

Behold Our Lamb

by Nate Bressler

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DEDICATION

Dustin Kensrue once wrote, "I moved in you and stirred your soul to sing, and if you let Me I would move again." This production is, and always will be, dedicated to the Great Inspirator, our Lord God. His interweaving of history and redemption within the Bible grants me and all creatives ample material to awe and marvel over. I am constantly amazed at the works He has done and could find no better use for my giftings and talents than to praise the One who allowed me to possess them in the first place. Thank You Jesus!

STORY OF THE PLAY

Two earthshaking events, one from the New Testament and one from the Old, intertwine in this play to remind us that when Christ came as our sacrificial offering for our sins, it was a purposeful fulfillment of prophecy by God. Jesus' life, death and resurrection echoes the story of Exodus from Egypt. The Passover and Exodus are experienced in a Hebrew home through the eyes of a typical family of four, mother, father, and two teen children. The events leading up to the Crucifixion are talked over at a Jewish home through four very different women, Mary Magdalene, Susanna, Joanna, and Salome, all women based upon Luke 8:1-3. A voiceover of appropriate Biblical verses opens most scenes to further help the audience understand that these stories are deeply connected. The two stories come alive through their characters' human doubts, fears, and ultimate reassurance of God's grace. The connections are similar on purpose as God demonstrated what He will do and has done with His son Jesus for all mankind.

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION

Performed at Hagerman Baptist Church in Sherman, TX. April 7, 8 and 9 of 2023.

Cast: Enoch - David Tuley, Deborah - Leah Martin, Daniel - Leo Lau, Naomi - Sophia Dawson, Joanna - Melissa Bressler, Mary - Emily Hesse, Suzanna - Kendyll Harden, Salome - Brook Tol

Crew: Director - Nate Bressler, Assistant Director - Audrey Sethaler, Lighting - Calvin Bressler, Costumes - Gloria Prince, Set Construction - Sam Kirk, Jennifer Tuley, Aly Tuley, Aly Sosa, Marlee Harden

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(2 m, 6 w)

Hebrews:

ENOCH: (44) Father. He is looked on as the spiritual leader of the household, but unfortunately, he has had his doubts. He struggles to watch his family undergo the hardships of slavery.

DEBORAH: (32) Mother. She always tries to uplift and encourage those whom she has been called to care for, both her children and her husband.

DANIEL: (17) The son who is growing in both stature, strength and knowledge, but is still a child in many ways, including his enthusiasm and somewhat reckless abandon.

NAOMI: (14) The daughter. She learns quickly and has a heart for her family, knowing that in the not-too-distant future she will be ready for a family of her own.

Women: *(All these women are based upon Luke 8:1-3)*

MARY MAGDALENE: (25) Healed by Jesus and set free from 7 plagues of evil spirits, she acts as a liaison between the disciples and the women who are interested but unable to get closer to Jesus.

SUSANNA: (23) A friend of the women, has been sick for some time. She seeks Jesus with hopeful but somewhat innocent and inexperienced reservation.

JOANNA: (30) Wife of Chuza, a steward in Herod's court, she is a more well-off woman who carries some of the same demeanor of her husband's position but is willing to share. Her experience with people has made her both curious but reserved to Jesus.

SALOME: (33) Wife of Zebedee and mother to disciples James and John. She is experienced with the stories that her sons bring home about Jesus, and she is a firm believer having witnessed some of His ministering and miracles firsthand.

SETTING

The stage is divided in half.

On the left is a modest but homey Hebrew slave home from the time of the Egyptian captivity of roughly 1500 B.C. The Hebrew home is the fixed setting of a family of four living through the slavery, arrival of Moses, plagues, Passover, and then subsequent exodus.

On the right is Joanna's Israelite home in Jerusalem at the time of Jesus, roughly 30 AD. Due to Chuza's (her husband) high position in King Herod's court, the home is well furnished and tastefully decorated. It would not be unusual to find occasional Roman influences in the designs or decorations of the home due to the occupation of Israel by the Roman government. The women frequent Joanna's home as they experience the healing, miracles, communion and resurrection of Jesus.

Text on Screen with Voiceover

Animated slides will appear on projection screens to supply scriptural context and backing for the action on stage. In lieu of screens, these can also be read by a narrator.

Scene 1

VOICEOVER: ⁸Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. ⁹And he said to his people, "Behold, the people of Israel are too many and too mighty for us. ¹⁰Come, let us deal shrewdly with them, lest they multiply, and, if war breaks out, they join our enemies and fight against us and escape from the land." ¹¹Therefore they set taskmasters over them to afflict them with heavy burdens. They built for Pharaoh store cities, Pithom and Raamses. ¹²But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad. And the Egyptians were in dread of the people of Israel. ¹³So they ruthlessly made the people of Israel work as slaves. (*Exodus 1:8-13*)

(LIGHTS UP on the Hebrew home. DEBORAH is preparing a meal. NAOMI is mending clothes.)

NAOMI: How late is it?

DEBORAH: It's almost time for supper.

NAOMI: But how late is it? It feels late.

DEBORAH: Yes, but asking me how late it is isn't going to make supper ready any faster. It will be ready when it's ready.

NAOMI: But it feels really late. It really must be nearly sundown.

DEBORAH: Why do you keep asking me how late it is? Can't you see for yourself? Look outside and see!

NAOMI: Yes, Mother, I can see that... but where are Father and Daniel? It feels late for them to come home.

DEBORAH: Oh, yes. You're right, they are normally home by now... Hmm... Well, how's the mending coming along?

NAOMI: *(Holds up the tunic. It is patched in numerous places.)* There's not much left. Mother, why don't we just replace it? I'm having to make patches of the patches now!

DEBORAH: Naomi, you know that's not much of an option. We have to make these last until the next Egyptian ration of cloth. Then we can talk about new tunics.

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(While she speaks, ENOCH and DANIEL enter, visibly tired.)

NAOMI: Oh, Mother, they're here! *(NAOMI gets up, hugging ENOCH then DANIEL.)*

DEBORAH: Supper is nearly ready. Why so late today?

ENOCH: The Egyptians had us break ground on the new storehouse today. Isaac twisted an ankle when setting the post, which left Daniel and I the only ones left to dig out the other post holes.

DEBORAH: Oh, my Lord! How many were there?

ENOCH: There are twenty-four! It's a large storehouse.

DANIEL: They claim it will hold more grain than the last, so hopefully grain rations will increase over the winter!

ENOCH: Don't let your mind wander too far, Son. There was plenty of grain last season and the Egyptians still shorted our share.

NAOMI: Here's your tunic, Father. Sorry, I did the best I could.

ENOCH: *(Visibly bothered by the rags.)* It's okay, Naomi, I know you did what you could. The Egyptians promise more is coming, but I don't see it. Our grain is running out, we have no more cloth rations till next year... the only thing left is prayer, but what good does it do?

DEBORAH: Enoch, please, don't talk like that in front of us!

ENOCH: Why not? Don't pretend you don't feel it too. Adoni has abandoned us here. Whatever promise was made to Abraham years ago seems to have been forgotten. Our people have been enslaved for four hundred years. This is how it will always be.

(Long, somber pause.)

DEBORAH: Well, there's at least plenty for tonight! Supper's ready, everyone.

DANIEL: Oh, it smells delicious! You really know how to season those lentils!

NAOMI: Just make sure you don't take more than your share tonight!

DANIEL: I didn't see you digging hole after hole today!

NAOMI: That's because I was patching hole after hole today!

ENOCH: Children, enough!

DEBORAH: Yes, you both do your share. Perhaps one day it will be better. But for now, let us try to enjoy what we have.

(THEY begin to gather, holding hands around the dinner table, LIGHTS fade.)

Scene 2

(LIGHTS UP on Joanna's home, where JOANNA, SUSANNA, and MARY are finishing their meal. Throughout the scene Susanna has coughing fits.)

SUSANNA: Bless you again, Joanna, for sharing this wonderful meal!

JOANNA: You are welcome! Obviously one of the perks of Chuza's new position is enjoying a portion of Herod's table!

SUSANNA: It's very generous of you to share. I didn't even remember what beef was supposed to taste like with all these new Roman restrictions. Why, I could barely provide enough food to go around at last Shabbat.

JOANNA: The Roman taxes have been a bit stricter lately, haven't they?

MARY: It was delicious. You and your husband are very hospitable. I haven't enjoyed a meal like that in a long time.

JOANNA: Yes! It is so wonderful to have you here, Mary! We have missed you so much!

MARY: Well, thank you. I know you're being polite. You both know I wouldn't have been good company.

JOANNA: Nonsense! We would welcome you anytime!

SUSANNA: Yes, the cursing and violent outbursts would have made the table lively!

(THEY laugh, SUSANNA's laugh turns to a cough.)

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MARY: Yes, yes, it would have... I just feel brand new again. Learning how to live for the first time. Almost as if, I don't know how to explain it.... As if I've been born again. I've been given a second chance. And everything is brighter.

JOANNA: And all this from the man from the river? What's his name again... the dirty fellow who eats bugs...

MARY: John?

JOANNA: Yes!

MARY: No, it wasn't him. It was the man he pointed to, the Nazarene carpenter on the shoreline. Like I said, I tried to get away because the second I laid eyes on Him, the monsters inside were terrified. But His eyes met mine, and I couldn't move.

SUSANNA: That's incredible. Even your voice sounds different than I remember. You're so much lighter!

MARY: I feel lighter. I am set free. And Susanna, there's something I haven't told you yet. I don't mean to come across in the wrong way, but He asked for you.

SUSANNA: For me? What do you mean?

MARY: After He... you know, released me, and His disciples were dismissing the few that remained, He pulled me aside and asked me to tell "my friend whom no one could help" that He's looking forward to helping her the same way He helped me.

SUSANNA: But I'm not... I'm not like you were. It's just a little cough.

JOANNA: It's not just a cough, Susanna. You haven't been well. You barely have any energy anymore. It's as if you've aged 10 years in 10 weeks!

SUSANNA: *(Rolls her eyes at the accusation.)* Thanks, Joanna. I'm feeling the love.

JOANNA: Oh, stop, you know what I mean!

MARY: Susanna... If He can do what He did for me... What's the harm in meeting Him?

SUSANNA: I don't know. I'm curious, of course... but I don't know.

MARY: I thought I was beyond help too. I had given up AND given in to the idea of never being myself again. But I want this for you. I want you to feel the way I do again!

SUSANNA: Fine. I don't want to expect anything. I don't even know what to expect.

MARY: Neither do I.

JOANNA: Yes, but we will be there with you! This is someone I've just got to see for myself as well!

(The WOMEN rise to exit, helping SUSANNA to stand. The LIGHTS fade down.)

Scene 3

VOICEOVER: ²³During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. ²⁴And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. ²⁵God saw the people of Israel—and God knew. *(Exodus 2:23-25)*

(LIGHTS UP on the Hebrew home. DEBORAH is working on something at the table. NAOMI is cooking.)

NAOMI: Do you think they will be late again today?

DEBORAH: Naomi, you know worrying about the hour they come home will not make them come home any faster.

NAOMI: I'm not worried. I'm just... hungry.

(DEBORAH laughs to herself. Suddenly DANIEL enters.)

DANIEL: Mother! Naomi! You won't believe it!

DEBORAH: *(Stands.)* What is it? What's wrong?

DANIEL: *(Visibly out of breath and excited.)* He came out of nowhere! He had a staff and threw it, and Mother, it was a snake! And then he poured some water on the ground, and it was, was, was... all bloody and... and ... and—

DEBORAH: Where is Father? What are you talking about?

(ENOCH enters, hurried but in control.)

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ENOCH: Hallelujah! Hallelujah, family!

DEBORAH: What is going on?!

ENOCH: Praise God for the Almighty hears our cry!

DEBORAH: Enoch, what are you talking about?

ENOCH: Do you remember the story our parents told us? Where Pharaoh commanded that all Hebrew boys were to be thrown in the river? And our people told stories about a man who was raised in the royal palace, but killed an Egyptian and ran into the wilderness?

DEBORAH: Yes, I remember.

DANIEL: He came back!

ENOCH: Will you calm yourself and let me tell it?! His name is Moses. He's come from Midian, AND from Adoni! He encountered the Lord our God in the wilderness! He's come to set us free from the Egyptians!

NAOMI: But Father, haven't you said that God has forgotten us? That's why we're here?

ENOCH: I know that's what I said, and I was wrong. I shouldn't have doubted Adoni. But this man performed miracles! He threw his staff down and it became a snake, only to turn back to a staff when he grabbed it! He poured water to the earth, and it became blood in the sand! And he brought us God's name!

DEBORAH: God's name?!

DANIEL: YHWH!!

ENOCH: Will you let me tell it!!! Moses said that I AM, YHWH, our Adoni appeared to him to set his people free! Our days of slavery are coming to an end!

(NAOMI and DEBORAH embrace.)

DEBORAH: Oh, praise the Lord! When will this happen?

NAOMI: I'm going to start packing!

ENOCH: Wait, Naomi. Be patient for a while. Moses and his brother Aaron are going to talk to Pharaoh in the morning and demand he let us go worship YHWH in the desert. We will know when we are leaving then!

(THEY all embrace, and the LIGHTS fade.)

End of Freeview

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