room and sits, handing a shirt to BENJAMIN, who puts it on while sitting.

BENJAMIN

(speaking low) Another crowd problem?

JESUS

Yes, and a hunter wishing to turn them against me. The same one we had to run from before.

They all sit mournfully. Rebeka gets up and pulls a towel from a drawer. She hands it to JESUS. He begins drying himself.

JESUS

Thank you.

REBEKA

Would you like something to eat or drink?

JESUS

No, I'll just wash a bit if you don't mind, then lay down before I wake anyone.

REBEKA

Do you have dry clothing?

JESUS

(pokes through his bag then smiles, wryly) Not particularly.

REBEKA looks at BENJAMIN, who jumps up and goes to his room to get some.

REBEKA

I can wash your things in the morning.

BENJAMIN returns with dry clothing and hands it to JESUS, who nods his appreciation and heads to the bathroom.

FADE to the sounds of children running and playing.

INT. BENJAMIN AND REBEKA'S HOUSE - MORNING

BENJAMIN motions for JESUS to sit at the table, where a plate of food covered with a light towel is waiting for him. BENJAMIN is tending to the children. JESUS begins eating and REBEKA enters, a bag over her shoulder and carrying water on her head. BENJAMIN takes the water off her head. She places the bag on her work table (a little like a kitchen counter) and turns to address JESUS.

REBEKA

No one said anything about you, and they would have, if they had seen or heard anything.

JESUS

Thank you.

She smiles and nods, then turns to BENJAMIN.

REBEKA

You can let the children out now. I closed the gate.

BENJAMIN

(to the children) Go out and play, but be careful.

The children run out, REBEKA begins, comfortably, unpacking her bag. BENJAMIN and JESUS are eating, but then BENJAMIN turns to him, very seriously.

BENJAMIN

I haven't asked you some obvious questions, because I was sure you didn't want to talk about them.

JESUS

Which I appreciate, Benjamin. Thank you.

BENJAMIN

You're welcome. But this seems a turning point for you, and so I want to insert myself further. Is there anything I can do to help you?

JESUS

You're a good man, Benjamin.

He stops and thinks for a moment. BENJAMIN waits.

JESUS

There *is* one thing I need to do. But I'm not sure I want you to take risks for me. You have little children.

BENJAMIN

Then Rebeka will be our arbiter. Is that fair enough?

JESUS smiles and chuckles. REBEKA has overhead the conversation and approaches. BENJAMIN waives her toward the table and slides over to make room for her. JESUS thinks for a moment and smiles.

JESUS

You negotiate well. (pause as he gets more serious) I need only one thing, and that's to get in and out of Jerusalem. But it has to be very soon, very quickly and without being noticed.

BENJAMIN

This would be a surprise visit?

JESUS

Yes.

BENJAMIN

Would anyone be expecting you?

JESUS

No. They'd almost certainly expect me to stay away from Jerusalem.

REBEKA

You're hesitant because being caught with you could get Benjamin imprisoned or worse?

JESUS

Precisely.

REBEKA gets up and begins pacing, deep in thought. We see the ripples of thoughts flashing across her face. JESUS and BENJAMIN wait. Then she turns to BENJAMIN.

REBEKA

Is your uncle still carrying wheat and oil to Judea?

BENJAMIN

Ah... Yes, I think he is.

REBEKA turns directly to JESUS, resolute.

REBEKA

If his uncle needs a laborer on one of his deliveries, Benjamin can arrange it and go with you. His uncle needn't be told much, and on Benjamin's word he would protect you.

JESUS

Benjamin, do you agree with that?

BENJAMIN

Yes, I do. I'll ask my uncle for the work and he'll almost certainly be glad to have us. His son, my cousin, is at sea now.

JESUS

Thank you both. What shall I do now?

BENJAMIN

Stay here another two days. Rebeka will shield you. I'll visit my uncle and see if I can make the arrangements.

FADE to new music.

EXT. THE GARDEN BEHIND BENJAMIN AND REBEKA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JESUS is helping Rebeka and (especially) her children to reap their garden. (pleasant music)

REBEKA

I've heard the teaching of a philosopher... that we become just by doing just deeds. That's close to what you said, but I'm not sure it's entirely the same.

JESUS

(smiling) I'd have to agree with you; close but not entirely the same.

REBEKA

Then would you explain, please?

JESUS

Do unto others as you would have them do unto you, and you are just. Do unto them as you would *not* have done unto you, and you are unjust.

REBEKA

But you've said nothing of the law.

JESUS

We are judged by the judgments we make. That applies equally to us all; before Moses or after Moses, near or far. What more is required?

BENJAMIN emerges from the house and approaches, energetic and happy.

BENJAMIN

It is done!

JESUS stands and smiles.

JESUS

Then tell us!

BENJAMIN

(approaches and lowers his voice, conspiratorially) Okay... tomorrow morning we will dress you as a poor laborer and we will help my uncle transport a load of ground wheat and oil to Jerusalem... And he's in a hurry to get back.

JESUS, considering carefully, nods.

JESUS

That will work.

BENJAMIN

You won't have much time, but he has agreed to stop long enough for you to deliver a message. He'll be gruff about it, but he'll do it.

JESUS

(smiling and brightly) Well done, Benjamin. We will do precisely that.

BENJAMIN and REBEKA walk toward their children, who need some oversight. JESUS mutters to himself indistinctly as the camera pulls back and the sound of cartwheels rises.

FADE to the sounds of cart wheels over Roman-style paved roads.

EXT. A ROMAN ROAD THROUGH JUDEA, APPROACHING A SMALL VILLAGE ON THE BASE OF A HILL. SUN SETTING - EARLY EVENING

The village is an old-world version of a truck stop. The UNCLE drops BENJAMIN and JESUS (disguised) in front of the Inn. He is driving a fairly large and fully-loaded cart, pulled by four less-than-beautiful horses. BENJAMIN and JESUS enter to secure a sleeping room for the three. UNCLE takes the cart and merchandise to a strongly built barn, where he has a business conversation with the proprietor. The two know each other, having done regular business for a long time.

We see one workman transferring hay from a cart, through a door in the back of the barn. Another is up the hill, opening a sluice gate and sending water down to a small reservoir between the barn and the inn. Yet another is in front, bringing in supplies from a smaller cart.

FADE

EXT. THE SAME ROAD AND VILLAGE/TRUCK STOP - EARLY MORNING

BENJAMIN and JESUS (again well disguised) bring the cart out of the barn. The UNCLE is having a few words with the proprietor.

UNCLE

It's a regular delivery and it'll take only a few hours to unload. So we'll be back tonight, hopefully before the sun sets.

PROPRIETOR

We'll expect you.

UNCLE and the PROPRIETOR wave at each other, BENJAMIN sits in front by his UNCLE, JESUS takes his spot at the rear of the cart, and they pull back onto the road, the horses setting a brisk pace.

FADE to the sounds of wagon wheels in dirt.

EXT. THE (SEMI-PAVED, SEMI-DIRT) STREET IN FRONT OF A LARGE, TWO-STORY HOUSE IN JERUSALEM - DAY

JERUSALEM

Scene resembles an old Western. Just a few people on the street. The wagon, now empty, pulls up, with JESUS, BENJAMIN, and the UNCLE driving the cart. JESUS has shed the shabbier, outer layer of his costume, and is wearing a clean robe that was beneath. The UNCLE looks back and JESUS nods. The wagon stops and JESUS steps off. He is still wearing the Arabic wrapping on his head.

UNCLE

(Sternly) We can't wait long!

JESUS looks to the UNCLE, waives his acknowledgement and turns to the house. His face changes to become almost fierce, as he begins to unwrap his head. He steps up to the door and knocks firmly, tucking the head wrapping into his robe.

CUT to the doorway.

A woman opens the door part way, looks at JESUS, gasps, and staggers backward. JESUS pushes the door open, we see the woman against a wall. JESUS, striding briskly (still a little limp) turns right and continues through the long entryway, then left, through a doorway and out of view.

FADE, serious music rising.

INT. A LARGE, UNFINISHED ROOM - DAY

The eleven are scattered across the room, having been here since the crucifixion. Pallet-like beds are scattered throughout, as a few tables, etc. The eleven are talking, reading and sleeping. A double door opens vigorously, grasping their attention. Their faces show a range of emotions from concern to fear.

CUT to JESUS, stepping up to a prominent spot in the room.

The double doors close behind him. The eleven, slowly, unconsciously, begin clustering.

THADDAEUS
(frightened, speaking to the
others) It's only a spirit.

JESUS
(angrily) I'm only a spirit? Does a
spirit have these?

He pulls back the wrappings on his wrists, one after the other. He shows them his wounds, which are no longer clean through, but are still showing heavy scar tissue.

JESUS

Or these?

He goes to one knee and pulls up the wrapping on one ankle, showing the same level of wound. He pulls the wrapping back, stands, and pulls the wrappings back over his wrists. The eleven are now in a single cluster, their faces almost blank with emotion.

JESUS speaks powerfully, but not uniformly loud.

JESUS

I told you I was going to be killed... and *clearly*.

The eleven begin to focus.

JESUS

I told you that afterward I would meet you at our place in Galilee. (pause) And how many of your company (gesturing widely with his right arm, as at others) were told, by special messengers, that you should meet me in Galilee?

JESUS pauses, no one dares speak. He begins to take a step to his left, then stops and returns. He leans slightly forward. The eleven follow him intently.

JESUS

All I ever wanted was for you to believe me. But you wouldn't!

CUT to another angle.

JESUS

You were eager to call me messiah... happy to be close to the exalted one, so you could exercise Lordship with him! ("Lordship" is spoken with disgust)

CUT to another angle.

JESUS

Or you wanted me to be the knower
of all things, so you could stand,
along with me, above the ignorant
masses!

He stands straighter again.

JESUS

You wanted me to be great for *your*
reasons! (pointing at them) To
serve *your* imaginations!

Backing off of volume but broadening the emotional scope of
his words.

JESUS

But you wouldn't *believe* me, which
would have carried you far beyond
your dreams of power and unearned
knowledge.

Takes a breath, continuing in sorrow, with a touch of
frustration.

JESUS

You wouldn't just *believe* me.

Again he takes a breath and becomes powerfully resolute and
louder.

JESUS

If you want any part of me - not
your vanities, but *me* - you'll be
in Galilee three days from now.

He turns sharply and walks back out, leaving the eleven
frozen in place.

CUT back to the front door.

The same woman is still there, waiting, and steps out of his
way as he strides briskly back out, re-wrapping his head as
he goes.

CUT

EXT. THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE TWO-STORY HOUSE - DAY

JESUS emerges, finishing his head wrapping. The UNCLE sees him and sits up straight to leave. Jesus waives him onward before reaching the cart. Uncle engages the horses and BENJAMIN helps JESUS onto the wagon, careful to grab his upper arm, not his hand or forearm. JESUS sits and arranges himself so his back is to the house, then slumps down to be seen as little as possible by anyone. The wagon continues to the end of the street, turns right and is gone. Several seconds later (not "just missed it") the eleven slowly emerge from the house and scan the street in vain.

FADE

EXT. A SLIGHTLY LESSER ROAD HEADING NORTH THROUGH GALILEE, AT A SMALL CROSSROADS. BRIGHT BUT COOL AND WINDY - MID-DAY

The cart pulls over and stops. JESUS slides off and walks toward BENJAMIN, sitting next to his UNCLE. BENJAMIN, however, jumps down quickly and meets JESUS almost at the back of the cart. UNCLE waits.

BENJAMIN
Is this our goodbye?

JESUS
I'm afraid so, Benjamin. I will not see you again in this world, but I will not forget what you and Rebeka have done for me. Without you, I don't know how this would have turned out. Thank you.

They hug one another.

JESUS
And please pass my feelings to Rebeka.

BENJAMIN
I will.

JESUS
And do one more thing for me,
Benjamin?

BENJAMIN
Of course.

JESUS
Take your family to synagogue this
coming sabbath. They'll be reading
Parasha Nitzavim. Be the second to
last reader.

BENJAMIN looks at him quizzically, but JESUS just flashes an enigmatic smile. Then JESUS kisses him (European style) turns and heads away.

CUT to UNCLE.

UNCLE
You are forgetting your wages!

CUT to back to previous P.O.V.

JESUS
(stops and looks back) You will
give them to BENJAMIN, please. He
can use them on my behalf.

CUT to back to UNCLE.

The UNCLE is a mix of skeptical and confused, but nods his agreement.

CUT back to JESUS and BENJAMIN.

JESUS turns and walks up the small crossing road into low hills.

FADE

EXT. BLUE'S HOME - ALMOST DUSK

JESUS walks out of the woods and looks around.

JESUS

Blue? (waits for a response) Blue!?
Are you here, my friend!?

JESUS walks the perimeter of the structure, looking for BLUE, but seeing no one. Then he looks over the house itself, seeing the roofed area is nearly enclosed. He walks inside that area (camera follows), finds a nice place to sleep, puts down his bag and picks up his wineskin. He steps back into the less finished part of the house, surveys it, takes a swig of water, then places the skin down. He speaks as a self-entertainment.

JESUS

Well, I think I can get some work in before it's too dark.

JESUS picks up a hand adze and begins trimming a mortise and tenon joint.

FADE to birds chirping.

EXT. BLUE'S HOME - MORNING

JESUS walks out of the shelter and looks around. He has a towel and mug in one of his hands. He finds a covered jar of water, dips in his mug, pours part on his towel, rinses his mouth and spits, twice. Then he puts down the mug and vigorously rubs his face.

JESUS

Well, I'm sorry I missed you, my friend.

JESUS looks around and finds a carpenter's pencil (a *leaden stylus* version of the modern kind). Then he finds a good piece of scrap wood and inscribes a message. It reads:

I'm sorry I missed you, Blue. I presume you've gone for supplies. I am leaving now, and will not return. Thank you for your friendship and I hope you will be able to forgive.

- Your friend

JESUS puts down the stylus and carries the wood (the message) to the shelter, where he places it prominently. Then he hitches up his bag, walks out to the edge of the site, turns, looks back, sighs, and then goes back on his way. It will be a long day's journey.

FADE slowly

EXT. ON THE ORIGINAL MOUNTAINSIDE - DAY

JESUS, MAN #1 and MAN #2 sit, overlooking the valley. Camera pans slowly, first right, then left, where we finally see the eleven, approaching from a considerable distance.

MAN #1

(smiling) This time they came.

MAN #2

(puts his arm around JESUS for a moment) You have your disciples back.

JESUS

(smiles) So it would seem.

JESUS, MAN #1 and MAN #2 sit silently, watching the eleven as they slowly proceed, smiling to themselves and to each other.

MAN #2

You'll make a few clear points then give them a clear charge?

JESUS

Yes. I'll have to see precisely how they respond, of course, But I'm reasonably sure that will be best.

MAN #1
And if they ask too many questions?

JESUS
I'll bypass them if they lead away
from the concepts I need to ignite
in them. But I'll answer a few, if
they can be helpful.

MAN #1 and MAN #2 nod their agreement, and all three go back
to watching the eleven and being pleased. After a good while
(we'll need nice music here), JESUS stands.

JESUS
I'll prepare for them now.

MAN #1 and MAN #2 get up and step back from the edge, so
they couldn't be seen by the eleven.

MAN #2
We'll stay out of view and wait.

JESUS smiles his appreciation. MAN #1 and MAN #2 walk into
the brush and upward on the mountain. JESUS cleans up his
spot, takes his bag back to a table-like rock in the back of
the clearing and begins digging into it.

FADE to the sound of a low wind on the mountain side.

EXT. ON THE ORIGINAL MOUNTAINSIDE - AFTERNOON

JESUS stands in the clearing as the eleven filter up the
mountain. They don't approach him directly and stay to
the stage-left. JESUS motions for them to sit, which they
do, and then he sits across from them, stage-right.

JESUS
I am glad you came.

PETER, ANDREW and JAMES motion to JOHN to speak. JOHN
hesitates, then proceeds.

JOHN

When you came to Jerusalem... We...
Master, forgive us for our
unbelief! *Help* our unbelief.

JESUS

John, my friend... (sweeps the eleven
with his eyes) my friends... I didn't
come to condemn you; I came to
light your candles.

The eleven are relieved that he still loves them, but don't
really understand.

PETER

(with an open and honest ignorance)
We don't understand, Master.
Forgive me and help me, but I
thought I *was* believing in you.

JESUS

Of course I forgive you, Peter, but
what you were believing were things
about me. (longish pause to let it
sink in, camera can visit several
faces grasping at the concept) I
want you to just believe me.

JESUS sees that they are still having difficulty taking his point and knows that this is his last shot. He takes a deep breath (the eleven are intently focused upon him) then decides to elaborate rather than imply... something he avoided earlier. The tone of his voice changes, becoming almost business-like.

JESUS

Yours is a world of idolatry; of people forever clinging to great ones. And if one of their idols falls, they are quick to choose another. That's why it was easy for you to see me - to place me - as a better type of idol. (pause) And so you believed *in* me, and believed things *about* me.

JESUS scans their faces and judges that he should expound a bit more before going back to his usual, more indirect, style.

JESUS

Do you remember what I said to you the last time we were together at Capernaum? To have salt (points) *within* yourselves?

PETER

Yes, Master.

JESUS

Holding to a great one dedicates your potency to your idol. My message is incomprehensible to the world because it sets *you* as the actors... It teaches that you are drawn by my father, that you have seeds planted in you, that the fruit of those seeds emerges from you; that all of *you* shine light into this world. In a realm filled with idols and worshipers, primary and potent beings do not fit.

JESUS scans them, then sits back to address them all, rather than primarily Peter.

JESUS

What I say now is for you, not for all, but understand: The world cannot bear this message. Either the message will drive the *world* from your midst... or the world will drive the *message* from your midst.

The eleven look at one another, nodding, then back to Jesus.

THE ELEVEN

We understand this, Master.

JESUS

(smiles) I believe that you do.

JESUS stands, walks to the rock ledge where we see two platters covered with light towels. He brings them to the eleven, sets them down and uncovers them. They are filled with bread, small jars of oil and cheese. He tears off a piece of bread and a piece of cheese. The eleven follow. One of them pours some oil into a bowl. Jesus dips his bread in it. Likewise the eleven follow.

JESUS

I likewise have water if you need it.

They all eat and the eleven become more comfortable. But ANDREW seems preoccupied with something.

JESUS

What is it, Andrew?

ANDREW

(tilting his head) How is it, Master, that you could reach people ... reach them in their hearts... better than we could?

JESUS

(smiles) Who wept more for them, Andrew, (again sweeping them with his eyes), you or me?

ANDREW

Certainly you, Lord.

Again JESUS pauses to let his point sink in.

JOHN

(mildly excited) Does that also come, first the blade then the ear?

JESUS

The vine dresser carefully tends his vines for years until they bring forth abundantly. So shall it be with you. Therefore, tend your vines, until you hunger and thirst to bless them.

JESUS takes another bite of his bread and some of them follow. Others are still trying to absorb what JESUS just said.

THADDEUS

And what of the beginning and end of the world, Lord?

JESUS

In all of the towns and villages where I taught the people, Thaddeus, did you ever hear me teach about those things?

They stop and consider, taking the point with some discomfort, knowing that people will be asking them, and will be disappointed if they don't have an answer.

JESUS

How did I describe the kingdom of the heavens to you? Was it not with seeds and vines and growth? Even with yeast raising bread?

Their understanding is mixed with a struggle to let go of expectations.

JESUS

How then will the kingdom develop
in you and in the world? What is
the nature of seeds and trees and
grains?

Again they take the point with some discomfort.

FADE

INT. SYNAGOGUE - EVENING SERVICE

A man is standing at a lectern (almost the same as in a modern synagogue) reading to the congregation. The RABBI stands, waiting, about eight feet behind him and slightly to the side.

READER

... if you turn to Adonai your God
with all your heart.

The reader walks away from the lectern and the rabbi steps up and checks a listing of names on a small piece of paper.

RABBI

Benjamin.

BENJAMIN stands and walks up to the lectern. The RABBI pats him on the back, hands him the Torah pointer and guides him to his starting place. Then he backs away to where he had been standing.

CUT to REBEKA, who is sitting with DANIEL next to her (he is watching his father intently) and Debra on her lap. REBEKA is deeply prayerful and speaks quietly.

REBEKA

Adonai... elohaynu... God alone... Open
the gates of light to me. Open them
to me.

CUT back to BENJAMIN, who is assuring himself he is ready. He takes a breath and begins.

BENJAMIN

For what I command you this day is not hidden from you, nor is it far off, so that you might say "Who will go up to heaven and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?" Nor is it beyond the seas, so you might say "Who will cross the sea for us, and bring it to us, that we may hear and do it?"

CUT back to REBEKA, who is even deeper into her searching, but no longer speaking. She looks as though she's listening to a distant voice.

BENJAMIN (V.O.)

But this thing is very near you... in your mouths and in your heart, so you are able to do it.

REBEKA stands, ecstatic in a deep way. (*Not excited and energetic.*) She speaks profoundly rather than quickly.

REBEKA

So we *can* do it! ... The seed, the root of it all... is already in us... We *can* do it.

She stands silently for a few seconds, then sits and puts her arm around Daniel again. The rest of the congregation (camera pulls back to show them) are a mix of confused and enthralled.

CUT back to BENJAMIN.

BENJAMIN looks surprised and pleased. He puts down the Torah pointer, walks back to REBEKA and sits. The RABBI remains standing where he is, one of the transfixed. The camera pulls slowly back again.

FADE slowly to the sounds of wind on a mountainside.

EXT. ON THE ORIGINAL MOUNTAINSIDE - EVENING, SUN SET, ITS
LAST LIGHT FADING

A small fire is burning. The fire between them, no distinct shadows are seen. JESUS and the eleven are sitting approximately where they had been, still talking.

BARTHOLOMEW

Before you go, Master, what else do we need to know?

JESUS

(appreciation in his eyes) What you need, Bartholomew, is not to hear more, but to *do* more.

BARTHOLOMEW

To keep your words? To do the things you've said?

JESUS

To shine *your* light into the world.

They are listening carefully and slowly comprehending.

JESUS

Have I not told you, many times, that good seeds bear good fruit? From where does that fruit come? From within or from without?

BARTHOLOMEW

From within.

JESUS

Is such a lamp to be placed *beneath* a basket? (gesturing to convey the concept of the light source being in the subsidiary position) Shouldn't it rather be placed on top of a stand? (gesturing to demonstrate position and primacy) *This* is how your light should shine.

They seem to be getting it.

JESUS

But if you want to know one thing you should do, that is to love one another. By *this* you will grow. And by *this* they will know you were my disciples.

The eleven sit in silence, feeling a conclusion coming, afraid for JESUS to leave them.

JESUS hangs his head, speaking or praying to himself. Then he raises his head, tears in his eyes.

JESUS

The way of the heavens (sweeping overhead gesture) has come unto you. Shift your consciousness and believe this good news. (pause) What my father has shown me, I have shown to you. (pause) And remember that I have loved you.

JESUS drops his head again, remains there for several seconds, then stands.

JESUS

And now, my friends, I will see you no more. And so I send you again, this time to the world. Go and teach our good news to all who can receive it. Give to them, as I have given to you.

The eleven slowly rise. JESUS hugs each, tears in his eyes and on his face, loving them and sending them back down the mountain. But after hugging THADDAEUS, he holds him in place, picks up his bag, and hands it to him, with an extra pat on the back. He continues till all eleven are on their way back into the world. (music will be crucial)

CUT to lower on the mountainside.

The eleven continue, glancing back. JESUS is seen in the low light (the fire is fading) waiving slowly, almost as a traditional benediction, but not stiff.

CUT back to JESUS.

JESUS continues waiving till they are out of clear view, lowers his hand and sighs, still looking down to where they were, sorry that he is leaving them. After a pause he turns and raises his head. MAN #1 and MAN #2 return, but remain just barely in view, at the back of the clearing.

MAN #1

Are you ready?

JESUS considers and turns back to the disciples, hoping to see them one more time.

JESUS

(speaking to no one in particular)
They have so much ahead of them... So
much blessing and so much
difficulty...

All three stand in silence for a long time, while the eleven head slowly down and the fire goes out, leaving only the red glow of the coals. Poignant music fills the scene, then pulls back. JESUS takes a deep breath, wipes his tears, watches a bit more, then turns and walks slowly back toward MAN #1 and MAN #2. He smiles just a little.

JESUS

Yes, I am ready.

MAN #1

Then let's go home.

JESUS

(nodding agreement and accepting
completion) Let's go home.

MAN #1 and MAN #2 put their arms around Jesus' shoulders and all three continue into the brush, up the mountain and out of sight. (music continues)

CUT back to the eleven, lower on the mountain.

They are walking in silence, tears in some of their eyes. PETER, who is walking in front, stops and looks at all of them with a blank face of disbelief and hope that it isn't really so.

PETER

Do you really think we'll never see
him again?

Suddenly the mountain is illuminated (about to the level of a full moon) and they look up to see an indistinct but roundish light rising from the top of the mountain. It continues through a layer of thick clouds and slowly fades as it rises beyond sight. All eleven remain looking up, even while speaking the lines below.

JOHN

I'm quite certain, Simon. We will
never see him again.

JAMES

God help us to do what we should
with the gift we've been given. And
God forgive our failures to do it
as he would.

THE ELEVEN

(In unison, except JAMES) Amen.

The eleven stand in awe, looking not at each other, but each at the place in the sky where JESUS disappeared. The camera scans each of their faces. They are sad, already feeling a great void, afraid of their inability to do what needs to be done. And a few, JOHN, especially, show an element of excitement about the path ahead for themselves and for mankind.

FADE slowly to black, as - very slowly - the sounds of street traffic rise.

EXT. JERUSALEM, MORE ACTIVITY THAN BEFORE, PEOPLE ON THE STREETS WITH A PECULIAR URGENCY - DAY

JERUSALEM, 36 YEARS LATER

BENJAMIN, now a fairly old man, is walking with his grandson, JESSE (about ten years old), who is overwhelmed by the city, having lived in the country all his life. Both are carrying satchels over their shoulders.

JESSE

Are you certain of where we are going, Grandfather?

BENJAMIN

(cradling his head in his hand)
Certain enough, my beautiful boy. I haven't been here in many years, but we'll find the house.

They continue through the crowded street, BENJAMIN taking JESSE's hand in the thicker sections.

BENJAMIN

(pointing happily) Here! This is the street!

He takes Jesse's hand and pulls him through the intersection then down the street.

EXT. IN FRONT OF JOHN MARK'S HOUSE - THE SAME TWO-STORY HOUSE JESUS CAME TO, THOUGH A BIT MORE WORN - DAY

BENJAMIN and JESSE, holding hands, walk to the house and up its two steps. BENJAMIN knocks. A very serious young man opens the door.

BENJAMIN

I am Benjamin of Dan, here to see John Mark. I sent a message ahead. You must have received it.

The young man closes the door, BENJAMIN and JESSE wait. JESSE is trying to take in all the activity of the street, and especially the area where two streets are crossing. Then, the door opens wide and JOHN MARK, also fairly old, steps out, grasps BENJAMIN and pulls him into the house, patting JESSE on the head as he follows.

JOHN MARK

My old friend! Please come in!

INT. THE ENTRYWAY OF JOHN MARK'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

JOHN MARK leads BENJAMIN and JESSE through the entryway and hands their bags to the intense young man who answered the door. Passing through a large doorway on the left, he hollers, presumably up a set of stairs toward the second level.

JOHN MARK

Martha! We have guests!

CUT to the main room of the house as BENJAMIN, JOHN MARK and JESSE enter from the entryway. (This is *not* the room where JESUS made his speech to the disciples.)

JOHN MARK

(Arm around BENJAMIN) I am so anxious to see what you have.

BENJAMIN stops walking so JOHN MARK will face him directly.

BENJAMIN

I have a good deal of material for you... But we can stay only one night. We have to meet his parents on the road to Egypt.

JOHN MARK

I understand. Our children have gone ahead of us as well. We'll be leaving in two days. With everything recently transpired, Rome will very certainly be sending its legions.

They continue, mournfully, past the stairway and into a large main room.

FADE

INT. A LARGE ROOM IN THE HOUSE - EVENING

MARTHA (36 years older now) is entertaining JESSE, A variety of foods are on a table, almost like a small buffet. MARTHA picks up two pieces of fruit which look like Mandarin oranges.

MARTHA

These are a special fruit. Have you ever seen one before?

JESSE

I don't think so. What are they?

MARTHA

They come to us by sea, from the far East. (begins peeling the oranges) We've only had them three or four times. Here, try one. (she takes him to a table and divides the segments between her plate and his)

CUT to the other side of the room.

BENJAMIN and JOHN MARK are seated at a desk-like table, oil lamps burning, looking intently at papers.

BENJAMIN

(placing his hand on one pile of papers) All of these are sayings that I heard, personally. (places his hand another pile of papers) These I heard from witnesses I trust.

JOHN MARK

(leafing through the first pile)
Most of these are close to the
things Simon recounted to me, but
not identical.

BENJAMIN

(nodding) Yes, he changed things
from day to day, depending upon on
the crowd.

JOHN MARK

But he said nothing to you about
his death and resurrection?

BENJAMIN

No, he never mentioned it, and
clearly wasn't eager to talk about
it. So, I never inquired. But I did
see the wounds on his wrists. Even
after a month or more, they were
striking.

JOHN MARK

Did he teach anywhere beside the
northern Galilee, so far as you
know?

BENJAMIN

I'm fairly certain he didn't. The
other place he went, that I know,
was the brief visit to Jerusalem
that we talked about years ago.

JOHN MARK

And where did he sleep all of those
nights? Alone in the wilderness?

BENJAMIN

I don't know. He stayed the at our
house four nights... that and two
full days. I know he had one other
friend he stayed with a few times -
he mentioned that to Rebeka - but
more than that I simply don't know.

FADE to street noises.

INT. THE ENTRYWAY OF JOHN MARK'S HOUSE - MORNING

BENJAMIN and JESSE are packed for the road, JOHN MARK is ready to send them onward. MARTHA enters, bringing two of the oranges, which she places carefully in JESSE's bag. She kisses the boy, then hugs BENJAMIN.

JESSE

I'm ready to go now, Grandfather.

JOHN MARK

(placing his arm around BENJAMIN)

And I am ready to write now.

(smiling and walking his guests through the entry way and to the front door) Our son has a small house waiting for us in Alexandria.

I'll have time and materials...

(smiles slyly to BENJAMIN) and enough years left in me to distribute my collection. All of us are leaving, so it has to be done now.

FADE

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE - MORNING

People are moving with some urgency, two-thirds of them heading the way JESUS did, toward the gate and out of the city. Among them (camera notices) is BLUE, now healthy but considerably older. He is guiding a donkey with a small wagon, along with his wife and two teenage daughters. They are also fleeing before Rome rains destruction on them. The camera lingers until they are passing out of sight, then slowly pulls back to BENJAMIN and JESSE, who have stepped down into the street. They walk down the street perhaps twenty steps, then stop and turn back to look at JOHN MARK and MARTHA, who remain in their doorway.

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BENJAMIN

If I come to Alexandria, I will
visit you... And if not... at the
resurrection of the just.

MARTHA AND JOHN MARK

(waving and responding in unison)
At the resurrection of the just.

ROLL END CREDITS.

THE END.