
THE RABBI FROM TARSUS

A

SCREENPLAY

BY

PHIL GOBLE

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Credits appear in staccato flashes next to the harp logo on a turquoise background. Each credit is in rhythm with rather wild chassidic jazz on the soundtrack.

FADE IN

EXT. THEATRE MARQUEE WITH LETTERS "THE RABBI FROM TARSUS" STARRING PHIL GOBLE-NIGHT

As the camera tilts down we see the audience filing into the theatre entrance.

CUT TO:

INT. HIGH CEILING SHOT DOWN ON A PACKED HOUSE

A gigantic ceiling spot hits Paul coming down the stage right aisle from the back of the house. The packed audience is in the dark, except for the spill from the follow spot. They begin to applaud and continue applauding as Paul reaches the stairs of the stage. The chassidic jazz fades out and the applause fades up and then stops.

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL ON THE STAGE STAIRS, HIS LEGS DANGLING IN THE AUDIENCE

PAUL
(singing)

Beed-vahr Ha-shem shah-mah-yeem nah-ah-soo. By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made. Yeesh-lahch d-vahr-oh v'yccr-pah-aim vee-mah-late meen ha-keh-vair. God sent his Word and healed them and delivered them from the grave. (looking up and rising)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT THE OFF-STAGE CHARACTER LUKE

We see a complete dungeon cell with various scrolls, a harp, and other materials lying around a slimy, dank, dark cave-like area with a slab of stone (serving as Paul's couch, bench, table, etc) stage right and another stone stage left near the footlights (serving as Paul's speaking platform). Upstage is a two-step riser sort of formation made out of three more stone slabs, which Paul can use for sitting or for placing his scrolls, etc.

PAUL
(speaking)

Luke! (The Luke special light comes on.) Wake up! (Smiles, shivering.) Boker tov! Did you doze off too, Luke? Doctors shouldn't fall asleep

on their patients! (Paul goes up onto the stage.)

CAMERA ON THE STAGE RIGHT SIDE OF THE HOUSE CATCHES A LONG SHOT OF PAUL

But it's morning anyway, isn't it? You can't even hear the Roman roosters down here in this solitary confinement cell! (Paul turns to go up to the riser slabs.)

CAMERA FROM THE AUDIENCE CATCHES LONG SHOT OF PAUL GOING UPSTAGE

Doctor, am I getting hard of hearing? Speak up! (To the audience) I said it is morning, isn't it? (Looking for Demas in the audience, Paul crosses to the scroll basket)

CAMERA ON THE STAGE RIGHT SIDE OF THE HOUSE CATCHES A LONG SHOT OF PAUL AND AUDIENCE

(Shading his eyes with his hand, still scanning the audience for Demas) Did Demas bring word on Nero yet?

FRONTAL CLOSE ON PAUL'S FACE

(Stops, quietly, a patiently bemused look directly into the camera as an aside to the film audience) Yes, this morning. (Louder) Wake up, Luke. My final hearing is at dawn! (Turning toward the basket)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING INTO THE BASKET

I specifically instructed Demas (taking one more look to see if he's not sitting out in the audience) to bring us word on Nero before the guards come for me!

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

He told you about Pudens and Claudia, didn't he? (Paul's face reacts to Luke with an expression that says, "Apparently not.") (Sigh) Their informants are going to try to find out Nero's private reaction to my first defense speech. (Paul reacts to what Luke has just said.) Demas hasn't even been here since yesterday? (Puts down basket like that's the last straw.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL DROPPING THE BASKET ON THE FLOOR OF THE DUNGEON

(Sighing) Lukas, Lukas, Lukas, Lukas, Lukas, Lukas...you are a friend who sticks closer than a brother. What fools for God we doctors are! Me a Jewish doctor of the law of Moses; you a Gentile doctor of the body, Luke! (Paul begins to move to the bench where his harp is setting)

CAMERA ON THE STAGE LEFT SIDE OF THE HOUSE CATCHES A LONG SHOT OF PAUL AT BENCH

(Glancing up at Luke) I can just see you now, with your most unwomanly white beard and this pregnant bulge under your cloak.

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE AS HE FEELS THE ASIDE TO THE CAMERA

(Confidentially, under his breath) It's a miracle you were able to slip this past the gate. (Starts to sit on the bench)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SITTING ON THE BENCH

Did you know this is genuine alghumwood? (Paul lays his tent needle down on the bench and adjusts the harp on his lap.) Yes. Like King David's harps in the Temple. (Plays a glissando on the harp) I had a dream last night, about the song I taught Silas at Philippi fifteen years ago... and about the earthquake...when God rescued us from prison. Then I woke up...(a dissonant chord, then Paul's eyes which had been momentarily closed, pop open, Paul looking into the camera) in prison again! (Looking up at Luke)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

There's nothing like music to lift your spirits, Luke. (Playing) But I don't play just to old Saul (pointing to himself) like King David did to my ancestor (pointing over his shoulder). (Singing) I make melodies in my heart to the Lord. (Sniffs, his face turning to a frown as he sets down the harp with dignity.

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SETTING DOWN THE HARP

When I was first shown my sumptuous quarters, the pungent smell made me think some Roman latrine drained down here. (Rising) Then slowly I began to get the picture: This is a Roman latrine!

REACTION SHOT OF THE AUDIENCE LAUGHING

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE

Nero, Nero, you subtle poet, you! Are you trying to tell me something?

REACTION SHOT OF THE AUDIENCE LAUGHING

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL PUTTING HIS FOOT ON THE STONE BENCH

(Sniffs) Oh, to awake in the morn to the smell of human waste...and the pitter-patter sound of soft little foot--little rats' feet! (Picks up bread and platter) And this bread they gave me... already has a generous supply of green mold on it...which appears to be alive! The baker obviously doesn't know whom he's feeding down here...(to the camera) or maybe he does. (starts removing foot from bench)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE AS PAUL REMOVES FOOT FROM BENCH

Luke, I think I'll call this place, ha-mah-lohn ha-kloom-nee-keem. (Laughs) What? That's Hebrew, Doctor, for the "Hotel Good-For-Nothing!" (Putting bread delicately on platter)

CAMERA ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE STAGE CATCHES A FULL SHOT OF PAUL APPROACHING

(Moving toward the camera confidentially) The chef should be informed that I am a dignitary who has dined in the filthiest dungeons in the Roman Empire, I am used to the vilest traif under heaven, and I demand (lifting platter like an irate restaurant customer) to know if this is the worst he can do! (Paul begins to lower plate slowly)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING DOWN AT PLATTER

Yet, somehow, Lord, when I think about you, this dungeon makes a fitting apostle's scriptorium. (Paul stares intensely at piece of moldy bread.) We are the scum of the earth! (Paul moves to place the bread and platter on the bench)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CATCHES PAUL IN A FULL SHOT MOVING

(Moving to the scroll basket on the two step riser) Doctor...(Luke special brightens.) what did you think of my first trial? (gets legal brief)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE WHILE PULLING LEGAL BRIEF FROM BASKET

My first trial! You were awake weren't you? (Looking up and over at the Lord:) Oi. I ask for a lawyer and you give me a doctor! (Paul moves back to clear the bench)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CATCHES PAUL IN A FULL SHOT MOVING

Did you notice the puzzled look on Nero's face? For a twenty-eight-year-old god, he certainly doesn't know much about Judaism! (Moving the bread to the upper corner of the bench, Paul starts clearing off the bench from behind it.)

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL CLEARING THE BENCH (THEN TILT DOWN ON SCROLL ON "I'M TRYING")

(To the camera) How do you explain Judaism to a demon-possessed madman? (Pause, listening to Luke) By letter? (laughs) Yes, I wish I could. (Settling down on his knees behind the bench) What do you suppose Nero's thinking? (Back at the camera) I don't think he does either! He's too busy hosting blood baths at the circus Neronis. (Staring at the legal brief scroll spread out on the bench) I'm trying to see the Lord in this. (starts to look up at Luke)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

Why has God made Nero, of all people, the world's final authority on what is and is not the true Jewish faith? (pause, listening to Luke) I'm not saying that, Luke! Granted, Judaism is a legally protected religion. And Caesar is the final judge of the Roman Supreme Court. But...Nero? (Looking back at legal brief)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING AT LEGAL BRIEF

(To the camera, under his breath) He wouldn't know a good moyel from a bad boil! (Pause, listening) A mere routine procedure, you think? (Paul crawls around the bench, putting his elbow on its upper corner) I know, but...so...(leans over to start to pick up bread and platter)

FULL SHOT OF THE STAGE

(Paul stares intently at the bread.) very shortly, I will either be declared guilty and be beheaded or the death sentence will be commuted and my life will be spared. (Paul starts to bite the bread, but is stopped by a thought.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CATCHES PAUL IN A MEDIUM SHOT STARTING TO BITE BREAD

(To the camera) But what have I done? The charges are utterly ridiculous. What crime have I committed? Against the law of Moses? Or the Jewish Temple? (Paul's face freezes as he sees something...a rat moving from stage right to stage left.)

FULL SHOT OF THE STAGE

(A pen spot-type follow spot follows the invisible rat from stage right to stage left as Paul's eyes and head pivot watching it.) Or the Roman Government? (Paul throws the platter at the speaking platform slab.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING AT THE RAT AT THE PLATFORM SLAB

I put it to my fellow prison rats! Stop trying to sneak a bite of my last piece of bread, and answer this question: (look from rat to rat, affably) How about it, cellmates? Is the Jewish high priest right? Do I look like a treasonable heretical, rabble-rouser? (Looking at the camera) Me? The Apostle Paul? (Looking back down at the rats, hands folded on top of the bench) What's the verdict, my red-eyed jury? (Back to the camera) Even these rats know I'm in for more time than they are! (Puts bread down on bench, shaking his head)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

It's hard to believe, Luke. For the past eight years, most of the time, I've been living in prisons. (Reminded, looking down) And time is running short! We've got to finish that letter to Timothy! (Getting up from behind the bench, almost falling.) Is your stylus sharpened, Luke? (Moving toward the platform, stopping) And please, Doctor, write legibly! (Looking up and over at the Lord:) I ask for a scribe and you give me a doctor! (Continues moving toward the platform)

FULL SHOT OF THE STAGE AS PAUL SLOWS TO A STOP NEAR THE PLATFORM

O Timothy, my son! (Timothy special lights up on the Timothy scroll lying on the stage left wall.)

CLOSE SHOT OF THE SCROLL IN THE POOL OF LIGHT

My son, Timothy! How I wish you were here!

STAGE LEFT CAMERA MED. ON PAUL, CROSSES TO THE LEFT WALL TO GET THE SCROLL

You have been like a son to me in all my trials! How little time there is and so much to write you! (Paul clutches the scroll to his bosom) I miss you so much, Timothy, with a sad longing like God has for his son Israel. Will I never see you again in Ephesus, my son? Or here? Lift this sorrow from me, Lord. (Weeping quietly) Don't let me fall into bitterness now...I've lost too much...come too far...Luke, I have no one like him. (Looking up at Luke.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE:

Selfless, full of concern and loyalty...but he's so young!
And timid! The false teachers and the troublemakers in Ephesus
are violent men. Alexander the coppersmith will make a stew pot
out of him! (Showing the scroll and handwriting to the Lord)
Hashem, Rabbono shel olam, if I die this morning, is this how I
must leave all the congregations you gave me during my ministry
as an apostle in Ephesus? To a soft-spoken Jewish man not even
thirty-five years old! Timothy! My successor!

DISSOLVE TO:

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL STANDING AT A STONE SLAB SEAT STAGE LEFT

(Listening, alarmed) Who's that coming down the stairs, Luke?
(Looks up)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT DEMAS

Demas! You made it! (moves to sit on the stone slab stage left)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SITTING ON THE STONE SLAB

Baruch ha-shem! Did you get to speak to the brothers in Caesar's
household? Yes, Linus too! And Eubulus! Wonderful! What did
Pudens and Claudia say? (Startled, gets up)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP A FULL SHOT OF PAUL AND A PIECE OF THE AUDIENCE

(Getting up) What? (moving down stage toward the audience) Nero is
toying with what? (Paul looks back at the STAGE RIGHT CAMERA WHICH
IS DOLLYING ALONG SLIGHTLY BEHIND HIM GETTING AN OVER THE SHOULDER
SHOT OF THE AUDIENCE) Executing me on the grounds...that I'm not a
Jew? The chasid of all chasidim-- (Paul walks away from the camera
right down to the footlights, talking directly to the audience)
I'm not a Jew! (STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PANS TO GET THE AUDIENCE REACTION
OF LAUGHTER, AS THE LIVE THEATRE AUDIENCE BECOMES INCREASINGLY PAUL'S
SOUNDING BOARD AND AND THE OTHER CHARACTER, SO TO SPEAK, IN THE PLAY)
(Paul crosses to in front of the stone platform.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL MOVING IN FRONT OF THE PLATFORM

Rats! (Paul moves up to the stone bench) Rats! Rats! Ohhhhh (Paul
does an about-face turn center stage) So that's what the god of this
world is sharpening his teeth on! (Paul begins to move in a loop
toward the two-step riser)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS PAUL UP AS HE WALKS DIRECTLY TOWARDS IT

(Speaking to the camera) Charging me with the crime of inventing an
illegal religion! How charming! A foreign superstition! Distinct
from Judaism! Without its legal protection by the Roman law! (Paul
moves to the stone bench.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA GETS A CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE

So that's what Nero is toying with! He knows I can't be made a scapegoat like Simon Peter. (Looking into the STAGE RIGHT CAMERA) I proved I was not in Rome last summer at the time of his little fire. (To himself) Wouldn't he love to crucify me upside-down! (Paul starts to sit on the bench.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SITTING ON THE BENCH

But I, Saul, have a Roman name, Paulus, Paul and civis Romanus sum. I am a Roman citizen!

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE DOLLYS SLOWLY BEHIND A ROW OF THE AUDIENCE, CATCHING PAUL ON THE STAGE FROM OVER THE TOPS OF THE BACK OF THEIR HEADS

(Paul picks up his harp and begins playing softly) And old Cephas, Simon Peter bar Jonah, was just an old fisher Jew from Galilee... and many of the other believers...Nero crucified...and burned alive ...and threw to the wild dogs in the arena... (puts hand to forehead)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SITTING ON THE BENCH PUTTING HIS HAND TO HIS FOREHEAD

While he acted like some great, blind Homer, reciting his poetry to the tune of his lyre, declaring his poems will live forever. (To the camera) I doubt if they will live till Passover! (Puts the harp down)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL FROM THE SIDE PUTTING THE HARP DOWN

But Nero is the lord of his own life and Caesar is the lord of this evil world. (STAGE RIGHT CAMERA TILTS DOWN TO PICK UP PAUL AS HE SURREPTIOUSLY GETS HIS TORAH SCROLL WHICH IS HIDDEN BEHIND THE BENCH) He's had his belly full of me! Who do I think I am--a skinny little rabbi running all over his Roman Empire proclaiming that someone greater than Nero is Lord of the world, the Jewish Messiah!

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

(Putting two handles on the Torah scroll) Luke, he probably breaks a lyre string every time he thinks about me! He granted me clemency during my first trial! That was two years ago when he said he'd never heard of me...(Paul begins to stand with the Torah scroll.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL BEGINNING TO STAND

(To the camera) But I sensed the demon in him knew me well!
(Looking down at the scroll) Now the Devil has put me in prison again...to test me. (Paul turns his back to the camera and lifts the Torah scroll over his head with both hands so that the Hebrew letters are visible to the camera and the audience) Shemah Israel Ahdohnoi Eloheynoo Ahdohnoi Echad. Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one...(Pause, Paul turns slowly back to face the camera) And we shall love him with all our being. (Moving directly toward the camera) Nero, tell us: Are you the Beast, the false Messiah from hell, who will kill millions of my Jewish people at the time of Jacob's trouble, or are we Jews to expect another?

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE AS PAUL MOVES TOWARD FOOTLIGHTS

Luke, what do you think? (Paul listens a second, then looks back down at the audience.) No, that's right.

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL AND A PIECE OF THE AUDIENCE

Nero can't be the false Messiah. The prophet Dahnee-yel did say the false Messiah would defile the Temple in Jerusalem, and fat Nero is too lazy to make the trip!

REACTION SHOT OF TWO PEOPLE IN THE AUDIENCE LAUGHING UPROARIOUSLY

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL FROM BEHIND IN FRONT OF THE WHOLE PACKED AUDIENCE

(Putting his foot on the stone platform) So now he's toying with the idea of saying I'm not a Jew. Mozel tov! "Rabbi" Nero thinks he has found an excuse to circumcise my head! I suppose he will put it on a platter with that other non-Jew, Yochannan ha-maht-beel, John the baptizer! (Paul starts to take his foot off the stone platform.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP A CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL AS HE TAKES HIS FOOT OFF PLATFORM

When that proud liar Satan lies, he loves to lie big! And all the little Neroes of this world believe him in their pride! Our blind hearts tell us we are gods, Luke. But our bowels speak more truthfully: We are fallen, evil-smelling clay! (Paul picks up the Timothy scroll on the platform.)

FULL SHOT OF THE STAGE AS PAUL PICKS UP THE TIMOTHY SCROLL LIKE A SWORD

Nero, I have no weapon of this world to fight you. My only sword is the Word of God! But he will conquer you, you grasshopper, and you will have the burial of a donkey! (Paul begins to move to the stage left wall.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA HOLDS ON A FULL SHOT OF PAUL

(Paul places the timothy scroll on the stage left wall.) But what do I do, Lord; how do I win this battle? I've got to decide. Do I use these last precious minutes thinking how to defend my own life before Nero at the trial this morning? (Paul starts walking along the footlights directly toward the camera.) Or thinking how to defend the believers who are and will be endangered by this Beast? (Paul stops and turns back toward the audience.)

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE

If Peter or James had not been martyred how would they advise me now? Luke everyone's gone, even my family! What would my mother say to me now? (Paul turns his head and seems to see her, starts to move toward the extreme stage right stone seat.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA BEHIND THE STONE SEAT PICKS UP A MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL AND A LARGE PORTION OF THE AUDIENCE

My dear Jewish mother. She would call me by my Jewish name as she did when I was a boy and say, (Paul becomes his mother as he sits as she would sit on the stage right stone seat, talking to the audience as if

it were Paul.) "What were you--Saul of Tarsus--the Pharisee of all Pharisees, the chasid of all chasidim, the Hebrew of all Hebrews, the rabbi of all rabbis, doing getting mixed up with a roly-poly band of countrified Galileans and--worse yet--unkosher Gentiles. Oi Vayyyyyyyyy!"

REACTION SHOT OF THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE LAUGHING UPROARIOUSLY

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA DOLLYS AROUND TO A MEDIUM-CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL ON STONE SEAT

My dear mother would have jumped out of her grave to think that such a thing could happen to a nice Jewish boy at the feet of Gam'liel! And my father! My Jewish father! He paid the great Rabbi Gam'liel --successor to the immortal Hillel-- to make me a rabbi! My father would have demanded a refund! I can hear him now! (Standing as his father would stand and speaking in his character:) "Gam'liel, Sham'liel! I sent him down a Jew, he sends me back a goy! Such a bargain!" (Paul starts to sit again on the stone seat.)

EXTREME LONG SHOT FROM THE BACK OF THE BALCONY INCLUDING THE WHOLE PACKED THEATRE AUDIENCE AND PAUL SITTING AS A VERY TINY FORELORN FIGURE ON THE STONE SEAT

(Sitting on the stone seat.) Luke, now my only Father is in heaven. And my only counselor is his Word and his Spirit. Nearly all my disciples are deserting me. With death closing in on me, everyone fears for his own life. BALCONY CAMERA BEGINS AN EXTREMELY SLOW DOLLY DOWN THE AISLE OF THE AUDIENCE, APPROACHING THE TINY STAGE Now I am avoided as a disease, by the very ones who used to admire me, those chasidim with the koh-hain ha-gah-dohl, the high priest, who has forced me to live apart, as unclean, a meen, a meshumed, a traitor to my people, the supreme apostate, they say of Judaism. So here I sit, like an owl among the ruins of a long, hard ministry.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT DEMAS AND LUKE

Demas! (Demas special comes on.) Luke! (Luke special comes on, both lights bathing Paul in the off-stage "lantern presence" of these two off-stage characters.) What should I do? Work on my defense speech? And try to win the praises of men? Or of God

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL, WHO IS TALKING DIRECTLY TO THE CAMERA

How shall I win the praises of men! From the world's point of view, I am a fool! (Gets up and moves slightly away from the stone seat.) I want you men to know, I could have been a sought-after rabbi, a talmeed chah-chahm (Paul is moving behind the bench, looking up), happily married, the father of numerous doting children, the head of my rich father's tentmaking firm in Tarsus! Praised by everyone! As my enemies want so badly to be! And many so-called believers, too! Instead, what kind of life have I known? (Paul is moving past the two-step riser stone slabs toward stage left.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT DEMAS

Demas, I want you especially to listen to me now, because the Lord wants to use you and Luke, but you do not know my manner of life.

(Paul starts a decisive cross toward center stage.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL CROSSING TOWARD CENTER STAGE.

Demas, I want you to go warn the congregation here in Rome, because they don't either! (Paul makes a gesture pointing overhead.) Some of them love the praise of men, and are becoming arrogant, especially toward my people Israel. They must be exhorted: Ha-Yeshua min ha-yuh-hoo-deem hee, salvation is from the Jews! They must understand! (Paul moves toward the bench to pick up his tent needle.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS PAUL UP AS HE TURNS TO MOVE

(Picking up the tent needle off the bench.) Why have I suffered all my life? For the sake of God's chosen! But some of these Roman congregants think they are so spiritually rich and superior! Some of them are poor and blind and won't lift a finger to help my people Israel. They have forgotten that the godly people must fight to serve the Lord and his people in an evil world. (Starts to move down to the center stage footlights.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT DEMAS AS HE WALKS

Demas, will you promise me you will exhort the Roman congregation to help my people Israel? All right--now listen, Demas, because you weren't with us. (Paul crosses to the basket on the two-step riser.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL PICKING UP THE SCROLL BASKET LIKE SOMEONE CARRYING A HEAVY BURDEN, THE RESIDUAL OF ALL HIS SWEAT, BLOOD AND TEARS.

In all my thirty years of ministry, I never tried to win the praise of men. I've been imprisoned many times. I've been flogged often and severely. I've been exposed to death again and again. (Pause, Paul collapses there with the scroll basket, recovering his strength.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT DEMAS AS HE SITS

Five times my preaching in the synagogues cost me the forty lashes minus one from my own people. Three times I was beaten with rods. (The Demas special goes out on Paul.) Once I was stoned, four times I was shipwrecked. I spent a night and a day in the open sea. (Paul sets the scroll basket down.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SETTING THE SCROLL BASKET DOWN

I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own people, in danger from Gentiles, in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea, and in danger from false believers. (Holding up the tent needle.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP FULL SHOT OF PAUL HOLDING UP THE TENT NEEDLE

I have labored and toiled with my tentmaker's needle, a weaver of tents, paying my own way, being a burden to no one, often going without sleep. I have known hunger and thirst and have gone without food; even now it is winter and I am without a warm cloak. Besides everything else, I face daily, the pressure of the tsuris of all the congregations I have helped establish throughout the world. And what has all this gotten me? (Rising)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AS HE RISES

The praises of men? Some praise I get from many of the so-called "believers" sitting daintily (Paul starts to sit)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SITTING DAINTILY AS HE PARODIES HIS DETRACTORS

...now in the very congregations I risked my neck to establish. They say I'm nothing but a weakling, an arrogant writer but a yes-man in person; they say I do suspicious things with my hands (like earn a living!). They say I take no money because I'm not worth any! It's true! I'm a real road bandit! I rob whole congregations of the privilege of paying me a salary! Forgive me! (Paul takes the Sayings of Jesus scroll and gets up)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL AS COMES DOWN TO THE STONE PLATFORM

These heroes of criticism have more! (Paul gestures out toward the sea of people in the audience, part of whom are in the shot as they become the "critics" in the mind of Paul.) They say my preaching is useless, my personal charisma is nonexistent. I change my mind impulsively. They say that I'm not Jewish enough when I should be more Jewish but on the other hand, I'm altogether too Jewish when it's not called for! (Paul sits on the stone platform with the Sayings of Jesus scroll.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL SITTING ON THE STONE PLATFORM, GLANCING UP AT LUKE

They say I will die and my name will perish, my message will get nowhere, I'm spiteful, money-hungry, carnal, mishuggah and crazy. (Peeking over the Sayings of Jesus scroll with a twinkle in his eye as he glances up at Luke:) Luke, other than that, they have the highest admiration for me!

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE CATCHES A REACTION SHOT OF TWO PEOPLE LAUGHING

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL READING THE SAYINGS OF JESUS SCROLL

(Paul has a distracted tone in his voice as though his mind is completely on what he is reading silently.) So what do I do? I've got to make a decision. (Listening.) Yes, Luke, I knew you were going to say that: spend time working on my defense before Nero because it's my last opportunity and, besides John, I'm the only living apostle. But, what does the Lord say? (Reading aloud:) Seek first the kingdom of God and his interests, not the interests of self, and what is the promise? We will be taken before kings and governors on account of God, but God will give us the words to say! (Excited, Paul stumbles to get up)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL STRUGGLING TO GET UP

(Falls back, then gets up and crosses to right of center stage.) Men, I've got it! I've got it! I've got it! I've made a decision and the Lord is giving me a plan.

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE LOOKING OFF PAST THE CAMERA AT A GREAT DISTANCE

A plan to protect the brethren! A narrative must be written, a history!

My legal brief before Nero must be baptized into a theological apologetic, a defense of the faith to protect the Lord's people all over the world...until he comes! (Looks up, starts to back up upstage.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP TOWARD LUKE

(Backing upstage a little) Also, Demas, I want to share with both of you the Lord's world strategy. You two will continue it for me if I'm executed. (Halts dead in tracks.) He what? He slipped out? Demas left? When? (Paul looks down, still holding Jesus scroll.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING DIRECTLY INTO THE CAMERA

After the third beating with rods? (Shakes head incredulously.) He left? What for? When is he coming back? (Paul starts toward the bench.)

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE CATCHES PAUL ON THE STAGE FROM OVER THE TOPS OF THE BACKS OF THE AUDIENCE'S HEADS

(At the bench Paul gathers his harp, platter, bowl and needle as well as the piece of moldy bread.) But I wasn't finished yet! Nobody listens to us! Nobody cares if the world goes to hell! We're losing our strategic thrust around the world, you men may have to take over my work, and he can't even sit still long enough to listen to it, much less do it! You mean all that time I was wasting my breath? (Sighing, Paul moves toward the two-step riser with everything in his arms.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL AS HE IS DEPOSITING ALL THESE ON THE RISER

Luke, I wanted him to hear about the Lord's work, what the Lord has been showing me, how the people of God must be gathered all over the world and if possible, protected against Nero and false teachers, and warned about the false Messiah who's coming!

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP TOWARD LUKE

Look down here, Luke. (Paul sits on the top riser.) I guess you'll have to write it: the life of the Messiah and the acts of the Holy Spirit! I'll explain...(Paul shuffles the bread platter with his foot.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL AND THE WORLD 'MAP' HE'S CONSTRUCTING FOR LUKE

(Gestures with his hand at the stone slab.) Let this be the world ...in bondage to deep darkness and evil. (Paul puts the basket of scrolls at the far end of the top riser.) Here's Israel, where God will plant his people forever, and her King the Messiah, the light of the world. Here's where I spread the light, establishing congregations in Galatia, (Paul is laying plates and objects down for places on the 'map') Macedonia, Greece, Asia Minor. Here's the light shining from Israel to Rome. (Paul puts the harp next to him and lets it represent Rome on the 'map' he's constructing.) But now the Prince of Darkness is coming, who hates the light and the Jews. He will try to make it illegal for us Jews even to live! Even to be called Jews! (Rising.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP TOWARD LUKE AS PAUL RISES

Luke, here's my plan! The Lord wants you to write a narrative (there's no time for me to write it.)...a story--however the Spirit of God leads you. (Paul moves over to the basket of scrolls.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL IN A FULL SHOT AS HE MOVES

Start with the life of the Messiah. Show how he was a loyal Jew falsely accused of being a revolutionary and a subversive against the Roman government (Paul moves to the harp.) who killed him. Then tell how the movement began...strictly Jewish...and how it spread...(Paul steps down to the floor.)...from the Temple...(and indirectly from my persecutions as I drove the believers out of Israel). (Paul moves to above the stone bench.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP TOWARD LUKE AS PAUL MOVES

Luke, this is important: There is a talmudic saying, "Even a Jew who sins is still a Jew." So explain how--from anyone's estimate--both before and after I came to faith I was still a Jew--taking increasingly dangerous trips to Jerusalem to prove, even if the proof cost me my life, (Paul is moving downstage)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL MOVING DOWNSTAGE TOWARD THE CAMERA AT THE FOOTLIGHTS

(As he approaches the camera) that I was still in fact a Temple-attending, synagogue-preaching, Israel-loyal rabbi who never taught our people not to keep our customs! (Paul steps in front of the platform illustratively.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP THE PLATFORM AND PAUL IN A FULL SHOT

(As he moves in front of the platform) Show that wherever I as a rabbi preached, the Gentiles turned from idolatry, and only the unbelievers caused trouble...like they did when they tried to kill me in Ephesus because of the shemah, saying (Paul affects a "country" accent as his head pops out of his prayer shawl covering like a turtle out of its shell)

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE

(Imitating them) "This rabbi's bad for the idol-making business!" (Paul turns and crosses up around the platform and toward the harp.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA HOLDS ON PAUL AS HE MOVES

But Luke, you record the historical truth, that whenever I went before a Roman leader in government (Paul moves up by the two step riser) --whether it was Sergio Paulus in Cyprus, or the magistrates in Philippi, or Galleo in Corinth, or Governors Felix or Festus in Cacsarcea, or even King Agrippa in Israel--whenever I went before a government leader, I was regarded as a Jew and my religion as Jewish and legal. (Paul starts to step up on the riser to get the harp.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL MOUNTING THE RISER

So if Nero is toying with the idea of killing me because I'm no longer Jewish he is toying with a lie from hell!

(Paul turns defiantly around, one fist on hip.) Who is a bigger liar than the man who says one cannot be Jewish if he believes in the Messiah? (Paul steps off the riser and moves toward the camera at the platform.) What does one have to do to become a Jew, by his majesty Nero's definition? Reject Nero's rival, the Messiah, as the true Lord of the world, of course! If that's the definition of the word "Jew" then I, Saul of Tarsus, was more Jewish than anybody! (Paul places the harp on the platform and moves toward the footlights, defying any challenger in the audience to prove him wrong.)

A CAMERA CLOSER TO THE STAGE, JUST BEHIND THE ORCHESTRA PIT, PICKS PAUL UP IN A FULL SHOT AT THE FOOTLIGHTS FROM THE LEFT SIDE OF THE HOUSE

Who ever rejected the carpenter from Nazareth more than the tentmaker from Tarsus? (Moving along the footlights) Does anyone honestly think that I don't know all the high priest's arguments? All the reasons he's giving Nero not to protect me because my religion isn't Jewish! I invented most of those reasons myself to prove the followers of the Nazarene weren't really Jewish. Luke...(Paul looks up)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP TOWARD LUKE

Who do you suppose was the high priest's chief prosecutor of these Jews? You're looking at him. Are you taking notes, Luke? (Paul starts to move)

MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL MOVING TO THE TWO STEP RISER, PICKING UP HIS NEEDLE

Now Stephen, as you know, was a rabbi because he had a following. He also became an apostle. (Paul looks at the audience as though someone might challenge that statement.) He saw the Lord! Stephen was an early leader and so-called wonder-worker (Paul sits on the riser and yawns through his words, exhausted.) of the sect--I thought it was a heretical cult, even though there were no Gentiles in the movement. Then I was already a young preaching rabbi, endeavoring to make a name for myself at the Synagogue of the Freedmen! (Paul props his head up on the riser and gets comfortable, with increasing yawns like one preparing to fall asleep.)

EXTREME LONG SHOT FROM THE BACK OF THE BALCONY INCLUDING THE WHOLE PACKED THEATRE AUDIENCE AND PAUL FALLING ASLEEP IN FRONT OF THEM, HIS EYES NOW COMPLETELY CLOSED

I preached about the Messiah...that he would be the Holy ONE and that... he would bring peace to Israel and the nations! But not like these followers of the Nazarene! They were proclaiming a crucified...dead man to be the Messiah! And they tried to prove that he was alive at the right hand of God...by the eyewitness testimony of five hundred of his former followers, who claimed to have seen him alive from the dead. Many of these so-called..."eyewitnesses"...(Paul is talking in his sleep by now.) I saw as country yokels, unschooled ignoramuses, ignoramusi...(Suddenly awake, rising up.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

(Sitting up, serious, a scholarly emergency) Ignoramusi? What's the Latin plural of ignoramus? What do you mean, "How should you know?" This is Rome! And what's a doctor without Latin! Anyway, the Torah says that any man who is hanged on a tree (Paul puts his hands out as in crucifixion.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL WITH HIS HAND OUTSTRETCHED AS IN CRUCIFICION

...is accursed by God, damned by God, cut off. But the Mashiach, blessed be he, the Messiah, was to be the Holy One from God. And how could the Holy One of Israel be the Accursed One of Golgotha? It was a contradiction in terms; it was foolishness to me. As a chasid, a Pharisee, I perceived this movement as a dangerously growing cult (Paul opens his eyes and stares, seeing Stephen again in his memory)

FULL SHOT OF THE STAGE AS PAUL STARES AT THE HARP ON THE PLATFORM, WHICH BECOMES FOR HIM STEPHEN

...enticing ignorant Jews away from Judaism. (Pointing at the harp) So one day I confronted Stephen in front of the Synagogue of the Freedmen. (The lights change and a light--the Stephen special--comes up on the harp. When Paul says "Synagogue" he gestures toward the theatre audience as if it were now the Synagogue of the Freedmen audience. Paul gets up from the riser.) I said, Stephen, you are no longer a Jew! (Looking at the theatre audience conspiratorially, Paul moves toward the platform, arriving right of the harp in the pool of light, the Stephen special.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS PAUL WHEN HE IS LOOKING TOWARD STEPHEN

You are destroying many of our people, leading them to believe in a false god--an idol you have shaped in the form of a man!
Luke, he called me by my Hebrew name. He said,

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL WHEN HE BECOMES STEPHEN SPEAKING TOWARD STAGE RIGHT

Saul, God has proven the Messiah is the divine Word he sent.

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

How, Stephen?

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

By raising him from the dead, Saul.

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT (PAUL IS TURNING BACK AND FORTH FOR EACH CAMERA)

Stephen, I'm a Jew. (Sitting on the platform next to the harp.) I believe in only one God.

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

The Father and his divine Word are one, echad, Saul. There is but one God who has but one Word, who became the Messiah.

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

(Putting his hand on the harp as if touching Stephen's shoulder.) Now be reasonable, Stephen. Can anything good come out of Galilee? Who was this nobody from Nazareth? He was a know-nothing, a law-breaker! He broke the Torah by driving demons into innocent pigs!

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

Saul, have you ever met an innocent pig?

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

Stephen, have you no compassion for animals?

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

I have more for a crucified messiah who loved me, Saul!

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

This Nazarene was a mamzer who worked his magic by accult powers, Stephen!

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

Saul, he said he did only what he saw his Father doing, and only in the power of the Ruach Ha-Kodesh, the Holy Spirit!

STAGE LEFT MEDIUM SHOT AS PAUL JUMPS UP FROM THE HARP PLATFORM FURTOUSLY

Stephen, he was a Samaritan with a deviant Judaism that is no Judaism at all!

STAGE RIGHT MEDIUM SHOT

Saul, he came to bring what Judaism promised--the bodily resurrection of the dead!

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

Then why isn't everyone raised bodily from the dead, Stephen?

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

Because those who hear and believe must first be raised spiritually from death to life.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

Luke, I was totally blind to what he was talking about. I was speaking only about external religion.

STAGE LEFT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

Answer this, Stephen. (Paul moves toward the bench, taking the stage like a prosecuting attorney.) If this Nazarene is the Prince of Peace, then where is the yah-meem shel Mashiach, the days of the Messiah, with all the world peace the prophets said the Messiah would bring?

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

Saul, he did not promise peace to a world that rejects him!

STAGE LEFT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

(Putting his foot on the bench, his elbow on his thigh.) Just where is he, anyway? The prophets said he's supposed to be sitting on David's throne!

Stephen, I don't see him!

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

That's because you're blind to the Kingdom of God, Saul! And to the Word of God, who is King and will one day be your judge. Where's your faith, rabbi?

STAGE LEFT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

(Caught off guard, furious, putting his prayer shawl over his head.) My faith is in the law of Moses! Toraht Moshe Torah min Ha-shah-mah-yeem. The law of Moses is the Torah from heaven, Stephen!

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

(Stephen flips around to the center stage area, backing up as in a fencing match.) But, Saul, in the law of Moses, what does the Word of God demand? What's the legal penalty of justice so that no evil goes unpunished?

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

Death, of course. You know that, Stephen. It is the curse of transgressing the law.

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

(Pause. Stephen walks upstage and gets the scroll basket off the two-step riser, turns slowly around and continues.) Correct, Saul. And when the word of God who came in the law of Moses finally came in the Messiah, what did he offer as justice and mercy for all transgressors? His death, Saul, of course! (Coming down to center stage.) He turned aside his Father's holy fury against all our ungodliness. He took the penalty of death for us. When he said, "My God, why have you abandoned me?" he was God's righteous Word taking our curse of abandonment from God--the curse of Hcll --upon himself to rescue us from the punishment we all deserve. (Moving toward the bench.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

(Crossing behind the bench and setting the scroll basket down on it skeptically.) Stephen, you are talking like a Greek philosopher!

STAGE RIGHT CLOSE UP

I am talking like Moses, King David, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, who all said the same thing! We must be cut free and raised up from the downward pull of evil by an inward circumcision of the Holy Spirit!

STAGE LEFT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

(Crossing angrily to the harp platform.) Your Messiah is a Haman! You've taken a man and turned him into an accursed male idol! Stephen, I have a question for you! Did the prophet say, "Whoever calls on the name of a male idol will be saved from God's judgment?" No, he said, "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord!" Jews do not worship men! You, Stephen, are no longer a Jew! (Looking at the audience, Saul triumphantly folds his arms, convinced he has won the public debate.)

A FULL REACTION SHOT OF THE ENTIRE THEATRE AUDIENCE

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

(Stephen looks out at the audience, then into the camera.) Saul, we Jews worship God through his Word which is the only way to God! And his Word became the Messiah who is the only way to God!

STAGE LEFT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

(Loud, raising his tent needle like a knife, ready to stike, looking directly into the camera) He was the devil! In the pride of his heart this devil has said, "I am a god and will sit on the throne of a god!" But this Nazarene was a blaspheming man and not a god, and if I had it in my power, (raising the tent needle menacingly) I myself would have driven my tent needles into his hands and feet!

(No change of camera angle...the contrast between characters will be made with the whispers of Stephen versus the screams of Saul while the same camera is rolling.)

(Urgent whisper) He was wounded for our transgressions, Saul.

(Dull and loud) That prophecy is talking about Israel, Stephen.

(Soft and reasonable) Can Israel die for Israel, Saul? Every man must die for his own sins!

(Loud, angry) That's right, Stephen. I must die for me! Not some mediator! No mere man can die for another man!

(Imploringly reasonable) But he was no mere man, Saul! The prophet said, "Unto us a son is born and his name shall be called Mighty God, in Hebrew, El Gee-bor!"

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA CLOSE SHOT

(Saul looks at the audience and then does a double take to the camera.) You're interpreting Isaiah literally, Stephen!

STAGE LEFT CAMERA MEDIUM SHOT

Because the Messiah was literally seen alive from the tomb!

His disciples stole the body, Stephen!

(Pause, Stephen starts slowly and softly then picks up the tempo.) Saul, he fulfilled what was foretold about him in the law and the prophets. He was born in Bethlehem, as was predicted, of the tribe of Judah of the house of David, as was predicted. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, gave sight to the blind, as was predicted. He was betrayed by a friend, sold for thirty pieces of silver, pierced in his hands and feet, yet his body did not decay, as was predicted! Prophecy after prophecy he fulfilled--

(Screaming!) So he got lucky, now shut up Stephen! Shekit!

REACTION SHOT OF THE AUDIENCE LAUGHING

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

Luke, no mere man could ever change me!

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL MOVING TOWARD THE STONE PLATFORM

My rabbi who ordained me as a rabbi, Rabban Gam'liel, tried to reason with me. (Sitting like an old man on the platform, taking his time, casual, as though he were the elder Gam'liel.) "Saul, leave these Jewish men alone! If their activity is of human origin it will utterly fail, like the followings of so many false messiahs. But if it is from God, you, Saul (Gam'liel points his finger at the audience) will not be able to stop these Jews; you will only find yourself fighting against God!" I disagreed with my rabbi and I was ready for a fight! (Pause, Paul puts his head down on his arms and rests)

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE DOLLYS SLOWLY BEHIND A ROW OF THE AUDIENCE, CATCHING PAUL ON THE STAGE FROM OVER THE TOPS OF THE BACK OF THEIR HEADS

(After two full beats of silence, Paul begins to speak as though he were raising his head to reply to something Luke has said.) They were gaining an enormous number of adherents! In fact, there were more of them than us; there were only six thousand Pharisees. We were the Jews of the strictly orthodox persuasion (Paul fixes his prayer shawl)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL ON THE STONE PLATFORM FIXING HIS PRAYER SHAWL

And I was sure that we were right and they were wrong, these messianic Jews, these Jews who proclaim the Messiah.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

Now this was no small matter, because the law of Moses commands that if any Jew tries to entice another Jew to worship another god other than the God of Israel, that person must be stoned; he must be put to death. For he is worse than one who destroys Jewish bodies, he destroys Jewish souls by leading them away from the true God and into hell.

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE AS HE PEERS OUT TOWARD THE STAGE RIGHT AISLE OF THE HOUSE

All this happened shortly before Stephen was arrested and put on trial for heresy before the Supreme Court of Israel. I can still see him...(Paul's eyes are transfixed on the past as Stephen appears again in his mind.)

THE STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL FROM THE SIDE AND BEHIND HIM, WITH THE STAGE RIGHT HOUSE AISLE VISIBLE OVER PAUL'S SHOULDER

(The Stephen special light comes up out in the audience, shining down on the aisle about ten rows out from the orchestra pit.) ...standing there before the Sanhedrin with what appeared to me at the time to be the most brazen defiance and disrespect I had ever witnessed. Immediately, Stephen stood up before the Supreme Court of Israel: (As Paul has been saying these last two sentences he has been moving out toward the Stephen special with a follow spot following him.)

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP PAUL AS HE BECOMES STEPHEN AND STEPS INTO STEPHEN'S LIGHT IN THE AUDIENCE

(He was put the prayer shawl over his head as a pious Jew; he is walking slowly

up the aisle:) You who say that I, Stephen, am no longer a Jew
(He stops, speaking softly through his teeth, restraining his anger:)
you are no more Jews than Herod! Herod has turned the Jewish Temple
into a golden calf for you but the Messiah is breaking camp! To lead
the true Jews out to the world! To build a house of prayer for all
peoples!

THE STAGE LEFT CAMERA GETS A FULL SHOT OF PAUL AND THE AUDIENCE FROM THE STAGE

The God of Israel is on the move! But you're fighting God! Like our
fathers fought Joseph! Even though God wanted to use him! God wanted
to test him in prison to be a worthy vessel to feed bread to the whole
world! (During this last couple of sentences he sweeps up on the stairs
of the stage and then turns back to the audience defiantly:)

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE FOCUSES ON HIM THROUGH THE HEADS OF THE AUDIENCE

But our fathers tried to kill him like they almost stoned Moses.
(He pauses, shakes his head as though giving up, then moves toward the
stone seat at the extreme stage right:) Do you think God wants to
(He sits on the stone seat in a "languish" manner:) languish here with
you and your religious pageantry?

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP PAUL AS HE SITS

(Lowering his voice) Do you think Israel is the only nation God loves?
(Stands up and shouts:) It's time to disciple the Gentiles! But all
you know is religion! You know nothing about God's suffering love for
the world!

THE STAGE RIGHT CAMERA SHOTS PAUL'S BACK AND THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE

Six hundred years ago, Jeremiah stood where I'm standing and prophesied
against our fathers and their Temple. They tried to kill him as you are
trying to kill me! But God fulfilled his word and that Temple was destroyed!
(Paul turns around to face the stage right camera, looking down in disgust:)
You blind guides! Hypocrites! (He starts to turn around to face the audience
with a who-do-you-think-you're-fooling look on his face.)

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE FOCUSES ON HIM THROUGH THE HEADS OF THE AUDIENCE

(As he turns toward the audience) You are trying to ignore the Messiah's
sacrifice and go on with the business of religion as usual! (He comes back
down the stage stairs and into the audience, the follow spot following him.)
But I have a word from the Lord for you! Your temple, your priesthood, your
sacrifices are on the way out!

THE STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS PAUL UP AGAIN OUT IN THE AUDIENCE

But the body of God's sacrifice and priest, the Messiah, the temple of his
Spirit, although it has been torn down by men, has already been raised up
forever by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE GETS A CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE AS HE SEES SOMETHING
WONDERFUL, VERY FAR OFF

Now the isles are waiting for his torah, his teaching! We Jews have been

given a new commission: And it is later than we think! The New Adam of the new humanity of the new age is already bodily alive! The new wine of the Holy Spirit, which Moses and Joshua tasted, is already being poured out on the whole world! (Starts moving slightly up the aisle a row or two)

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP PAUL AS HE MOVES

We are a nation of priests! And God is commanding us to proclaim the Good News to all the nations! But you (He is pointing his finger at the audience like Gam'liel pointed his finger at him a moment ago), you are totally blind...

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE GETS A MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL AND HIS ACCUSING FINGER DIRECTED TOWARD THE CAMERA

Mere religious functionaries, devoid of the Spirit. You Sadducees! (Paul turns to his left and goes halfway to the back of the theatre while the follow spot follows him.)

THE STAGE RIGHT CAMERA GETS A FULL SHOT OF PAUL GOING HALFWAY UP THE AISLE IN THE FOLLOW SPOT.

You love to call King David and Daniel liars by denying the resurrection! You love to say, 'When you're dead, you're dead!' You Sadducees should know because you've already been dead for generations!

A CAMERA IN THE AISLE IS DIRECTLY ON PAUL IN A MEDIUM SHOT AS HE MOVES ALL THE WAY UP THE AISLE TO THE BACK OF THE THEATRE WHERE THE USHERS ARE STATIONED

And you Pharisees, who love to nullify the Word of God with your oral traditions! You think even God doesn't know as much about religion as you do!

A REACTION SHOT OF THE AUDIENCE LAUGHING

THE CAMERA WITH PAUL IN THE AISLE HOLDS ON HIM IN A MEDIUM SHOT AND BEGINS TO DOLLY DOWN THE AISLE AFTER HIM AS HE HEADS BACK TOWARD THE STAGE

You are leading our people to destruction! (Moving rapidly down the aisle toward the stage stairs) If you defy these words which are not mine but God's given long ago by his holy prophets and today by his holy apostles, you are unregenerate goyim, heathen at heart, pagan hypocrites, masquerading as Jews, and you will be thrown (Paul is now back on the stage and is pointing toward the orchestra pit.) headlong into the lake of fire because you always resist God's Word and kill his holy messengers!"

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE GETS A FULL SHOT OF THE STAGE

Aaaaaiiiii!!!! (Paul is screaming with rage as a strobe light begins to pulsate menacingly on the stage while a follow spot stays with Paul.) Luke! (The Luke Special comes on.) We wanted to beat Stephen's brains out! (Shouting, Paul grabs the scroll off the bench and also the bowl on the two-step riser.) As one man we leaped from our seats and we dragged him (Paul crosses down to the stage center footlights) out of the Sanhedrin and through the streets of Jerusalem (raising his hand as if the bowl were a stone to throw) and tossed him as a blood-splattered mass

of wounds into a stone pit. (Pause, Paul is panting, exhausted, the strobe light is fading out as he stands motionless.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA GETS A CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE (The Jesus Special (same as the Damascus Special) floods eerily over

And don't say I experienced a pang of guilt as he cried out, "I see... (The Jesus Special (same as the Damascus Special) floods eerily over Paul's face with a heavenly brilliance)...the Son!...of Man...standing at the right hand of God! Lord, do not hold this sin against them!" (This special light fades out.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA GETS A MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL

(Pause.) At that moment I felt no compassion! I wouldn't have cared if he had sprouted angel wings and started to fly! I wanted him dead!

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

(Paul moves stage left to in front of the platform.) Why, Luke? (Paul keeps on moving and loops up to the two-step riser. How can you say, why? (Shrugs) Because one of us was dead wrong and I was sure it wasn't going to be me! (Sits on the two-step riser.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA GETS A MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL

(As he sits) But be informed about this. I have never been ridden with guilt. I have always served God with a clear conscience and a sincere heart, as my ancestors did, who were rabbis before me. Any error I made were in ignorance and unbelief. (Staggering to get up.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL GETTING UP AND COMING DOWN TO THE PLATFORM

Recently, it's true (kneeling on the little step behind the platform, pointing his finger out toward the audience) an accusing, condemning thought has come to me with a thorn in the flesh as a messenger of Satan saying,

STAGE LEFT CAMERA GETS A CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL AND THE WAGGING FINGER

"Aha! The persecutor is now the persecuted, the executioner is now the victim! What you did to Stephen is now being done to you! For, as it is written, 'Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong and there is no favoritism!' Not for Moses, not for David, not for Saul of Tarsus!"

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL LOWERING HIS WAGGING FINGER

But, Luke, I walk by faith, not by appearances. By faith I've been taken out of God's condemnation. (Smiles) God is for me. Nothing can separate me from his love! Be clear about that. Don't you see, at the time, not feeling guilty at all, I saw it as my ...solemn Jewish duty (Paul slams his fist down on top of the platform.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA GETS A MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SLAMMING HIS FIST DOWN

to go to Caiapha (Paul gets up to his feet) the Kohain Ha-gah-dohl, the high priest. (Paul moves upstage to above the stone bench.) I received permission to organize, as his informal prosecutor of those messianic Jews, a corps of rabbis and Temple guards. They went with me to disrupt their messianic synagogue services and house meetings to teach them a lesson

against heresy they wouldn't forget.

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA GETS A MEDIUM CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING INTO THE CAMERA AND DELIVERING THIS ASIDE

There were too many of them to stone them all, but I was sure we could at least frighten them into their senses. For this purpose (moving to the footlight) I procured an ugly-looking whip that could cut through human flesh like a knife (Paul is beginning to flail a scroll as if it were a whip). Through certain infiltrating spies and informants, we were alerted (moves along the footlights)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP A MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL MOVING

...every week of their secret meeting places so that we could burst in upon them by surprise (a strobe light begins to pulsate on the stage again as Paul leaps to in front of the stone platform), smash up their homes, (he moves upstage and loops to center stage) lash at their screaming women and children, (spins 360 degrees center stage) beat their men half to death, knocking out teeth, ripping off clothes, (he kicks at the upstage corner of the platform) kicking in their faces till the blood poured, (leaps toward the footlights) throwing them into the Temple prison until they decided whether they wanted to recant their blasphemous heresy or join Stephen at the stoning pit. (Drifting toward the extreme stage left stone seat.)

MEDIUM SHOT FOLLOWS PAUL MOVING TO SIT ON THE STAGE LEFT STONE SEAT

That's how it came about that I (Paul collapses on the stone seat), Saul of Tarsus, the Pharisee, the chasid, became the angel of death to these messianic Jews. (Paul place the whip scroll on the seat and the strobe light fades out.) I'll never forget this one beautiful Jewish girl we arrested--this is not for the record! (Paul glances upward toward Luke somewhat apprehensively.)

A REACTION SHOT OF THE THEATRE AUDIENCE LAUGHING

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE AS HE SOMEWHAT ROMANTICALLY GAZES VACANTLY TOWARD THE BACK OF THE THEATRE

She had long, lovely black hair and the softest eyes. But, what infuriated me was that, when we burst into her house, tearing up the furniture, instead of screaming like the other women, she was staring right at me, and calmly talking to someone. There was so much noise in the room, I had to press close to her face...

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE WITH EMBARRASSMENT

...to hear what she was saying, you understand! Oi! (Paul gets up)

A REACTION SHOT OF THE THEATRE AUDIENCE LAUGHING

MEDIUM SHOT FOLLOWS PAUL AS HE MOVES IN FRONT OF THE PLATFORM

She was praying for my soul in the name of this dead Nazarene! I was filled with rage to see her beautiful Jewish mind poisoned like the rest. I shook her to make her blaspheme his name and shouted, "Yeshua chey-rem ah-lay-chah --say it!" (Paul grabs his harp and loops up to the bench.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL AS HE REACHES THE BENCH IN A MEDIUM SHOT

She prayed louder, defying me! Suddenly the room became deathly still ...while everyone paused from tearing up the furniture to listen to this beautiful Jewish girl praying at the top of her lungs for the Nazarene to save my soul. I was embarrassed beyond words. (He shakes the harp.) I shook her with all my strength. "Yeshua of Nazareth, a curse on you--say it!" She began to sob loudly and someone dragged her off to be locked up with the others. Luke...(Paul sits on the bench)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SITTING ON THE BENCH AND BEGINNING TO STRUM THE HARP

...if I had taken time to take a wife, as my rich father was insisting, since I was an ordained rabbi headed for membership in the Sanhedrin, and Luke, if she and I had met under...how shall you say it? (his eyes bat romantically as he seems to see her in the back of the theatre)... if she and I had met under different circumstances...I could have allowed myself to feel an attraction for her, Luke, but...I never saw her again. (Paul clears his throat breaking the romantic mood.) Luke, never become a religious fanatic!

A REACTION SHOT OF THE AUDIENCE LAUGHING

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AFFECTIONATELY AT LUKE

Doctors are hard enough to deal with as it is! (Pause.) What, Luke? That's right! A hopeful thought! I never considered that. Nero hates the Jews so much he may release me just to infuriate my Jewish enemies from Jerusalem!

STAGE LEFT CAMERA GETS A FULL SHOT OF PAUL AND PART OF THE AUDIENCE TOGETHER

(Glancing up at Luke, then back down) Who were you talking to just now? (The stage lights have faded so that Paul is enclosed in a pool of light.) What did the guard want? (Pause, then speaking quite loudly:) I'm terribly sorry I'm making too much noise...Let him go sharpen his sword! (An aside to an audience member on the front row:) There's nothing worse than being hit on the neck with a dull sword! (Turning to speak directly to the camera:) They won't even let me have a knife down here (pulling at his hair) to cut my hair. I look like Samson (back to the audience member on the first row) without the muscles. (Paul stops to scratch for a moment.) I'd give anything for one warm bath. (Laughing to himself, scratching.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

I'm reminded of that couple we spoke to in Philippi, Luke. Do you remember? (Suddenly very serious.) They both had leprosy and she was blind. They were beggars, sitting on a dung hill by the city gate.

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL WHO SEEMS TO SEE THEM ON THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF HIM

Remember, they seemed anxious to meet us (laughs) until they found out we had no money. (Scratching) Then the man became preoccupied with himself; he was pulling off these horrible pieces of skin (imitating him) from under his rags, rolling them up into neat little balls, examining them with the greatest interest, then tossing them carelessly over his shoulder. (Paul imitates him, amused.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP A FULL SHOT OF PAUL

(Imitating Luke in a very "Britishy" accent as Luke speaks to the leper)
You said, "Excuse me, I'm Dr. Luke. I'd like you to meet 'the Apostle Paul.' (pronounced POLL) That's how you said it--'the Apostle POLL.'

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL IN A CLOSE SHOT AS HE BECOMES THE LEPER

"I haven't got time. Leave me alone. I'm working on something."

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA ON PAUL AS A DISGUSTED LUKE

We see that!

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

Do you remember Luke, we were watching with fascination the arc of each piece of--what shall you call it?--debris?--as it sailed through the air.

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA ON PAUL AS HE BECOMES LUKE

You said to him (imitating Luke's Britishy accent), "We represent the Messiah. We beg you for a moment of your time."

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CLOSE ON PAUL

He looked up from this ball of himself he was examining as though he were a busy jeweler looking at a gem and we were the beggars begging for his time.

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA ON PAUL AS HE BECOMES LUKE AGAIN

Luke, you said, "But sir, are you really that busy? You're here all day as a beggar and a leper. Mind you, we are all beggars and lepers in the sight of God, since everything--even life itself--is a gift and we all need to be cleansed from evil. But (low, embarrassed, under his breath) why spend all your time picking at yourself? Won't you let us help you?"

STAGE LEFT CAMERA CLOSE ON PAUL

"I don't need religion!"

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA ON PAUL AS HE BECOMES LUKE

(Laughing) Luke, you became exasperated. "We're not talking about mere religion, we're talking about righteousness. It's a gift. You're a beggar. TAKE IT!!!!!"

REACTION SHOT OF THE AUDIENCE LAUGHING UPROARIOUSLY

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA ON PAUL AS HE BECOMES LUKE

You're a leper. Don't you want to be cleansed?

STAGE LEFT CAMERA ON PAUL AS THE LEPER

(Affronted) "I'm a good person. Who did I ever hurt? I never hurt anyone in my life!" And with that he threw a ball of himself over his shoulder and it landed on the top of his blind wife's head.

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA ON PAUL

Finally our hearts went out to this sweet little old lady with the (Paul gestures with his hand) pile of her husband's debris on the top of her head. You went to her, Luke, and you said, "We realize you're blind, ma'am, but if you'll let us lead you, we'll take you to where the Apostle Paul teaches at Lydia's house. I'm Doctor Luke. This is the Apostle POLL. How would you like to attend a gathering for the study of the Torah?"

STAGE LEFT CAMERA AS PAUL LEANS INTO IT CLOSE AS THE OLD LADY

"How would you like me to spit in your eye, creep?"

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE AND LAUGHING UNCONTROLLABLY

Luke, I've never seen you at such a loss for words! Whenever I feel sad, I think about the expression on your face and I get happy all over again! (Paul continues to laugh.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL

(Clearing his throat, getting control of himself and becoming serious) You might have said what our prophets have declared, "All our own tsidacah, righteousness, is like leprosy rags; but God's people will be credited with God's righteousness because they live by faith, by loving, loyal, sacrificial trust in God. (Paul rises with the harp from the bench.)

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE GETS A FULL SHOT OF THE STAGE

Luke, that was fifteen years ago. I wonder if that couple ever woke up. That was my problem, Luke. I needed to wake up to what time it was. It was later than I thought. (Paul crosses above the platform, dropping the harp there and the scroll basket on the two-step riser.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP A FULL SHOT OF PAUL AND PART OF THE AUDIENCE

Now some of this you know, some you don't. But make one thing clear in your apologetic, whether Nero or any of my other critics (gestures toward a sea of critics in the audience) understands it or not:

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

I did not change my religion. I changed my time reference and God changed my heart.

STAGE LEFT CAMERA ON PAUL AND THE AUDIENCE AGAIN

(Coming down to the footlights, gesturing at the audience) But, wait, my critics say, Who cares about your heart, Paul? Or your life? Other rabbis have been defrocked, other Jews excommunicated. Of what moment, Paul

is your incessant teaching, your endless sermons? What great battle rages in the trial of my life? What is at stake, Luke? What am I fighting for?

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

Only the salvation of Israel and the world--nothing more.

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP A FULL SHOT OF THE AUDIENCE AND THE STAGE

And if the issue of this conflict is of no import, where is there any weighty drama? "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die." And if what I attest about the Nazarene is not truth, then we, his suffering servants, are of all men most tragically, pitifully naive, and the hope of Israel is dead. (Paul starts to move toward the extreme stage left stone seat.)

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP A FULL SHOT OF PAUL GETTING THE WHIP SCROLL FROM STONE SEAT

But here is what happened. I had received reliable information that there was a stubborn nest of these Jewish heretics in the synagogues of Damascus. (Paul returns toward the camera along the footlights to center stage.)

A CAMERA IN THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE PICKS PAUL UP IN A MEDIUM SHOT

The journey from Jerusalem took us six days on horseback. The other Jerusalem rabbis and the Temple guards and I had just crossed the desert from Galilee. We were approaching Damascus. It was about noon. The sun was high in a clear blue sky, as clear as heaven. Then, suddenly my ears were filled with a sound like a mighty rushing wind...and then... (The Jesus Special lights up Paul's face in a fiery glow...Paul backs up slightly, terrified.)

A CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE WHICH IS BATHED IN THE FIERY LIGHT

A second sun up in the sky blasted down on us from nowhere, lighting up everything like a consuming fire. At first, I couldn't fathom what my eyes were showing me. I was seeing what Mary Magdalene and Peter and five hundred others had seen three years before. Young as I was, the Devar Adonoi, the Word of the Lord, who came to Moses in the burning bush, was coming toward me, revealing himself to me.

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS PAUL UP IN THE CONE OF LIGHT IN A FULL SHOT

In the east, as in the dawn of time, a figure like a man, fire all around him, his eyes sorrowful and dark, his voice like the sound of rushing waters. He spoke to me in the language of the Hebrews: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? (Terrified, he sinks to his knees.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT JESUS

The glory in his face was brighter than the sun, like the glory of God, blazing around me in heavenly splendor. I had fallen off my horse and was too frightened to move. I said, "Who are you, Lord? And in the language of the Hebrews, the voice came from out of the fire: "I am Yeshua of Nazareth: I am sending you as a light, my light to the Gentiles."

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP PAUL IN THE CONE OF LIGHT

Yah-eh-r ah-doh-noi pah-nahv ee-leh-chah vee-choo-neh-chah. The Lord made

his face shine upon me and was gracious to me. The Lord was in his heavenly Temple; let all the earth be silent before him.
(Pause.) I sat overwhelmed, my eyes still in total glare from the excess of light. I found out later that the other rabbis did see something and heard something as well, but were not clear on what it was. (Starts to get up as the Jesus Special fades out.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP A FULL SHOT OF PAUL GETTING UP, BLIND, GROPING

I was led blind by the rabbis and Temple guards into Damascus to the house of Judas, on the street called Straight, where arrangements had already been made for me to lodge the night. (As he is saying this he is moving toward the platform as though he were being led blind.) Had it literally dawned on me that I was blind to the will of God? Or had I hallucinated? I prayed and fasted for three days, asking God to give me physical and spiritual sight...I remembered how I prayed: (sitting blindly on the platform)

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL ON THE PLATFORM

O Lord, have I been missing the true way of Judaism? Have I been leaning on my own understanding? Rather than acknowledging your will? Have I been leaning on my own righteousness rather than receiving your righteous Word the Messiah?

A CAMERA IN THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE PICKS UP PAUL IN A FULL SHOT

And this Nazarene, I have heard of him and now my eyes have seen him. Therefore, I abhor what I have done and with deep conviction, teshubah, turn to you for forgiveness with prayer and fasting. I am a Jew and I am going to die a Jew, but show me the truth, and I'll do it.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL GETTING UP

And do you know something, Luke? At that exact moment, the Lord answered my prayer. Because there was a man in Damascus, probably the only man I would have listened to, because he was a deeply pious Jew, but he believed in this Messiah. His name was Ananias, and the Lord appeared to him, too, and he too became an apostle (Jesus Special comes back on Paul and all other lights fade) when the Lord said.

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP "ANANIAS" IN THE CONE OF JESUS SPECIAL LIGHT

Ananias!

Yes, Lord.

I have something I want you to do.

Oh, Yes Lord. I'm your servant. I'll do anything. What is it that you require?

I have someone I want you to go minister to and pray with.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF "ANANIAS" LOOKING UP AT THE LORD

(Smiling excitedly) Gladly, Lord. I'll pray with anyone in Damascus. Who is he?

The man named Saul who's come up here to arrest you and kill you. (His smile vanishes.)

Oh, him, Lord. Well, Lord, I'm awfully busy. Does that have to be done today?

Today.

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP "ANANIAS" IN THE CONE OF JESUS SPECIAL LIGHT

Well, Lord. You know why he's come up here to Damascus--to throw the whole lot of us messianic Jews in prison in Jerusalem. He's one of the chasidim. What can I possibly tell him?

Ananias.

Yes, Lord.

Just tell him I said to evangelize the whole world.

I beg your pardon.

Today.

Today? The goyim? Tell one of the cahsidim to go to the goyim today? (moving)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP A MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL MOVING TOWARD THE EXTREME LEFT SEAT

And when Ananias came to me, he gave me the precise message from the Messiah that I had heard on the Damascus road, though I had told no one. The message was, Saul go to the Gentiles.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

And you know Luke, as soon as Ananias placed his hands on me and prayed for my sight, something like scales, little cataract-like tissues, fell from my eyes into my fingers, and I could see. I looked at these two pieces of tissue and I realized that the Yah-moht Ha-mah-shee-ahch, the age of the Messiah, had begun, the first man was bodily alive from the tomb, and I had received the same Spirit that Joshua, Caleb, Elijah, and all the others had received, the Spirit of the new age. I had been born into a new spiritual existence. I had become a new creation!

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP A MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL NEAR THE SEAT, BEHIND HIM AND INCLUDING THE ENTIRE THEATRE AUDIENCE

Suddenly it was revealed to me what had been hidden in the Scriptures but had been there all along: That in Abraham and the Jews, God intended to bless equally all peoples of the world through faith in the Messiah, through this Messiah, alive from the dead. (Paul moves back along footlights)

A CAMERA IN THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE PICKS UP PAUL IN A FULL SHOT

Now, let me pause to clear up one thing, Luke. For the benefit of the scoffers you must refute. (Crosses upstage to the two-step riser) What exactly made me switch, not religions, but vocations, from that of persecutor to that of advocate and apostle? (Crossing to center stage)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

What was the problem, Doctor? Are the scoffers right? Was it really a mere case of sunstroke? Nervous collapse? Hallucination? Guilt catharsis? Honest mistake? (Sits on the bench)

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP A FULL SHOT OF PAUL ON THE STAGE AS HE SITS

"What is truth for you, Saul, is not truth for me," my critics say (gesturing toward the audience). "There are natural explanations for everything."
(Paul reclines on the bench like a man talking to his psychiatrist) Yes, yes Doctor. Here is the natural explanation. One day, on the road to Damascus, while I tried to enforce the law of Moses (Strobe light comes on again as in the persecution scene earlier, flashing all over the stage, while Paul quietly reclines, head on hand, propped up by elbow), piously serving my God as a rabbi, with all my heart, I--the arrestor--was arrested...by a naive superstition. Quite naturally, a meteor just happened to blaze across the sky. (A follow spot blazes across the stage, misses Paul, comes back and finally hits him.) At the very same time, it just happened to thunder, so that the other rabbis quite naturally did see and hear something. At the very same time--clumsy shlah-meel that I am--I just happened to fall off my horse (falls off the bench, gets up center stage). And at the very same time, just happened to hallucinate (follow spot turns green) with a nightmare vision, complete with face, fire and voice, that just happened to be my enemy, who just happened to want me to go to work for him! Among the very people who just happened to be my enemies--the Gentiles. And at the very same time, I just happened to have tissues form over both my eyes with a purely accidental case of coincidental cataracts. (Strobe light and follow spot fade off.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

Yes, Doctor, there are natural explanations for everything, if one has enough bad blind faith to go his own way.

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE DOLLYS SLOWLY BEHIND A ROW OF THE AUDIENCE, CATCHING PAUL ON THE STAGE FROM OVER THE TOPS OF THE BACK OF THEIR HEADS

Many like Nero are lords of their own lives who want to go their own way, even if it may lead to hell. But Luke, I had to trust God and like any other disciple, take a step of faith (Paul crosses to behind the platform) into the mikveh waters and into the Damascus synagogue. (Steps up on the platform, his prayer shawl over his head.) There with my eyes seeing clearly again, and with the mouths of my companions, the other Jerusalem rabbis, falling wide open, I preached a new rabbi's sermon, one that I would preach in synagogues all over the world for the next thirty years.

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP PAUL AND THE ENTIRE AUDIENCE

My Jewish brothers (and you Gentile Godfearers there in the back) listen to me.

A REACTION SHOT OF THE AUDIENCE LAUGHING

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY PICKS UP PAUL AND THE ENTIRE THEATRE

God can make Jews out of anyone, even a Gentile like Ruth, if we have her pilgrim faith. I now have that faith! I tried to curse these Jews who believe in the Nazarene but God has brought me to a point where I can do nothing but bless them!

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE CLOSE TO THE STAGE GETS A FULL SHOT OF PAUL OVER THEIR HEADS

Brothers, I have good news! The Word that promised life through Moses and the prophets has destroyed death and brought immortality to light through the Messiah! I know! I personally saw the Word alive! This same Word will appear again at the end of this closing age to judge everyone. Therefore, turn from this dying world and come eternally alive to the new age already dawning. Join my people Israel who by faith looked for him before he came. Join them by living for him now that he's here. Believe the Good News!

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

Well, Luke, some of the Jewish people believed and some didn't. Some of the Gentiles believed and some didn't. And the other rabbis? Well, some of them tried to kill me. And I understood why, since I would have done the same thing. I know the truth of the saying, "He who has been forgiven of much forgives much." (He crosses to the scroll basket on the two-step riser and collapses there, exhausted.)

STAGE LEFT CAMERA IS MEDIUM SHOT ON PAUL

(picking up a little scroll and a drinking bowl and the piece of bread) Luke, we still have to finish that letter to Timothy, if God will give me the strength. We've got to watch and pray, Luke. The evil one is coming and we must be ready to stand against him. (Paul is preparing to eat and read during his perhaps last meal--suddenly startled, listening then getting up.)

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

Why didn't you tell me Demas came back?

Did he bring any news? Wonderful! What was it?

He feels called to Thessalonica?

I sent him to the congregation here in Rome. Didn't he exhort the brothers to keep trying to speak to my people Israel?

Why not? He's running for his life? Why, Luke? Claudia told him what? (long pause, Paul moves.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL COMING DOWN TOWARD THE STONE PLATFORM

There's no chance for me?

What about my second trial this morning, Luke? A mock trial...Did he hear what charge convicts me? The charge? Are you falling asleep? The charge, Luke!

Treason against Nero. Turning his little world upside down. Well... at least I'm still Jewish...

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL AS HE COLLAPSES ON THE STEP BEHIND THE STONE PLATFORM, LETTING THE BREAD AND BOWL LAND ON TOP OF THE PLATFORM AS HE FALLS INTO A GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE POSITION

But who will go...who will go...

Who will go to my people Israel?...The harvest is past. Summer is ended... My people are not saved...Lord! Adonoi! (picks up the little scroll and drops it) Has it all been for nothing? All my sacrifices!

Is there no healing balm in Gilcad for Israel? (Puts the prayer shawl over his head.)

NOW A HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT THE LORD

O Lord, I pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Save your people, Rabbono shel olam. I could wish I were in hell if that would save them! Have I spent my life strength for nothing? A miserable failure!

(Looking up again.) Luke. Luke! (Whispering) Are you awake? Asleep.

You're not alone, Luke. The whole world is asleep. Wake it up, Lord! One disciple betrays and deserts me. One falls asleep on me. My enemies say, "Where is your Lord, now, Paul?" (Seeing the bread, picking it up with a look of recognition.)

CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL AS HE PICKS UP THE BREAD

I think you saved me my last piece of bread, Lord. (Holding it up, without pausing) For the Passover tradition I handed on to the world came to me from the Lord himself! That the Lord, on the night of his arrest, took bread and, after giving thanks to God, broke it and said: "Baruch atah adonoi eloheynoo mehlech haolam, hamotzi lechem min haahretz. This is my body, which is for you; do this as a memorial of me." (picks up the bowl) In the same way he took the cup after supper and said "Baruch atah adonai elohheynoo mehlech haohlahm bohray pree haghahfen. This is haBreet hachahdahshah, the New Covenant, sealed by my blood! Whenever you drink it, do this as a memorial of me." (picks up his harp)

A BALCONY SHOT OF PAUL PLAYING HIS HARP IN A POOL OF LIGHT ON THE PLATFORM

(singing with harp accompaniment) To me to live is the Word of God, My Messiah is my life. For I can do anything, Anything through him who strengthens me. This one thing I do, whenever I feel sad: Forget about the past and all its evil darts and press on, I press on with my Messiah.

STAGE LEFT CAMERA GETS A MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL PLAYING

And suddenly, happily I receive from him His love, His joy, and His peace, His patience, Kindness, Goodness, and his faithfulness, His gentleness, self-control.

A CAMERA OUT IN THE AUDIENCE CLOSE TO THE STAGE GETS A FULL SHOT OF PAUL THROUGH THE HEADS OF THE AUDIENCE

(Looking directly at the camera in the audience, as though Demas might be sitting out there) O Demas. You're so weak, my son. Running back to a world that's dying, to try to save your life. Don't you realize you can't take anything with you out of this dying world, except the living Word of God, the Messiah? Oh Demas (singing)

A STAGE LEFT CAMERA GETS A MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL SINGING AND PLAYING

(Singing) I pray you'd come to see

The man I came to know...the one who blinded me...so long ago. The scales fell off my eyes and I was healed of doubt. A dead man came alive and I could shout! I saw his face, blazing brighter than the sun. The Son of God I disgraced, my time had come, my time had come, my time had come. I'd been his enemy, He could have killed me then. Instead he mercifully forgave my sin. I pray you'd come to see...the man I came to know. (Paul suddenly sees a rat, throws the bowl. THE STAGE LEFT CAMERA PANS TO FOLLOW THE BOWL AND HOLDS ON PAUL'S BACK AS HE FACES THE AUDIENCE WITH A CLEAR VIEW OF THE STAGE RIGHT AISLE.) Satan, you are such a liar! God is not executing me for killing Stephen! (Stops, thinks) Stephen... (Stephen Special light comes on in the stage right aisle.)

REACTION SHOT OF PAUL'S FACE AS HE SEEMS TO SEE STEPHEN AGAIN OUT IN THE STAGE RIGHT AISLE

Stephen! God used my sufferings for good to finish Stephen's work, to teach me his obedience, that I might have his honorable departure. And more than that, in suffering I have known something of the suffering love of our God, the God of Israel for his lost world.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT OF PAUL LOOKING UP AT THE LORD

Lord, I have one last request. Nero is having everything his way right now. But you can destroy his whole empire with five smooth stones! My last request is this: Give me one of those five smooth stones! Let me have one parting shot, one little shot, one final shot at the God of this evil world, Satan.

FRONTAL MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL WITH THE STAGE LEFT WALL IN VIEW

I wonder what time it is? (The Timothy Special lights up the Timothy letter on the stage left wall.) Oh, wait! (Paul tries to get up but falls back down, too weak to rise.) The guards will be coming for me soon! I still haven't finished the letter to Timothy, my only son...and to Israel, God's blind unfaithful wife, spiritually sound asleep.

A BALCONY SHOT OF PAUL AS HE ROLLS OFF THE EDGE OF THE PLATFORM AND PULLS HIMSELF UPRIGHT LIKE A HOSPITAL PATIENT GETTING OUT OF BED

I'm so weak...but down deep inside I feel the Word of God (Jesus Special light glows on Paul as he strains to get up), the Lion of Judah, ready to let out a roar within me that will wake up the whole world. (Moves to pick up the Timothy scroll.)

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE PICKS UP PAUL THROUGH THE HEADS OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Nero, you have me like a hummingbird in the hands of a crazed baboon --but when I am most weak, then my God is most strong! Even my defeat he turns into unspeakable victory! I feel the Spirit of God coming on me.

STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP PAUL WALKING SILENTLY TOWARD THE STEPHEN SPECIAL LIGHT IN THE STAGE RIGHT AISLE

Luke, wake up! Write this down fast!

NOW A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE FOCUSES ON PAUL IN THE STEPHEN SPECIAL LIGHT IN THE STAGE RIGHT AISLE WHERE STEPHEN EARLIER CONFRONTED THE SANHEDRIN AUDIENCE

(Seeing Timothy far off, in the back of the theatre) Timothy, my son, if anyone purifies himself from what is dishonorable, he will be a vessel fit for honorable use, consecrated and useful to the Master of the house. Therefore flee from the lusts of youth and follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Avoid foolish and senseless controversies knowing that they breed strife. And the servant of the Lord must not quarrel; instead he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, and to bear evil without resentment, correcting his opponents with gentleness, in the hope that God will give them the grace to turn and acknowledge the truth, that they may recover themselves out of the trap of Satan, who has taken them captive to do his will.
(starts moving up the aisle.)

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY FOLLOWS PAUL UP THE AISLE AS HE TALKS TO THE AUDIENCE WHO BECOME A HOST OF TIMOTHIES TO PAUL

Now understand this, Timothy: In the latter part of this closing age, there will be terrible times. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural love, unforgiving, slanderous, drugged--without self-control, brutal despisers of the good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of religion but denying its power. (Starting back down the aisle.)

THE STAGE LEFT CAMERA PICKS UP A FULL SHOT OF PAUL AND THE AUDIENCE WITH A FOLLOW SPOT FOLLOWING PAUL

(Coming down the aisle) Avoid these people. There are religious leaders like this who creep (Paul creeps along, imitating them and crosses in front of the audience in the orchestra pit aisle to the stage left aisle of the auditorium) into homes and gain control over weak-willed women who are burdened with sins and swayed by various lusts who are always learning the truth but never acknowledging it by their lives.

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY FOLLOWS PAUL UP THIS AISLE AS HE TALKS TO THE AUDIENCE

But you, Timothy, continue in what you have learned and have been assured of, knowing from whom you learned it. And how from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in the Messiah. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE SHOT PAUL THROUGH THE HEAD OF AUDIENCE MEMBERS

Timothy, my son, I give you this solemn charge, in the presence of God and our Messiah the Lord, the judge of the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: Proclaim the Word! Be ready in season, out of season: Correct, rebuke, encourage, with great patience and careful teaching.

STAGE RIGHT CAMERA PICKS UP A FULL SHOT OF PAUL AND THE AUDIENCE

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound teaching,

Instead, they will accumulate for themselves a great number of teachers to soothe their own lusts and to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn away from listening to the truth and turn aside to myths.

A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE SHOOTS PAUL'S BACK AND THE AUDIENCE FACES

But you, Timothy, always keep your head, endure hardships, do the work of an evangelist, continue establishing new congregations worldwide, discharge all the duties of your ministry. For I am already being poured out in sacrifice to the Lord like a drink offering and the time of my departure has arrived.

A CLOSE SHOT OF PAUL TAKEN FROM A CAMERA IN THE AUDIENCE

But I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. And now there is in store for me, the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall award to me on that day; and not to me only but also to all those who love his appearing. Timothy, do your best to come quickly.

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY GETS A FULL SHOT OF PAUL IN THE AISLE FOLLOW SPOT WITH THE AUDIENCE

Because...Demas has deserted me. In love with this passing world, he has departed for Thessalonica. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark and bring him with you, for he is profitable to the ministry...Alexander the copper-smith did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for his evil deeds. Timothy, you too should be on your guard against Alexander, because he strongly opposed the message. (Paul hurries to get back up on the stage.)

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL GOING UP THE STAGE STEPS

Luke, stop the dictation! Seal up the message Alexander opposed: (Looking back at the audience in case there are any in the audience who might also oppose the message) The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through the Messiah, our Lord. And this gift has been given even to me, though I am the least of the apostles, because I murdered Jewish believers in the Messiah.

HIGH ANGLE SHOT WITH PAUL LOOKING UP AT LUKE

But it's by God's unmerited favor that we have been rescued from judgment, through faith--and this is not from ourselves--it is a gift from God, not by good deeds, so that no one can boast. If we confess him unashamedly before men as Messiah and receive him as Lord to have first place in our hearts, he will confess us unashamedly before his Father and receive us into heaven. Now Luke, continue the dictation:

A CAMERA IN THE BALCONY CATCHES A FULL SHOT OF THE POOL OF LIGHT WHERE PAUL IS ISOLATED ON THE STAGE BY THE PLATFORM.

At my first trial, no one came to my support. All men deserted me. I pray God that it may not be held against them. But the Lord stood by at my side and gave me strength so that through me the proclamation might be fully known and all the Gentiles might hear it.

And I was delivered from the mouth of the roaring lion, Satan!
And the Lord shall rescue me from every evil attack and will preserve
me to his heavenly kingdom. Loh ha-kah-vohd...Luke, you must learn
Hebrew. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen.

MEDIUM SHOT OF PAUL

Luke, who are you talking to? It's all right, Luke. You can call
them what they are. So my executioners are here. Luke, see to it
that you fulfill your ministry. (Puts the Timothy scroll down on
the platform and picks up the harp.) Tell Timothy I said...the Lord
be with your spirit. (Paul staggers, pulls himself up like a general
standing at attention, though there are tears in his eyes.) And
Luke, grace be with you my friend. (To the camera) And with you.

FREEZE FRAME

ROLL CREDITS

THE END