

SEVEN STEPS to the CROSS

A Collection of Seven Dramatic Portrayals
for Lent and Easter

By Roy Wiegand

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ABOUT THE PLAY

Easter comes alive with these seven dramatic readings, each 10 to 15 minutes long. The dramas are in the sequence of the events as they actually happened, beginning with John at midnight after the Last Supper, and ending with Barabbas some thirty years after the crucifixion of Jesus.

Other characters include Judas, Peter, Caiaphas, Mary the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene.

The monologues are as historically accurate as possible, yet so powerful you'll identify with all the characters, sinners and disciples alike. Touch the hearts and souls of your congregation with this program about the most dramatic period in Christian history.

CONTENTS

- Scene 1 - The Witness of the Apostle John.
- Scene 2 - The Betrayal of Judas.
- Scene 3 - The Witness of the Apostle Peter.
- Scene 4 - The Plot of Caiaphas.
- Scene 5 - The Witness of Mary, Mother of Jesus.
- Scene 6 - The Witness of Mary Magdalene.
- Scene 7 - The Witness of Barabbas.

SCENE 1
THE WITNESS OF THE APOSTLE JOHN
AT THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

(AT RISE: JOHN enters, walking briskly from the back of the audience, the SPOTLIGHT following him. He is apprehensive, concerned that he is being followed, and from time to time he stops and looks behind him. He then climbs up to the pulpit. He is a young man, about 25 years old. He has a short beard and wears a white sackcloth type of cassock.)

I have come back here tonight because this is the only place in or near Jerusalem where I could find peace within myself, here in the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives ... here where I was last with Him.

This has been a week filled with events. Jews from all over Israel have come to Jerusalem this week to celebrate the Feast of Passover. We were warned not to come, however, for it was rumored that Caiaphas, the high priest in the temple, was plotting to arrest Jesus and have him killed.

Jesus would not be swayed. He told us that we would enter Jerusalem and celebrate the first two days of the Passover together. On the third He would be taken up to be crucified, for thus it was written. So on the first day we journeyed on the dusty road from Bethany, the Master and his twelve followers. It was a quiet journey, for each of us constantly thought with apprehension of the perils that lay ahead. As we approached the village of Bethphage which lies on the outskirts of Jerusalem, we stopped to rest. Jesus said to me, "John, go with Andrew into the village. There you will find a colt hitched to a rail. Bring it to me."

Upon returning with the animal, He sat astride and we led Him slowly toward Jerusalem's gate.

Seven Steps to the Cross

- 5 -

The city was swarming with people and we were unnoticed at first, but as we moved further into the city's bowels, fragments of people began to turn and point. Our eyes suspiciously darted among the crowd, fearing that at any moment they would rise up against us.

But to our astonishment when the great multitudes recognized Him, they began to line each side of the lane where we walked, and they threw their garments and palm leaves at our feet, shouting, "Hosanna! Hosanna! the Messiah is here," and they continued their shouting even until we stopped in front of the temple. "Hosanna. The Messiah has come, the Messiah has come!" And the fear in our hearts was gradually replaced with relief and comfort, and I looked up to the Master to see the joy in His face, but His was a sullen look ... and tears streamed down His cheeks. I shall never forget that vision.

Early this evening Jesus told Peter and me to enter Jerusalem through the Fountain Gate. There, He said, we would find a man bearing water. This man would lead us to an upper room in his house. There we would prepare the feast.

We found that man and he led us to that room. Peter then went to the market, purchased a lamb, and had it sacrificed at the temple. As we were making the final preparations, I heard the noises of our brothers as they climbed the stairway. Jesus was the first to enter the room. He stood silently, surveying it, and then looked at us and nodded His approval. He then took His seat at the center of the table and gestured to Peter to take the honored position to His left. All of us knew that Judas, the treasurer of our group, would be offered the second honored seat to His right, but to my surprise He looked at me and said, "John ... John, sit here."

I know not why He chose me but I was gladdened, for I felt a need to be close to Him tonight. He looked about us and said,

Seven Steps to the Cross

- 6 -

"I have greatly desired to share this Passover feast with you before I suffer, for surely I say unto you I will eat of it no more until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."

Now we have all been with Him for nearly three years, and we are simple men who were certain now and then that we were in the presence of the Son of God. I say now and then because it is difficult to fathom that such men as we should be in the presence of the Son of God. But tonight I hoped it was true, we all did, and we all wanted to ask Him why He would not have God send His angels down to smite His enemies. We wanted to ask Him, but we did not, for to ask was to not believe in prophesy.

After we had begun to eat He said, "One of you is not clean. One of you will betray me."

We looked at each other with astonished glances each asking, "Is it I, Master? Is it I?" He then stared at the end of the table where sat Judas and said, "Go do what you must do, and do it quickly."

When we had finished eating, Jesus stood among us, giving each of us a morsel of bread saying, "Eat this for this is my body." Then He again passed amongst us a goblet of wine saying, "Drink this for this is my blood which will be shed for you."

Now this was a great departure from Hebrew custom for in this ritual He was establishing a new faith, a new pact with God, a new religion for all to follow until eternity, and we were its first witnesses.

Late tonight, just before midnight, He led us here, to Gethsemane, and for about an hour He preached His last lessons to His missionaries. I watched Him closely in the pale moonlight, and I chiseled out a memory of Him, for this was the vision that I wanted to describe to others who had never seen Him.

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