

“The Serpent Strikes Again”

A Play by Philip Ney

February 2007

Actors:

J – Jehovah A - Andrew

S – Satan/Lucifer T- Thomas

Jo – Joshua/Messiah B - Baruch

G – Gabriel Ja- Jane

Mi – Michael Jo - Joe

A – Adam G - George

E – Eve Ma – Martha

Mo – Moses S- Sylvia

Aa – Aaron

These parts can be played by players with different roles in earlier scenes so that there is no need for more than 6 players at one time.

Je – Jeremiah

JB – John the Baptist

R – Rotan (demon)

D – Decepte “

P – Painly “

ACT ONE, SCENE 1

S: Blast, blast, blast! Blast you, God! You win, but only for now!

Yes, I choose to rebel, and I'll stick with that choice! And I will win!

R: How can we do it, Lucifer?

S: God made me the angel of light, Prince Lucifer

He put out my light, so the angel of darkness I'll be

I'll be Satan, SATAN, Satan!

D: Lucifer, your honour, I mean, Prince Satan

Your army is defeated

Some of your best troops and generals were mortified

The rest of us are pretty bruised.

P: The stupid little planet earth is no place for giants like us!

In training exercises we'll keep bumping into each other.

It's so cold and dank!

R: We would need an army one hundred times the size of the one we had, and you can't create creatures, Satan. You know only God can do that.

S: Ha ha, so only God can create?

I won't need to bother, I'll use his creation against him!

Gather round, my faithful mega-minions! You scarred old generals of mine!

You thought you were pretty bright. I told you to think it all through, and even slow thinking old Michael outwitted you, trapped you in your own inconsistencies and inaccuracies. If I hadn't distracted him, your minds would have been blown into

elemental dust! Never mind, I've got a better plan, a much better plan. I'll use God's desires against him.

D: Prince Satan, not so loud! He'll read you!

S: He always has. I've had no choice because he could always predict what I was going to do. But when I was part of his inner circle, I was told a horrible, amazing secret. I'll use it, and I'll win. I'll make mankind to sin.

P: Come on, PS, if you want our help you've got to fill us in.

S: I just did, you numskull!

R: Yeah, what or who is mankind?

S: Humans! God's newest pets! His darling playthings!

(Flashes of lightning and thunder. R, D and P cringing.)

S: Oh, stop cringing! If God was going to destroy us or chain us down, he would have done it already! No, he needs us for his cosmic game plan. We are the alternative.

D: The alternative to what, PS?

S. Man, are you guys thick! It all starts with desire. I desire to be God, to know and rule everything, then I chose to attack.

God's desire is friendship. He is lonely. He is tired of the same old tunes from his slave musicians. The futile chess games he always wins. The stilted chat with those who always agree because they can't think as fast as he does.

He tried making a few of us with lots of smarts and guts like him. But until I challenged him, no one was really interesting.

It became apparent, I don't know why he didn't see this from the beginning, the only way to have what God calls 'true friends' is to make some being sufficiently smart they

can choose to know him. He believes the only kind of friend is one who chooses to be a friend.

R: We chose to follow you, PS. We had choice.

S: Only because they let you, and only because I provided an alternative.

R: And he obviously allowed you to rebel because God needed an alternative. You aren't so smart, PS. You are a sucker to be a bit player in his game plan.

S: There's a fatal flaw in his plan.

D: You want me to believe that God can't see? That he doesn't know everything?

S: He sees it alright, but there's no other way. He is trapped by his desire and logic. He is flawed after all, Haha!

P: So who are these humans?

S: I can't be sure. I haven't seen one yet. The plan is to make them a superior creature to us. A little lower than God.

R: That's awful, PS. What chance have we got? Come on, let's surrender now!

S: You think you're pretty smart, Rotan, but actually you are as thick as a brick. He's given them free choice! We angels don't have real choice because 1) we are too overpowered by the strength of God and we wouldn't dare; 2) We're overawed by God's beauty, his grace and love compels our love and adoration. A free choice is only if (i) there's precisely 50-50 either way; (ii) no one is pressured or coerced; (iii) they have the capacity to choose; (iv) they have the freedom to make that choice; (v) they are allowed to experience the consequences of their choices, at least for a time. (The fourth generation) 3) Every time we choose and make a mistake, God corrects it. Otherwise heaven wouldn't be a perfect place, and if it's not perfect, it won't last. It would implode.

D: That's gotta mean fifty-fifty, one way or the other!

S: That's precisely precise! You're getting my point, friend!

P: That means even God can't predict! If he confines himself to that moment of choice.

S: And to make it 50-50 between him and me, he has to hide himself while I am given more power and freedom to do all sorts of amazing things to impress these little humans.

R: You call them little humans? So how can they be just a little lower than God?

S: They'll take a while to grow into that potential. Right now they are little in their brains, and everything else which makes them vulnerable. We can take them.

D & P: We're with you, PS!

R: It can't work. I followed you once, not again. I am going to try to go back.

S: Take him, boys, and chain him. After a while, he'll be ready to play his part.

(Noisy battle of wits and shoes. Eventually R holds his head and succumbs, and is led away, moaning.)

D: But PS, God won't let you destroy his newest creation.

S: I won't. I am going to recruit them, millions and millions of these potentially powerful people. I am going to seduce them using their own desires until they are thoroughly dehumanized. Then they'll follow me, and we'll simply overwhelm God and his armies.

P: But won't God just make more?

S: Not if I know him. He'll feel threatened by anything more powerful, and according to his plan, only humans can create humans, and I'm going to fix it so they won't want to recreate or procreate.

D: How, PS?

S: You'll see.

(Eerie light fades.)

ACT TWO SCENE 1

E: Good morning, my love.

A (yawns): Morning already? I could sleep a lot longer.

E: Last night was that good, huh?

A: Better than good. The only reason I would want to get up is so I can go to bed with you again.

E: Nice thought. Don't forget, we have work to do, then a meeting with God to learn more biology.

A: I never realized God made so many creatures. It will take us a lifetime to categorize, classify and name them all.

E: No rush, we can live forever.

A: Sweet soul mate, you are a great helpmate. Your classification system works better than mine.

E: You're welcome, but just don't push it, mate. Right now I am hungry. Some fruit for breakfast would hit the spot.

(She walks away.)

A: (calling after her, but rather hesitatingly and weakly) Don't forget God says we should not eat that particular apple. I can't exactly remember why, but he warned us it could make us sick and we could die.

E: I don't think that's what he said. Besides, why would a perfect God put an imperfect apple in a perfect garden? It's some kind of setup.

A: (muttering mostly to himself) I guess we have some kind of choice. But why a choice between obeying God and something so intriguing as disobeying the almighty God? If he absolutely didn't want us to find out what it was like, why did he give us such intense curiosity? Until I get this straight, we better be careful. (Calling after Eve) Be careful, Eve! (No answer. He is seen to be indecisively sitting up, then lying down again, then sitting up.) Then to himself: She's a smart woman. She can look after herself. She really doesn't need me. On the other hand, I am supposed to be in charge and look after her. I sure wish God gave me instructions on how to deal with this creature he made, this woman for me. She always tries to be so independent. Maybe if she got into some trouble, she would realize she needs me. I better go and find out what she's up to.

ACT TWO, SCENE 2

E in conversation with a greasy, sly super salesperson, S, with D and P looking on.

D: I can see why PS didn't want us to bring the whole army when he said now is the time to attack.

P: You've got to admit, he's got a way with women.

E: It sure looks good, so red and shiny and smooth.

S: You'll find it feels better than it looks.

E: But God warned us not to eat it or we would die.

S: Look, I happen to know God pretty well. That isn't really what he meant. The only thing that will die is your naivety. What will really happen is that your eyes, your insight

will open up and you will get to know both sides of the situation. Then you will be just like us gods; me, Lucifer, a guy called Joshua I hope you never meet, and old Jehovah himself. You'll get to know everything, and that's power like you won't believe. Why, with knowledge you could fly to the moon, or make some really beautiful clothes to set off that really cute figure of yours. You don't want to spend eternity just chatting with God in this garden. What a bore! This is your last chance. I've got to move on. Now or never!

E: I should ask my husband.

S: Adam only wants you to be his little helper. (Speaking in a sarcastic tone). And when you're really tired, he expects you to entertain him in bed! He is so paternalistic, boring, codependent. What you want is power and pleasure. I've got it all, and it's for you. With one small bite, you'll get gigabytes of understanding.

E: I guess one small bite can't hurt a girl. Here goes. (Crunch)

(Eve's eyes popping out of her head, she doesn't see Satan disappearing in a cloud of smoke, through which Adam walks toward her.)

E: Where the hell have you been when I needed you most?

(Adam, startled, begins to protest, and Eve, with Deceit at her shoulders, sweetly smiles)

E: I can see why God didn't want us to eat this apple. He wanted them all to himself. Here, try it! It is delicious, gives you a thrill right into your..... Now I am really looking forward to being in your arms, any time, anywhere, any way you want.

A: I don't know if I like the change. You're right, I should have been here. I can't leave you alone like this when it's partly my fault.

E: Come on, be a man, a real man. That's what you always wanted. And I'll be your woman, I promise. Adam, please don't leave me, I'll die.

A: What a bitter choice. I can't decide. There is no indication to do what is best. It's exactly 50-50. If no one ever has such even probabilities, they should be glad. I can't choose between loving and obeying the wonderful God who made me, who only asked that I get to know him so we can be friends, or joining the woman he gave me and to whom I am so bonded. She only asks I don't leave her, and because of my neglect she is in such trouble. God, where are you? Tell me what I should do! Oh my God, don't be silent.

(Silence broken by mutterings, murmurings, pleadings, and subtle desires)

A: What? What did you say? Only obey, is the only way.

It could be fun.

Know God and you'll know everything

Knowledge is power

Was God straight with you, Adam? Look, Eve didn't die.

Look at her. You can't imagine anything more lovely, and she's all yours.

Don't just stand there like some idiot with your mouth open, etc.

A: God, I am going crazy. Please, please tell me what to do.

J, talking to himself offstage: This is painful to watch. I've given these humans a free choice and they can't handle it. If I even suggest to Adam what he should do, it won't be free choice any longer. But he is my son, and I hate to see him agonize like this. If I look into the future, one little peep, I will know how he chooses, but I won't. He can't read my

mind, not yet. But I am determined not to influence the odds in any way. It's intriguing for God not to know. Oh, how I wish he will choose me.

Satan got that part right; I am somewhat stuck by my desire to have friends, but friends by their choice and not because I am so overpowering or loving. What S. doesn't know is that I have worked out the contingencies either way. So yes, I am God, and I always get what I desire. I will have friends who choose to be friends against all the odds.

Mi: Great God, you know I really love you and will always be loyal. Why isn't my friendship good enough?

J: Good old warrior Michael, your scars prove your loyalty and love. But would you choose me if you could hardly see me? Would you struggle to know me if your mind was confused and your body wracked with pain?

M: I honestly don't know if I would or not. But I get what you are driving at.

J: Shush, Michael. Let's listen to Adam. What a struggle he is having. I honour him for that. He is trying hard to decide between strongly competing loves and loyalties. Even though he has only an inkling into the vast repercussions of that choice. His choice will affect all of us.

G: Please explain, God. I can't see how his choice could possibly influence the one and only almighty creator, God of this vast universe.

J: If Adam disobeys, bows to Satan's choice, Adam and Eve and all their offspring will die, but so will I.

M & G in unison: What? That can't be! Our God who is, was and ever will be, die? You can't die! We don't understand.

J: It is the only way. Josh understands, and you will need to help him, many human years in the future.

G: Look God, Adam has taken the apple from Eve. Stop him, please stop him!

J: I could, but I won't. I have given him free choice, and I won't take it back, even if it will cost me the life of my son. Adam and Eve have the only free choice of any humans.

Their descendants throughout all of human time are now influenced by their choice and cannot have free choice.

(A moaning sound as Adam eats the whole apple, then spits out the bitter seed with disgust. He holds out his arms expectantly towards Eve, who looks angry and sad. She turns and walks away, muttering.)

E: The fool, now he has neither me nor God. And what have I done? Oh, foolish me.

Already I feel my flesh and mind aging.

ACT TWO SCENE 3

J *(weeping, and then angry)*: You think you've won, Satan. You twisted my words. You soiled my children. You've ruined this world, this whole universe. You have upset the balance. Now nothing is perfect and nothing is eternal, except what I have preserved in heaven, and.... No, I am not going to tell you about that. But you haven't won, Satan.

S *(slinks off and whispers to his cronies)*: I hate slinking about like this. I was the angel of light, now I am compelled to eat dust. In heaven, he let me think I could win. I was so stupid to think I could with a frontal attack. But I have learned something. I will twist his truth just enough. The closer to the truth, the easier these humans will go for it, and the better my purposes will be advanced. So, he wants to use me as a fool? I'll let him think

I'll go along. And I will, but I will be fostering my own designs all the time. I'll use these humans to overwhelm him with billions. I don't care how many die. But first I've got to recruit them. I will recruit those who sacrifice their children, because truly their spirits have become evil. And I will do my best to keep them from repenting. I'll recruit the embittered little souls who've been aborted, who were not protected by their fathers or sustained by their mothers.

Adam and Eve talking to each other.

A: I really don't understand what we've done, but it seems terrible. I suspect the consequences of our bad choice will affect all our descendants. We've agreed and eaten Satan's deceit, so they will always be deceitful. Men will be fearful and unprotecting like me.

E: And the women will become manipulative and deceitful. We may want to murder our babies to somehow gain power over men.

A: We will always prefer quick fixes to our problems rather than getting to know God quietly in the garden.

Together: And all knowledge, all the discoveries and useful things that men learn will be used for good and for evil. It will not be possible to have something that is only good.

Adam and Eve have lost their joy and openness, along with their innocence. Since they feel so polluted, they use deceit to try and hide from Jehovah, as if they could.

J: Adam, Eve, where are you? I have come to have tea and to chat.

A & E (*to each other*): We can't let God see us like this. He will know.

E: I feel so ashamed. I am wrinkled and stooped.

A: I can't think straight. I am much weaker than I was. Come on, let's hide.

E: We can't hide from God who sees all!

A: You're right. But how can we approach him, who is so perfect and pure?

E: Quick, duck behind this big tree.

J. Come on out, you two. Come and face your God.

A & E shyly emerge.

J (*gasps*): So this is dying! You two look filthy and sick. How did this happen? Of course, I know, but I want to hear your explanation. I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God. Do you understand?

(Only by becoming human could Christ have human choice, and therefore be a friend of God by choice.)

(It's only dark matter to eyes that cannot see, i.e. the full spectrum.)

J: Adam, why did you eat the apple?

A: She talked me into it, God.

J to E: How did this happen?

E: That slinky Satan talked me into it. Believe me, I didn't really want to do it. Why did you allow Satan to exist at all, God? He's ruined everything. You know we couldn't resist.

J: Oh no, you don't. You had free choice. Now you have chosen wrongly, so will so many millions of other humans. Their choices won't be nearly as free as yours.

J to S: So you slinky creature, you got into a thick skin, and it fits you to a T. So you chose to be sneaky; for the rest of your life you will crawl. You have injured my wonderful beings, these humans, and that injury will stay with them, but someday they will crush you. And in the women's minds there will always be a horror and dread of your snaky kind so that they will attack. You think you win, Satan? You better think again, Satan!

S (*not daring to answer God, speaks to D&P*): Stand up, you cowards. Jehovah always threatens when he is trapped.

J to A&E: Eve, do you know pain? The joy and excruciating agony of childbirth? But you can try. (To Adam) I gave you the responsibility over Eve, and you let her down. From now on you are going to have to slave to keep her fed and quiet. You will struggle to get enough from the ground, which will become rocky and weedy. You will toil until you die and return to the elemental matter from which I made you. Both of you chose the knowledge of good and evil and that knowledge is always death. You could have chosen just the knowledge of good, which was the knowledge of me.

Commentator: Then and ever since, humans have been faced with the same choice, the knowledge of good and evil, known better by abortionists than anybody. With the knowledge of good in communion with God, why do people watch television and stuff their minds with horror when they could be in God's leafy cathedral chatting with him in quietness and joy?

Abraham's Choice – Trust and Obey

ACT THREE SCENE 1

J: Abe, are you listening?

Abe: Is that you God? I was sitting here watching the stars, and thinking about that most unlikely promise you made.

J: I made quite a few to you, my friend. You probably mean the one about having as many descendants as there are stars. You think that's unlikely? Wait until you hear what I am asking of you now.

Abe: God, I don't like the sounds of this. Please, not another trial of my faith. I was just beginning to relax and settle down in this place.

J: Abe, I want you to sacrifice your son to me on Mount Horeb.

Silence, and then moaning with Abraham rocking back and forth.

Abe: Oh no, God, how could I? How could you ask this of me? I've told everyone of your promise to me. I've told neighbours and friends that you're utterly different from their gods of fertility and war that require child sacrifices up on the mountains.

J: Yes, I know. Now, do what I have requested and trust me.

Abe: Jehovah, my God, couldn't it be later? Say when he is 20, he might understand. He is only 12 and there is so much I want to teach him about you. We were going to go fishing tomorrow.

J: Hey, you old bargaining Jew! No, I want to feel what it is like to sacrifice one's only son. It is something I may have to face. When you do it, since we're so close, I could feel it through you.

Shocked silence.

Abe: I can't believe what I've just heard. You're going to make me murder my innocent only son just so you can have the gruesome thrill of knowing my feelings of horror as I

stab him, watch him writhe in agony then burn his body? Then I suppose you'll want me to eat his flesh? Jehovah, you're far worse than any of these evil so-called gods I live among. That's it. I've been faithful while you've dragged me away from my home and family, made me an outcast wandering around, surrounded by barbarians who constantly eye my beautiful Sara and want to murder me for her, only one son, no permanent home, having to drive away my sensuous concubine and my other son, and now this? It's not worth it!

J: Don't say it, Abe. I want, in fact I need your friendship. Get as mad as you need to be, but don't turn your back on me. If you choose to turn away, I will accept your choice and leave you alone. Then you will know what hell is.

Abe: If this is the way you treat your friends, it's small wonder you have so few of them. So I get to choose between the hell of losing you or the hell of killing my son. It's a devilish choice. Oh God, how can I choose? Which is worse? There is no way of knowing! If only I could see the future. I know the pain of losing my son Ishmael, and I never want to go through that again. But losing my God? Trying to live without my light and life? Impossible. Please, Jehovah, take this fearful drink of impossible dilemmas from me.

J: Abe, what you give to me you will never lose. If you give your sons to me, they will be yours forever. If you give me yourself, you will always have both me and yourself.

Abe: But isn't that what those who sacrifice to Ishtar and Moloch also believe?

J: The big difference, Abe, is those poor benighted people have a piece of the right idea, but because they do not know me, they can't see that Satan, the liar, the deceiver,

has twisted it. When they believe his distortion of truth, they are dehumanized and enslaved by fear and guilt.

Abe: God, at least explain what this will accomplish.

J: For one thing, I'm trying to fully understand how killing one's children so robs people of their humanity they can't see any way back to light and truth, and so become progressively evil in body and mind and spirit. They become so evil they begin encouraging others to do the same extreme evil. It is small wonder Satan laughs every time an innocent child screams in terror and dies in agony and confusion. The child's unuttered cry, "Why, how can my own parents do this to me?!" is never heard and never answered.

Abe: Yes, I can see that, but I thought you could read everyone's thoughts. So why do you also need to know my pain and my little son's terror?

J: They have shut me out, and I can't really know their feelings. But I'll be in you, Abe, and truly know the acuteness of a father's grief. And there's another reason, but I don't think you will understand.

Abe: What is it?

J: I want to be sure you choose to be my friend and not just because I am so good to you. So I'll pretend to be really bad and see if you are really loyal and still choose me.

Abe: I suppose S accused me of being yours because you so blessed my herds, and I am now really wealthy. If that's the case, I'll gladly surrender my money and my reputation. You can even take my health and I would choose you. But not my son Isaac, please Lord, no. I beg you.

J: No, Abe, dear old Job already proved that. No, it's much deeper. You don't quite get it. Also I need to know what it's like in case my son and I have to go that route sometime, many of your years later.

Abe: You're right, God. I can't understand what you are talking about. But...(he's quiet for a moment). It does ring true. Sara!

Sara: Abraham, Abraham, I told you not to go out in the cold night air without your warm wool coat. You'll catch a cold, you silly old duffer! I heard you talking to someone, who was it?

Abe: Ayayai, stop scolding, woman. You sound like an Arab fishwife!

Sara: What an insult! If I didn't love you so much I'd slap you with a wet bagel. What am I going to tell my friends in the coffee klatch? "Old Abe has lost it, he's talking to the stars?" Come on, Abe, what and who is it?

Abe (turning away from Sara): Now God, I'm in a real fix. What am I going to tell her? She could never believe me. She'll desert me, and she'll turn against you too. I am all alone. Jehovah, I can't stand this.

Sara: I heard part of that, Abraham. So you and your God have a secret I can't know! You don't love me. Tell me the secret, Abe, or no more back rubs!

Abe: Sara, God told me to kill our son.

Shrieking, moaning and wailing.

Abe (shouting): Be quiet, woman, be quiet! You'll wake him up! It will be bad enough when the time comes. Give him a bit of peace, woman!

ACT THREE SCENE 2

Isaac, Abraham and two robust servants walking through rocky country, heading for Mount Moriah.

Isaac: Dad, where are we going?

Abe: We're headed for that mountain to make a very special sacrifice to the Lord.

Isaac: It's been fun, this camping trip. Thank you for all you've taught me about the Lord and the stars. We have so much to be thankful for. At the sacrifice, I want to praise the Lord for giving me such a good old dad.

Abe: Why, thank you, my son. You're a good lad. I am going to thank the Lord for you, Isaac, my son of promise.

Isaac: What does that mean, dad? You've said it before.

Abe: It means that God promised me a son. You, my boy. A son who would be the start of a dynasty that will last forever. Can you believe that? Our children's children's children will include princes and mighty kings. I caught a glimpse of eternity while we sat at the campfire last night. I think I saw one mighty king who will reign over the entire world, and who will never die.

Isaac: Wow! And all because of you and because of me. Dad, if you'd died before I was born, there would be no me. If I die before I have children, there will be no dynasty, or everlasting king. Oh man, this is good to know. Now I can be sure that God will care for me, and always keep me safe.

A minute or two of silence. Abraham walking slower, won't look at Isaac who is darting among the boulders and playing tag with his shadow, laughing joyfully.

Abe: You heard him, God. He can't die now. It will be the end of all our dreams. Yes, and you would break your promise. You can't do this, God. I won't do this terrible thing, I won't, I....

Abraham's increasingly loud tirade is interrupted by a yelp from Isaac.

Abe: My son, are you all right? Where are you?

Servant, returning from behind a very large boulder supporting Isaac as he limps.

Abe: Oh, my lovely son, my precious boy! Are you all right?

Isaac: I'm okay, Dad. I was being careless. It's only a sprained ankle, but I could have broken a leg when I fell. I caught a handhold in a crevice in the rock. It's funny coz I didn't see it when I was climbing up.

Abe: The Lord, the rock provided the handhold to save you. Very interesting. I think I begin to see it. If we surrender our children to God they are safe for all times. If we hold them tight they are unprotected and could get hurt, and die. Oh, forgive me, God for doubting. (Turning to the servants) You two, wait here for us. (Then to Isaac) Come on, son, it isn't far now.

They continue, with Isaac carrying a board and Abraham carrying a knife and a stick glowing with fire.

Isaac: Dad? Usually when you and I sacrifice to Jehovah, you have a lamb. We have everything but the lamb.

Abe: Relax, son. God will provide. I believe he will provide somehow. He always has. He has blessed me with everything I ever need. While the heathen around us sacrifice their children to invoke the blessing of their gods, I have trusted Jehovah who is kind because he wants to be kind. I could never have earned his precious gifts. I suspect

that through all human history it will be the same. There will be heathen who will try to get ahead by killing their children. There will be sons of God who will spare and protect all their children against the greatest of odds because they trust in God to provide.'

Isaac: I don't quite get it, dad, but I trust you. I know you would never sacrifice me.

Abraham groans.

Abe: No, my son. I mean, yes, you're right. (*Abraham weeping*)

Isaac is frightened, dismayed. They arrive, build a rough stone altar, and lay out the wood. Abraham suddenly grabs Isaac from behind and they struggle while Abraham ties his arms and legs.

Isaac (in distress): No dad, you lied. I suspected what you were up to. All this pious talk about being better than the heathen. At least they are honest, and their little children never trust their fathers but obey out of terror. I trusted and obeyed you, my father, just like you taught me. You said that's what God wanted from us, to trust and obey. And now this is what I get.

Abraham, having lain Isaac on the wood, still squirming about, raises the knife. With a look of sheer horror, Isaac shouts, so that the servants can hear; "Listen world! Don't trust God! Don't trust your fathers! They won't protect you!"

Jehovah's thunderous voice: Don't do it, Abraham! Now I know you really trust me. You were prepared to sacrifice your only son.

Abraham, weeping, unties Isaac then gradually lifts his head up and blinks, looking at Isaac. He doesn't respond but sits in silence and shock. Abraham goes off stage and returns with a ram which doesn't struggle as it is sacrificed.

ACT THREE SCENE 3

The little group is walking back, with Abraham trying to explain to Isaac just what happened.

Abe: I am sorry, my son, for scaring you like that. I knew, at least sort of, that God would somehow provide himself a sacrifice, so it wouldn't have to be you.

Isaac: I could never trust you.

Abe: But I, I didn't kill you! You...

Isaac: No, but the intent was there, it was just the same. Kids can't count on their fathers to protect them when they are young and trusting like me. Who can they trust? If they can't trust, there will be chaos, everyone pleasing only themselves.

Abe: Isaac, you've spoken more true words than you realize. It was God's way of testing me, testing us. Don't fail the test, my son.

Isaac: If that was some kind of examination, I think it was a cruel joke.

Abe: I'm with you there, son. All my examinations were cruel. Multiple choice with no way to know what is the right answer, and no way to study beforehand.

Isaac: Dad, I still don't get it. What did God get out of this? What bizarre kick does he get out of terrifying people?

Abe: I'm not sure why, but I think it's because he wants friends.

Isaac: If this is how he treats his friends, it's small wonder he has so few.

Abe: exactly what I thought a while back. But I'm beginning to see that we've got to choose. God wants our friendship because we choose him and get to know him better. I am also finding that the better I get to know him the harder the exams become.

Isaac: Dad, you talk in riddles.

Abe: Son, I am just trying to explain...

A thunderous voice interrupts.

J: Abraham, I'll teach Isaac just like I taught you. Just give me some time.

Abe: Good old Jehovah, don't put me through anything like that again. It almost killed me.

J: You can relax, Abraham my friend. I hope you and all your descendants now realize two things. One, I will never ask them to do anything I am not, as a human, prepared to do myself. Two, trust and obey me, and I will never let you down. I swear, so help me God.

Isaac (walking off by himself): I don't get it. I don't think I ever will.

ACT THREE SCENE 4

Sara: Yoo-hoo! There you are. How are my men? Did you have a good time? Did you catch any fish?

Isaac (subdued): Hi, mom.

Sara: What's up with you two? You look like you've been fighting.

Abe: Sara, there are no fish where we went. You're thinking about Ur, where we lived when we were kids.

Isaac: Yeah, mom, no fish in the wilderness. Just examinations. I go with dad hoping for a nice camping trip, and I get this tough examination.

Abe: That exam was tough for me too.

Sara: What are you two talking about?

Abe: Sara, do you love me?

Sara: Do I love you? For 89 years I've washed your clothes, made your bagels and roasted your lamb. If that isn't love, what would you call it?

Abe: Sara, do you love me?

Sara: There's trouble in the town, the Philistines are preparing to invade, ten servants ran away, a camel died in birth, and you want to know if I love you?

Abe: You've been a good wife, cared for me all my life.

But I really want to know if you feel my kind of glow.

Do you love me?

Sara: You silly old Jew, if only you knew.

When you are far away, I can hardly pray. Yes, I love you.

Together: I love you (*as Abraham leads Sara off to their tent*)

Isaac: They are too old for this kind of thing, but to watch them kissing makes my heart sing.

ACT THREE SCENE 5

Abraham sitting under the stars beside a campfire.

Abe: Now what, God?

J: I made you stop, Abraham. It is a lesson for all time. Never must any child or disciple of mine kill their child. What the heather do is inspired by Satan. I never had such a thought and never will. Humans who kill their own innocent children disgust me. There is not a single justification for doing that. Those who kill the innocent will surely die.

Abe: But look at my neighbours. They have done it to please or appease their gods. Their herds grow. They live a normal lifestyle.

J: Look closer, Abraham. They are the walking dead. They have so alienated themselves from me, their source of life, all their humanity is sucked out of them. Rarely do they come back to me and find me. Though I always forgive everyone for everything when they repent, those who murder their children are scarred for life.

Abe: Great Jehovah, I pledge for me and my descendants, we will never kill our children.

J: May it be so, but be careful, Abraham.

God leaves in a flash of brilliant light.

Moses

ACT FOUR SCENE 1

Moses out in the desert with a few sheep.

J: Moses, Moses!, He's not listening again. He's so preoccupied with his troubles.

Maybe this will get his attention!

Bush bursts into a flame of light at the side of the stage.

J: Moses, take off those sandals, you're standing on holy ground. Because although you can't see me, I am standing here and talking to you. Wherever I am is holy. God and evil cannot coexist or cohabit. Now listen carefully. I've got a special job for you.

Mo: Me, Lord? Why me?

J: I want you to go back to Egypt and persuade Pharaoh to let my people go.

Mo: Me, persuade Pharaoh? First, I can't speak well, let alone persuade a mighty king.

I stutter and stumble, my wife says I mumble. Two, there's a price on my head. They haven't forgotten that I killed one of Pharaoh's favourite overseers.

J: Don't worry Moses, I'll give you the words.

Mo: I take it that I have some choice in this matter. So after careful thought, I prefer to stay here, where I can be safe and sane.

J: No, Moses, I selected you for this important job very long ago. I put it into your parents' mind to save you by putting you in a basket that floated down to the Pharaoh's daughter, where she was having a bath. I put it into her mind to pick you up, claim you as her own and give you good training.

Mo: Well God, if you can get people to do whatever you put in their mind, why don't you speak to Pharaoh?

J (with a big rumble): No, Moses, I give people jobs. They have a choice; they can do it or run away. I give them jobs so they will get to know me, and so that they will become more mature. I have in mind that you and I will become good friends.

Mo: All right, God, I will do it. I so choose. But please, I need help.

J: I'll get your big brother to speak for you. He seems to have a lot to say nowadays.

Mo: Thank you, God. But whom should I tell your people sent me?

J: You know, Moses, the only thing they will remember through all these hundreds of years is that I am called I AM.

Mo: I AM? Sounds a bit strange to me. When Pharaoh gets hold of me, I will be I am not. Besides, God, I am not sure many of your people like me. I was rescued, given a privileged upbringing, and then ran away and lived with lots of freedom while they were enslaved and breaking their backs every day.

J: Take it easy, Moses. I know you will never run away again. Watch Pharaoh well. he's learned lots of sneaky tricks from Satan. He'll probably keep changing his mind because he has some building projects in mind and appreciates how hard you Jews work.

Aaron walks onto the scene.

Aar: Hello little brother, it's very good to see you.

Mo (looking very grave): Well, Aaron, we have an impossibly difficult task, you and I. We must persuade Pharaoh to let all the Israelites leave so they can go to the Promised Land.

Aar: Cheer up, Moses. If God told you to do this, we can certainly get it done. I believe he won't leave us. And look, I didn't know where you were but God guide straight to where you are. That's a miracle, as far as I'm concerned. Say goodbye to your father-in-law, get your family and let's be on the way.

ACT FOUR, SCENE 2

Mo (chatting with Joshua): So, my young friend, we're almost there. The Lord told me because I made such a bad mistake I won't be allowed into the Promised Land. Instead of speaking to the rock I struck the rock, I won't be allowed in the Promised Land.

Joshua: But, my dear old mentor and friend, you were really pushed. The people were kept moaning and grumbling. They seemed not to notice you were just as thirsty as anyone. I am not surprised you lost your patience.

Mo: Yes, you're right. However, you've got to remember that I have known the Lord face to face. I talked to Him just as a man talks with his friend. If anybody should have had

patience, it was me. Besides, the rock is God. I struck the rock from whom comes the living water. I didn't know it then, but I see it now.

Joshua: I am sorry. You should have had a quiet retirement, an opportunity to have your own little farm, grape vines and a good wine for dinner.

MO: Thanks, Joshua. I have known good wine. In Egypt and even in Midian, I've had some of the best. However in my experience the Lord is far more precious than the sweetest of farms and the most delectable vine. I don't like it but it seems I won't be crossing Jordan with you. There is one thing I must do before we get there. I have got to get these people to make up their minds.

Joshua: Yes, they have been following you more or less faithfully for a long time, and they trust you. But they've got to make up their own minds and decide to follow the Lord.

Mo: I'm going to review their history so they will remember all the ways the Lord has kept and blessed them. Then I will put the simple but essential question to them; who will they serve and worship. They are terrible fence sitters. Now they must stop vacillating. I will put the question and they must choose.

Act IV, scene 3. (Moses standing before the whole congregation of Israel,

Now you have heard all your history; how the Lord has blessed you, defeated your enemies, and kept you all healthy. Now, if you carefully obey all the commands I am giving you today, and if you love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul, and if you worship him, then he will send the rains in their proper seasons so you can have harvests, crops of grain, grapes for wine and olives for oil. He will give you lush pastureland for your cattle to graze in, and you yourselves will have plenty to eat. Be

careful to obey all the commands I give you. Show love to the Lord your God by walking in His ways and clinging to Him. Then the Lord will drive out all the nations in your land, though they are much greater and stronger than you. Today I am giving you a choice between a blessing and a curse. You will be blessed if you obey the commands of the Lord your God that I am giving you today. You will receive a curse if you reject the commands of the Lord your God and turn from his ways by worshipping foreign gods. If any among you devote your children as a burnt offering to Molech, you must be stoned to death by the people of the whole community. God says, "I will turn against you and cut you off from your community because you have defiled my sanctuary and profaned my holy name by sacrificing your children to Molech.

Moses pauses to look at the crowd, and try to assess the reaction. He is drinking water from a wineskin. There is loud mutterings from some of the people.

An Israelite: Poor old Mo. He's beginning to lose it. Why put it so black and white.

Another Israelite: Yeah there are many shades of grey. He wants us to think it God's way or the highway. It's too simplistic. I opt for a bit of Jehovah and a bit of Molech.

Cover my bases. It can't hurt.

Joshua, standing by, speak hears the comment but tries to keep it from Moses.

Joshua: That's the way to speak it, Moses. They must obey. It's not a difficult choice, surely, after all the ways in which the Lord has blessed them and they have seen what happens when they go their own way.

Mo: Humans have always had to make choices, and they have never been easy. But I agree with you, after all the miracles they've seen, this should be an easy one. Very

simply put; if they choose the Lord, they will be blessed with everything anyone could need. If they choose anything else, they are cursed.

Joshua: Thank you for forcing the issue, Moses. I will probably have to remind them to keep making the right choice. Making it once isn't good enough. They will have to keep choosing life.'

Moses turns back to the congregation.

Mo: "This command I am giving you today is not too difficult for you to understand or perform. Now listen, today I am giving you a choice between prosperity and disaster, between life and death. I have commanded you today to love the Lord your God and keep his commands, laws and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will become a great nation, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are about to enter and occupy. Today I am giving you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life that you and your descendants might live. Choose to love the Lord your God, and to obey him, and commit yourself to him, for he is your life. Then you will live long in the land the Lord swore to give to your ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Most of the people shout repeatedly: We choose the Lord. We choose life.

But a few quietly walk away thru the crowd.

Joshua: Well, I guess the best evidence that God gives us a choice is that some will choose the other way, even when it seems so stupid.

Then Moses calls Joshua to stand on a higher level with him. As all Israel watches him, he says to Joshua:

Be strong and courageous, Joshua, for you will lead these people into the land the Lord swore to give to their ancestors. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord is the one who goes before you.

ACT FIVE, SCENE 1

J: Jeremiah, I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my spokesman to the world.

Jer: Oh, sovereign Lord, I can't speak for you! I am far too young.

J: Don't say that! You must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and take care of you. I, the Lord have spoken.

A hand reaches out and touches Jeremiah's mouth. Then the voice of Jehovah:

J: See I have put my words in your mouth. Today I have appointed you to stand up against nations and kingdoms. Now, get up and get dressed. Go out and tell them whatever I tell you to say. Do not be afraid of them, or I will make you look foolish in front of them. See, today I have made you immune to their attacks.

ACT FIVE, SCENE 2

Jeremiah standing in front of a group of Israelites, who are shifting about on their feet and don't look terribly interested.

Jer: Oh my people listen to the words of the Lord. Have I been like a desert to Israel? Have I been to them a land of darkness? Why then do the people say, "At last we are free from God. We won't have anything to do with him any more. Listen you people.

Your clothing is stained with the blood of the innocent and the poor. Now I will punish you severely, because you claim you have not sinned. Your own actions have brought this upon you. This punishment is a bitter dose of your own medicine. It has pierced you to the heart. This is what the Lord says, Oh Israel my faithless people, come home to me again, for I am merciful. I will not be angry with you forever. Only acknowledge your guilt.

Jeremiah, turning slightly to a different segment of the people looking at him:

Now listen you prophets and priests, you offer superficial treatment to my people's mortal wound. You give assurances of peace when all is war.

Baruch Jer's assistant: Jeremiah, don't you think that's going too far?

Jer, (shouting): The Lord says this: Stop right where you are. Look for the old godly ways and walk in them. Travel this path and you will find rest for your souls. But you reply, "No, that's not the road we want." I set watchmen over you who said, "Listen to the sound of the trumpet." But you replied, "No, we won't pay attention."

There is a grumbling and murmur in the crowd.

Baruch: standing shoulder to shoulder with Jer now.

Bar: Jeremiah, they're not listening!

Jer to Bar: I've got to try again. "The lord says I will be merciful only if you stop your wicked thoughts and deeds, and are fair to others, and if you stop exploiting foreigners, orphans and widows, and if you stop murdering, and if you stop worshipping idols.

Bar to Jer: I want to support you, my friend, but the things you are saying are not at all popular. They could get us both killed.

Jer: Yes, I know. But I don't have an option. The Lord told me to say all these things. Why won't they repent? Can't they see they are heading for ruin?

Voice of Jehovah: the people of Judah have sinned before my very eyes. They have built pagan shrines of Tophet in the valley of the Sons of Hinom where they sacrifice their little sons and daughters in the fire. I have never commanded such a horrible deed. It never even crossed my mind to command such a thing. Soon the valley's name will be changed, and it will be called the valley of slaughter. They will bury so many of the bodies in Tophet there won't even be room for all the graves.

Bar to Jer: Why can't they remember the days of King Josiah, who destroyed the altar of Tophet, so they could never again use it to sacrifice a son or daughter in the fire?

Jer: Yes, Josiah was the best of kings. He turned to the Lord with all his heart and soul, obeying all the laws of Moses, and there was never a king like him before or since. But do you remember what the Lord said about Manasseh, his son? He filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord would not forgive this.

Bar: Yes I remember. Do you remember what David wrote in Psalm; all the blessings of those who are kind to the poor and the weak? Nobody is more weak or poor than a baby. That the Lord would protect them and keep them alive, and give them prosperity and rescue them from their enemies, and nurse them when they are sick, and ease their pain and discomfort? Surely, people who protect children have seen the blessing of the Lord.

Jer: Baruch, the Lord said that he would not forgive those who kill innocent children. To not forgive, doesn't sound like the Lord you and I know. But He said it, and I am sure it is true. He certainly will forgive everyone who repents, no exception but they will

unquestionably feel the consequence in their own person. No one can profit at the expense of another, ever.

Bar: What also seems out of place is when Isaiah speaking for the Lord said that he will punish the innocent with the guilty.

ACT FIVE SCENE 3

Sounds of war, shouting, cursing, smashing. Jeremiah speaking to King Zedekiah.

Jer: Your highness, you cannot win. You broke the covenant we made with Nebuchadnezzar, and now he has come back with a vengeance. But it is the Lord who fights against you.

Some men standing around shout at Jeremiah: Traitor! He is undermining the will of the people and the courage of the army!

Jer (shouting back: Listen to what the Lord says! I have had to punish you because your sins are many, and your guilt is great. I must discipline you. I cannot let you go unpunished.

Jer turns as he is being ushered out.

Jer: Listen, Zedekiah! This palace and the temple will be flattened. People will be killed and made captive. But there will come a time, the Lord says, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. The covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors. I will put my laws in their minds, I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people. But the sins of Israel and Judah have stirred up my anger. My people have turned their backs on me and refuse to

return. They sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molech. What an incredible evil causing Judah to sin so greatly.

ACT SIX SCENE 1

Jesus and his disciples walking up a hill, glancing behind them.

John: Look, Jesus, with the sunlight at this angle, doesn't the temple look wonderful?

Do you know that it took 40 years to build this?

Peter: Yes, on the backs of Hebrew slaves.

Jesus: Do you see all those buildings? I can assure you they will be completely demolished, not one stone left upon another. There are terrible, terrible times coming. I cannot tell you exactly when, because I do not know myself. But you should be able to figure it out. You see the fig tree, it begins to bud and you say, "Summer is near." So use your head. You know the Lord and his mind. You know history. You can predict within at least a few years when the Lord is coming back. There will be an attack on Jerusalem that will destroy all this. But there will be an even greater time of calamity. There will be a time of greater horror than anything the world has ever seen, or ever will see again. In fact, unless that time of calamity is shortened, the entire human race will be destroyed. But it will be shortened for the sake of God's chosen ones. When you see the events I've described beginning to happen, you can know God's return is very near; right at the door.

ACT SIX SCENE 2

Jesus kneeling in the Garden of Gethsemane, the forms of four very sound asleep disciples not too far away.

Jesus: Dear God my father, this is too awful. Don't let this happen to me. There has to be some other way. I've gotten to know these humans well enough to know what it's like to live in their sinful world, and now you want me to dive into that cesspool, to know every last one of their sins, to eat, breathe and drink it's filth, and to die with all of that in me. Dear God, you have made me a human, with a human choice. You didn't even tell me when you were coming back, just in case Satan was able to tempt me into giving that secret away. I know that secret is the ultimate secret about your invasion. Satan knows everything but that one. Therefore he has to be constantly on guard, and that throws off his tactics with the humans.

Jesus gets up, gives Peter a shake.

Jesus: Peter, couldn't you stay awake and watch with me, even for one hour? Oh well, at least keep alert and pray for you own sake, otherwise temptation will overcome you. For though your spirit is willing enough, your body is weak.

Jesus returns to where he was, praying to God.

Jesus: Oh God, you said you would never abandon me, but I feel so utterly lonely. Even my truest disciples can't pray with me. Must I really do this? Is there no other way?

A period of silence, then Jesus says,

If there is no other way, dear God my father, your will be done. I will do it. Just don't leave me.

He gets to his feet, gently nudges his disciples awake, when there is a clamor offstage.

Jesus and his disciples walk out.

ACT SIX SCENE 3

A shadow of Jesus on the cross. This is done by having a sheet illuminated from behind. The foreground is filled with soldiers and priests and women, and in the distance, a few disciples. Jesus is groaning, the women are weeping.

Jesus (shouting): My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

In the foreground, two disciples talking:

He's not calling for Elijah! He is terrified! It must be hell, to be filled with sin and forsaken by God.

Other disciple: Yes, Jesus knows what hell is like.

A: Did God actually forsake him? Jesus told us God would not do that, and that we could always count on God.

T: Yes, it's really very disturbing. It must have been how Isaac felt when Abraham was about to put a knife through him. To be a sacrifice, abandoned by your own father, a child, killed by your father to serve some greater purpose. It doesn't make sense.

A: Oh God, this is too hard to understand. But maybe if Jesus was dying for us and if God made Him alive again, it does make sense. We have a lot of thinking to do, Thomas.

The two of them walk away, hanging their heads.

Jesus (in the background, in a desperate shout): It is finished! Into your hand I commit my spirit, oh my God.

The two disciples, hearing this, look back.

A: I don't think God abandoned him after all.

T: I guess it felt that way, which is reality for Jesus. He went to hell and back.

ACT SEVEN, SCENE 1

Father (Joe) and mother with a big tummy (Jane) and preborn baby (Christopher).

Jane to Joe: Joe, I've got bad news.

Joe: You didn't do too well in that last exam in Sociology?

Jane: No, the exam went fine. I got an A+. The bad news is I am pregnant.

Joe (shocked, and then smiling): Jane, that's not bad news. That's wonderful news! I always wanted a little son.

Jane: What are you talking about? I've got to finish my degree! I hope to go on to graduate school, and who knows where. My marks are good enough.

Joe: Jane, we can still do it. I'll drop out of school and support you. I'll even stay home and look after the baby. But I do want this baby.

Jane: No, Joe, it's not a baby. It's a blob of cells. That's what they taught us in high school – I can remember. The nurse said, "If you girls ever get pregnant, don't worry about having an abortion – it's just a blob of cells. You can have babies later. But don't let it interfere with your career." It's what my folks believe too.

Joe: We certainly don't believe that way in our family. I was brought up to believe that all human life is precious, even babies yet to be born.

Jane: Come on, Joe, be logical; be scientific. It's not a baby until it's born. It can't think or see or smell or feel.

Joe: No, Jane, in our physiology class, the prof said it quite clear, the baby is a person. A complete human, long before they are born. He even told us a story about a baby listening to his mother playing a cello. Later when he was a conductor, he knew all those lines by heart without having read the score.

Jane: Well, your prof is one of those rare Christians, but he hasn't got his facts straight. Look, Joe, I'm a Christian too. There's nothing in the bible that says we shouldn't do what is best for ourselves so we can serve the Lord better. Remember, love your neighbor as yourself. I'm loving myself by putting my career first.

Joe: I can't believe I am hearing you say this. You can't benefit at the expense of the baby. If it isn't good for your neighbor of any size or shape Jane, it can't be good for you. I've loved you so much, we had such great plans to serve the Lord together, and you want to kill this baby? That's murder! God will not tolerate killing innocent babies. It says so in the bible. Don't you recall studying in our bible school, how after the flood God said to Noah, "for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God's image" I remember because our prof put that together with the verse in Kings 2, "He had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the Lord would not forgive this" The terrible tragedy is that now the whole world is filled with the innocent blood of aborted babies. Quite frankly I don't think the Lord will forgive us.

Jane: Oh Joe you always were overly dramatic. Besides that was the old testament. Jesus came to show us the new way of loving. And that was about persons Joe. The fetus isn't a person yet.

Joe: Prove it Jane. You want the baby killed. I hope you can prove it isn't a person. Small though it is, it looks human to me. Besides when God creates us it is at

conception and that is when He puts a undying spirit in us. And that spirit may be very mature....

Jane interrupts: Joe, that's Old Testament stuff! These are modern times. We are free of the law. We don't have to abide by all that!

Joe: The bible is one continuous book from beginning to end. God does not change. He says He will not forgive those who kill their babies.

Jane: Look, Joe, let's stop this argument. I am going down to the clinic tomorrow. I am going to get an abortion.

Joe: Please Jane, please don't do that. Please keep our baby.

Jane: Joe, you know very well that you don't have a choice in this matter. The courts make it very clear that it's a woman's decision. After all, it is my body.

Joe: So now women have the power of life and death and men are forced to sit and watch. I'm so angry I could.....

Jane: Sure you bully. Hit me, right there. I dare you. You'll spend the rest of your college days sitting in the local lock up.

Joe: You not only make me furious but you make me feel so impotent.

Jane: Now that's a good thing. If you were impotent, I wouldn't be pregnant. Yeah its time we women had some power. I'm beginning to believe that sociology prof. After many centuries of repression we women are coming into our own. She thinks women should have an abortion just to show you men we have power and you can't stop us. Wimen need to feel their power over life and death to know what being a woman is really like. I'm beginning to believe her. Up with the goddess Lilith. There is lots of evidence she came before whimp Adam and that poor old downtrodden Eve.

Joe: I wish you had never signed up for the class. That prof who says he admires women so much, actually hates them and you can't see it. He's a cunning snake in the grass.

Jane: Poor little boy, you're easily threatened. He's a lot smarter than you are, Joey.

Joe: I give up. I'm out of here. Starts to leave.

Jane furious: Just like all you men. Its fine when you want to make love, you're all love and loyalty. As soon as there is a crisis, "I'm out of here" You are just like Adam.

Where was he when Eve needed him? You smart ass, answer that one.

Joe sensing he has a little leverage: You want to be so smart and independent. So you've got it. You won't like it.

Jane: Oh no Joey boy. If I decide to have this baby and if necessary, I'll force DNA testing and in a paternity suit, I'll take you for all you've got and may have. Either way its my choice and you've got no say in the matter. Now I'm beginning to enjoy the power of womin. And I must say I enjoy watching you squirm.

Joe: You can try you bitch, but you'll have to find me. I won't be in this country.

Jane: So tell me where you're going little boy.

Joe: You will never know. And even if they find me, you won't be able to squeeze me. I've learned quite a bit myself, in the palliative care class. A little bit of euthanasia will be better than being a slave to womin all my life.

Jane: Now I know you're nuts. I'm glad we got this straight. I don't know why I was ever attracted to you.

Jane begins to walk out. Joe clings to her. "Don't do it Jane. Please, please don't kill our child.

Jane: Let me go you brute. This is assault. I can have you put in jail.

Joe clings a little bit more. She slaps him. He lets go, sinks to sitting on the floor and puts his head in his hands while she walks off with her head held high.

Joe: yelling after her. Okay, okay, I'll pay for it.

Jane off stage: Its 450. Put a check in the mail and don't ever come near me again.

SCENE 2

D: Way to go big guy.

P: Yeah, the snake strikes again.

D: From Christian to child killers in 6 easy stages.

S: Now you're beginning to get it. God wants friends. Humans want babies. To have babies they want sex. A slick little twist and humans want sex more than babies and will kill to get it. Another little twist and humans feel so guilty they can't get back to God. And the big pay off. I get to recruit another embittered little soul.

P: You are truly remarkable PS. I didn't think it could be done. Outsmarting the great J. Ominous thunder.

S: Don't let him scare you guys. I get the feeling we are heading for the big showdown. How is the army shaping up?

D: There are millions of angry embittered people who we could recruit. They are so mad at their helpless fathers and at God for not protecting their siblings who were aborted. They have no faith in the faith of their fathers. They want something they consider more tangible.....

P: Like magic and the occult and witches, black and white. So far we have been able to keep them from seeing you are behind it. We also keep them from seeing the real

horrors of realizing what it is like to be wanted with lots of entertainment; the more bizarre and cruel the more they seem to like it.

P: Your friend Margaret really got them confused with that line, every child a wanted child.

S: Joshua tried to get them to believe every child should be welcomed. But with one of my better twists, I got them to believe wanted was much better. It sounded much more ethical.

D: At least to everyone who already had in your pocket.

P: No. Believe it or not, I got quite a few of those who call themselves Christians because they never bothered to think it through. That was another one of my little triumphs. I got them watching their TV so much they lost all capacity to reason. I neatly arranged with some of my followers to make sure TV could never show the truth. They like their TV so much they soon lost their desire to know the truth and then I had them.

ACT SEVEN SCENE 3

At a house party, Jane is getting pretty drunk. Joe is nowhere to be seen, but she has another boyfriend, Fred.

Fred: Jane, that's enough. What's happened to you? Since Joe dumped you, I've seen you fall apart.

Jane: No, Fred, it wasn't Joe. It was something else.

Fred: What was it? Come on, you can tell me.

Jane: No, I can't tell you what happened, but I can tell you I feel awful. I am going home.

Fred: Let me drive you, you can't even walk straight.

Jane: Yeah, I know, Fred. Then we'll drop un at your place. No, Fred, I am not in the mood. I don't think I'll ever be in the mood. I don't know how God can forgive me.

You've been pretty decent to me Fred. Tell me, how did this happen.

Fred: What happen?

Jane: Abortion Fred. Two godly, idealistic young people end up killing their kid. Why?

Fred: I donno. Same thing happened to me and my girl friend. But I never expected it of you. You're so sweet and innocent. It's what attracted me. At last an innocent woman. Not some power hungry bitch.

Jane: No. Under the make up you'll see I'm not innocent and I never will be ever again.

I sense I've lost something that will affect me the rest of my life.

Fred: I think you and I could make a good pair. Pause What is it like to be pregnant.

I've always wondered. I watched my mum. She was pregnant when I was 12. Dad left. He said if she was going to keep, he was long gone. I guess to get him back she... and then she wasn't pregnant. I've hated them both ever since although they think I'm their bright dutiful boy. They killed my little brother and I'll never trust them again. And I'll get even. Just wait till they are old. I'll tell their palliative care doc, they have no quality of life any more. They left me with the decision. I decide they should not longer have unusual means of life support. So no more food and water, or its time to turn off the machine. They got a machine to kill my little bro so I'll get the machine to end them. They so no intrinsic value in that tiny boy I always wanted to be my playmate, so I see

no intrinsic value to them. Besides which I wouldn't want to see them suffer, at least not too much.

Jane: Fred you scare me.

Fred: Sorry but I do want to know what its like to be pregnant.

Jane: Actually when I was pregnant I felt pretty good. It wasn't just good health either. I felt some kind of existential purpose. Now I feel the royal pits. I've known the best, now I feel the worst. I've experienced the knowledge of good and evil. Its what Eve and Adam chose and now we get to know evil and good whether we like it or not.

Fred: You know my dad is a doctor. He did some abortions. I went to his place the other night when his girl friend was away. He was really pissed. He said the same thing. Now he really knows good and evil. When I asked what he meant, he said as a doctor nothing feels as good as delivering a baby and nothing worse than killing one. He surely has the knowledge of good and evil.

Jane: Adam and Eve, look what you have done to us. Your stupid choice has ruined us all.

Fred: Yeah, what they did was really dumb and makes me so mad. However to be honest, I know I would have made the same choice as they did. I just did.

Jane: You know Fred, this would never have happened if Joe had offered to marry me.

ACT SEVEN, SCENE 4

Joe, sitting in his room. His father George walks in, finds him loading a gun.

George: No, Joe, no, it can't be that bad! I know you've been really down but don't do that!

Joe looks up, puts the gun behind him. George makes a desperate lunge, the gun goes off, and the father is left lying on the floor with Joe standing over him. Joe's mother Martha rushes in.

Martha: Joe, what happened? George! George! Are you all right!

She turns him over. He smiles up at her.

George: Yes, I'm all right. But look after Joe.

Joe: Mom, I shot myself in the leg. It's just a superficial wound, although it is bleeding badly. I wasn't intending to kill myself. That bullet had the abortionist's number on it.

Martha: Joe, roll up your pant leg. Let me take a look. That is going to need some medical attention. But what's this about an abortionist? Surely you weren't going to kill an abortionist!

Joe: Mom, they are paid murderers!

Martha: But Joe, killing is never right. We can't solve one wrong with another.

Joe: But Mom, think of all the thousands of little people he's murdered. Isn't somebody going to stop him?

Martha: No, Joe, I am sure there are thousands of young men like you who feel so awful about their girlfriends having aborting their baby. I know there was nothing you could have done, but you blame yourself. You want to kill somebody. I can't blame you, but Joe, no. Leave it to God. Remember, God says, vengeance is mine.

Joe: But how long, Mom? There are tens of millions of babies that have been murdered. And it looks like my God is just sitting back and watching it all. Oh, Lord Jesus, come!

In the distance, a loud rumbling, something between a drum roll and thunder, and then a long trumpet blast. Joe and Martha clutch each other.

Joe: Mom, he's coming!

The trumpet blast becomes increasingly a familiar car horn. The thunder rolls away.

ACT 7. Scene 5

Joe on the telephone: Could I speak to Jane please. That you Jane? You sound so different. This is Joe. Please don't hang up. I've got some good news. I had some group counseling and now I see a way through. I was pretty suicidal there for a while, but I now see how I went so wrong and why. God has forgiven me. [pause] I was on antidepressants too. I didn't feel so depressed but I couldn't feel much of anything. I don't need them now. I want you to forgive me too. Did you get my letter? Yes I was apologizing to you. I would like to get this awful experience out of my mind. My doctor said the only way to forget is to forgive and be forgiven. I would like to be reconciled at least enough so we can talk like adults. Please write back. Audible click. Joe: She did it to me again. Lord give me patience and speak to Jane.

ACT EIGHT SCENE 1

People huddling over a fire in a cave. Somebody walks into the firelight. A woman from the group in the cave speaks up.

Woman: It's Joe! Joe, could you find any food?

Joe: I borrowed some apples, mom, but there is nothing out there. I've scoured the countryside. It's not easy to travel at night. I saw a poster on a wall, mom. There is a warrant out for our arrest. You, dad, Jane and me.

Sound of a baby crying.

Jane speaks up: Joe, I was so worried for you.

Joe: How's the baby, Jane?

Jane: He's hungry, Joe, and I am running out of milk.

Another woman, Sylvia, speaks up: God's gotta come soon. We can't last. Surely he can't tolerate any more of the killing of his babies, the murder of his saints, the drunkenness, drug abuse, prostitution and the awful torture by the state police and...What did they do to my Fred?

George: I know that torture all too well.

Martha: How are your wounds, George? At least we can thank the Lord for the man who was sympathetic to you and let you escape. He must be in deep trouble now.

George, chuckling: Oh, he's got a good alibi. I gave him a very good lump on his head. But he was brave to do it. I wonder if he was a secret Christian.

Joe: I don't understand the government. How could it ever think they could run a free market economy on a declining population? But no they kept on supporting abortion, and euthanasia, and eugenics.

George: As the population dwindled, so did the economy. Then they became desperate. Then this guy they call St. George X walks onto the stage, and offers to solve all their economic problems by having a single database with every citizen registered in it. He got the mandate, power and control, which now means we can't buy, sell or trade without one of his long numbers. Because people couldn't remember their long code and because there was so much identity theft our kind uncle said, no sweat, we'll drill it into you in such a way the scanner at the check out can read it fast. Now we scrounge everybody thinks we are thieves. Branded as state economic thieves they can put us in prison without a trial for a very long time. Oh, Lord, come.

Group as a whole: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Distant baying of dogs, and finally there is a hound at the mouth of the cave with a policeman (Serge) behind it.

Serge: So, I've got you at last. Come on you stupid people. On your feet unless you want to die where you sit.

The ground begins to tremble, and some rocks fall from the ceiling of the cave.

Serge: Come on, we gotta get out of here fast or we'll all get buried and I don't deserve that.

As they are exiting, there is a brilliant flash of light and then a loud long trumpet blaring.

Serge stumbles back into the cave.

Serge: Now rocks, fall on me! I cannot look on him!

Offstage, the sound of battle, then a swelling sound of a choir singing a triumphant song, and then the voice of God.

J: I have constrained myself for so long. Too often have I allowed human choices to govern events in the world. No longer. Now I choose. The time is now!

Curtain falls.

Please feel free to perform this play. It will be best received if you use 2 performances.

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