

The Adventures of



Jesus

by
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**The
Adventures
of
Jesus**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Chapter 1](#): "The Arrival"
- [Chapter 2](#): "Casting Lots"
- [Chapter 3](#): "The Wedding Feast"
- [Chapter 4](#): "Water and Wine"
- [Chapter 5](#): "Satan Says"
- [Chapter 6](#): "Climbing "The Mount"
- [Chapter 7](#): "Interview"
- [Chapter 8](#): "PC Apostles"
- [Chapter 9](#): "The Healing"
- [Chapter 10](#): "Crime and Punishment"
- [Chapter 11](#): "Trial and Tribulation"

Chapter One

The Arrival

The sounds of thunder are rolling in the distance and black, threatening clouds fill the sky. Lightning flashes and a deep, rumbling voice echoed from overhead.

“Look, Jesus is coming with the clouds! Everyone will see him, even those who pierced him. All peoples of the earth will cry loudly because of him. Yes, this will happen! Amen.”

Suddenly, Jesus and his companion Gabriel appear on a deserted corner in the heart of the city. Both are dressed in traditional robes and sandals.

The loud voice comes from the heavens again.

“For just like the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so the coming of the Son of Man will be. He,

the very one who descended, is also the one who ascended above all the heavens. They will see the Son of Man arriving on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory...”

Gabriel interrupts, the voice stops, and he speaks to Jesus.

“Pretty old school Bro! Needs an update. We’re going nowhere will that kind of lingo.”

Jesus pauses and thinks for a moment.

“Well how about this then?”

He then begins to rap.

“They call me the Messiah,

The Savior, the Son.

Yeah! That's me,

I'm the one.

I'm comin' back.

This time I ain't takin' no crap.

No more good guy stuff,
I'm gonna be tough

Mercy is out
Cryin' and pleadin' ain't gonna count.
I'll be gettin' some homies to watch my back.
No more losers like my old school pack.

I looked at my past.
This time it won't be like the last.
Twelve Jews I had before,
But not no more.

Can't you see?
I'm goin' PC.
Luke and John are gone.
Now it's Hose and Juan.

And that ain't all
No more Peter and Paul.
We got Devon and Tyrone
And they're not alone.

We're getting' Kim and Chang
To round out the gang.
I'm gonna vet 'em all real good
No more Judas hangin' in my hood.

If you're not on my list,
you're gonna be pissed.
I'll be comin' on a cloud.
It's gonna be thunder and loud.

Lightning will be lit.
The whole World will shit.
Now you got my diddy.
It ain't gonna be pretty."

Gabriel replies with an eager grin.

“Now you got it going homie! I never knew you were a poet.”

Who do you think wrote the Psalms?” Jesus answers.

Gabriel takes a step back from Jesus and carefully eyes him up and down.

“I don’t know how to say this, but now remember, I’m your friend and friends should always be honest with each other, right?”

Jesus speaks with a sigh “Okay let’s hear it.”

Gabriele points to Jesus’s belly protruding from under his robe.

“It looks like you let yourself go while you were on your vacation. Your abs don’t look anything those I see on the crucifixes. I’d say you’re looking kind of porky.”

“On purpose!” Jesus replies confidently.

“What do you mean, on purpose?”

“Just trying to fit in. I’ve come to tend my flock and the flock is pretty chubby these days.”

Suddenly, it begins to rain.

“I thought in Revelations it said you would be "coming on a cloud with thunder and lightning" not "under a cloud with thunder and lightning"?

“John was a very poor speller and had lots of typos.

Besides, have you ever asked yourself how did he come up with the Four Horsemen idea and all that other crazy shit he wrote?” Jesus replies.

“Yeah, sure?”

“Mushrooms Bro! Plenty of shrooms!”

Jesus snaps his fingers and an umbrella salesman appears.

He is a big man with bulging muscle wearing threatening grimace on his face.

“Looks like you two gents need umbrellas. Five bucks each.”

Jesus hands him four dollars.

“No discounts pal! Ever heard of supply and demand?”

“But blessed are the poor!” Jesus answers.

“It looks like the poor are going to be blessed and wet then” replies the salesman.

Gabriel immediately points to Jesus.

“Do you know who he is? He’s the Son of God!” exclaims Gabriel.

“Oh, sure! Next, you’ll tell me he’s Jesus Christ!” laughs the umbrella man.

“He is!” Gabriel again exclaims.

The salesman hesitates. Both Gabriel and Jesus wait eagerly anticipating his reply.

“Well in that case, for you guys, umbrellas are only five bucks each then!” he says with a laugh.

Jesus reaches behind the salesman's ear and pulls out a ten-dollar bill and hands it to him. He takes the money, hands them the umbrellas and walks away.

“Why didn't you just give him the ten dollars in the first

place?” Gabriel asks.

“I read The Art of the Deal!”

“What do you mean by that?” Gabriel again asks.

“The subtitle was ‘How to Stiff Everybody You Can and Get Away With It’ “.

“So then why did you give up so quickly and pay him the ten bucks right away?”

“Did you see how big he was? He didn’t look like an ‘everybody’ that you could stiff and get away with it!”

Jesus answers.

“And just how did you pull that ten dollars from behind his ear like that?”

“I am the worker of miracles great and small and besides I always wear long sleeves” Jesus answers.

“But didn’t you tell me that church attendance is way down and your father is having big budget problems? So where did that money come from?” Gabriel asks.

“That was the last of my Holy Communion money.”

Gabriele points to a cardboard sign Jesus is holding in

front of himself. It reads “Repent -The end is near”.

“Do you really think that sign is all we need to get the message out? We need media exposure. We gotta get on TV or go viral on the Internet.”

“You should have thought of that before we left” answers Jesus.

“Me? You're supposed to be the all-knowing, the omnipotent one remember?”

Momentary silence and then Gabriel speaks, “Hey, maybe we could get on The Joel Ostein Show or The 700 Club with Pat Robertson before he dies on the set?”

“Yeah, that could be it?” Jesus muses and then speaks.

“But wait a minute- aren't most of the people that watch those shows, old people? All we would reach is geezers and old farts. We need a bigger audience than that” Jesus answers.

“You mean senior citizens? Geezers and old farts is a bit pejorative don't you think? You've got to get with the new PC rules!” Gabriel chides.

“Okay then ‘senior citizens’.”

“You know maybe reaching the senior citizens isn’t such a bad idea after all” Gabriel replies thoughtfully.

“It is said ‘The older the wiser’” he adds.

“But it is also said ‘The older the more demented and disoriented’! We’d have to spend all our time finding out where they live and taking them home” Jesus answers.

“Just where did you read that?”

“It’s in the Gospel” Jesus replies.

“I never read that in the Bible?” Gabriel questions.

“Of course, you didn’t. Remember, everything say is Gospel. I just put it in right now.”

“Okay!” Gabriel sighs.

They continue to ponder. Suddenly Jesus exclaims.

“I got it. Have you ever seen America's Funniest Home Videos? It’s one of the most popular shows on TV. People just love the videos where somebody gets really hurt, right?”

“Yes,” Gabriel agrees.

“So, here's what we do.

We go down to the corner and wait for a bus to come along. Then you run out in front of it. Both of your legs are broken like I mean compound fractures, blood all over the place. Right away a lot of onlookers start taking video.

Then, I come along and heal you on the spot?

You immediately jump up and start moon dancing like Michael Jackson. While you're dancing, I slip in a plug from our 'Second Coming' tour. Now that's gotta go viral don't you think?”

“I don't like it. Not at all!” answers Gabriel.

“Why not?”

“You wouldn't be able to heal me.”

“What do you mean? Of course, I could!”

“Do you really think you'd be able to push your way through the throng of lawyers that would be surrounding me?”

Wait a minute! How about you get a big loan from your father and then claim you're rich, really rich. Everybody

loves rich people. That could get you on TV. Maybe you could even host Celebrity Apprentice for example.”

“But how could I be rich if I had to take a loan to get rich?”

“I didn’t say that you would be rich, you would just claim to be” Gabriel explains.

“In other words, lie?”

“Well, if you really believe you're rich then it’s not really a lie because you believe it, so it’s okay.”

“Just how am I going to convince myself into believing that I'm really rich?”

“Didn’t you once say ‘All things are possible for one who believes’?” Gabriel quotes.

“Yes, I did!”

“Then all you gotta do is believe that you believe.”

“But what if someone finds out about it and says I’m lying?” Jesus asks.

“Easy – just keep saying that anyone who calls you a liar is a liar.”

“Didn’t I just tell you about my Dad’s financial situation and besides what about the camel and needle story?”

“What do you mean?”

“Don’t you remember when I said, ‘It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven’?”

“You gotta stay with me here. We’re not talking about getting into Heaven. We’re talking about getting on TV”
Gabriel replies.

Chapter Two

Casting Lots

Jesus and Gabriel are still standing at the corner pondering their next move.

Suddenly, a bus rode passed them. On the side of the bus is a large picture of an Indian holding a fist full of cash.

The sign reads "Pale Faces Win Mucho Wampum Everyday at Kickapoo Kasino". Gabriel points to the sign excitedly.

"Hey look at that! There's our answer!"

"What's Kickapoo Kasino?" Jesus questions.

"That's where they serve plenty of firewater and cast lots!"

"The last time I saw casting lots I lost my robe! I'm not so sure about this?" Jesus replies.

"No, it's all different now! They don't crucify anymore.

They just have guys in the back room that will break your legs if they think you're winning too much" Gabriel

reassures him.

“How can you be sure we’ll win?”

“Of course, we’ll win! There aren't any losers. I've seen it on TV. Everybody always wins!” Gabriel again assures Jesus.

Suddenly, a large white blob of bird shit lands on Jesus’ shoulder.

“What was that?” Gabriel exclaims in a startled voice.

“The Holy Ghost wishing us luck” answers Jesus.

A car pulls up to the stoplight at the corner. Jesus walks up to the stopped car and begins to speak to the driver.

“Excuse me! Do you know where the Kick-a- ...”

The driver immediately interrupts him.

“No handouts pal. Get rid of the dress and get a haircut and a shave and a job. You cross-dressing bums make me sick!” He rolls up the window and speeds off as the light changes.

“Well, so much for the meek inheriting the Earth” Jesus mutters as he walks back to Gabriel.

“Don't we need some money to start with?” he asks.

Gabriel bends down and pulls a small wad of cash from his sock and shows it to Jesus.

“Here I've got some money.”

“Where did you get that?” asks Jesus.

“Remember the time when you kicked overall money changer's tables? Well, I was your Guardian Angel then and when they chased you out of the Temple I grabbed some of the loose change on the way out.”

“Some Guardian Angel you were!” Jesus snaps.

“What do you mean by that?”

“If I remember correctly, you were the one who had to take a personal day on Good Friday!” Jesus replies.

“I make one little mistake and you won't let me hear the end of it! Whatever happened to forgive and forget? Turn the other cheek? Let he who is without sin cast the first”

Jesus interrupts him in midsentence - “Did you ever hear the eight Beatitudes?”

Gabriel pauses, ponders and then speaks "I remember only seven? What was the eightieth?"

"Blessed are those who keep their mouth shut for they shall not be punched in the nose."

They begin to march to the Kickapoo Kasino. When they arrive they hastily walk to the craps table.

Within minutes a scantily clad cocktail waitress approaches them.

"What will you boys have to drink?"

"What do you have?" asks Gabriel.

"Whatever you want Honey!"

"How about wine?" Jesus asks.

"Red or white?" she answers.

"Red of course!"

The waitress turns and walks away and soon returns with the wine.

"Do you have any crackers?" Jesus asks.

"Do you have to do the 'This is my body' thing every time we have a glass of wine? It's getting to be embarrassing"

Jesus pauses for a moment.

“Okay - forget the crackers then,” he tells the waitress.

They stand next to the craps table sipping their wine and carefully studying the action. After several minutes of observation, Gabriel speaks.

“I've been watching. Every time a new stickman takes over the table he gives the dice to the newest player at the table.”

Just as he finishes speaking a new stickman approaches the table.

“Hey, let's get over there now and he'll probably give you the dice” exclaims Gabriel excitedly.

Jesus and Gabriel hurry to the table. Jesus puts down twenty dollars and the stick man pushes the dice to Jesus.

“New shooter comin' out!” shouts the Stickman.

Jesus picks up the dice and cups them in his outstretched hand. He closes his eyes and moves his lips silently praying. After a few seconds, a player from across the table yells.

“For Christ's sake will you throw the god damn dice?”

Jesus is startled by the player’s outburst and immediately throws the dice. They come up as a six. He stares angrily at the other player and shouts back.

“See what you made me do! You broke my concentration!”

Gabriel immediately tugs at Jesus’s arm.

“Master - calm yourself.”

Jesus pauses, closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. He then looks back at the other player and speaks once more this time in a calm voice.

“Thy sins are forgiven thee.”

“What is that supposed to mean?” the player shouts back.

Jesus again pauses, closes his eyes and takes a deep breath.

“It means I'll let it go this time but don't let it happen again.”

“Or what?” the player snarls.

Upon hearing the response Jesus waves his hand in the player's direction.

“What do you think you're gonna....” the man begins to speak and suddenly in mid-sentence, his lips continue to move but he is mute. He grasps his throat in panic.

“That's what! “Jesus replies snaps.

After a second or two Jesus again waves his hand in the player's direction. The Player regains his speech, removes his hands from his throat and mumbles quietly to himself.

“Okay - I'm letting you off with a warning this time. Don't do it again because I'm fresh out of forgivenesses.

Gab bet the pass line again!” Jesus shouts.

Jesus picks up the dice again holds them out in cupped hands and mutters. He throws the dice. They strike the wall bounce off and come up with a five and a two. After a second the two flips over to a one. Jesus makes the point, and everybody is paid.

Jesus again picks up the dice and immediately starts to

throw. Gabriel grabs his arm to stop him before he can throw them.

“Boss - You forgot to bless them!”

“Nah! No problem! I gave them my premium blessing the first time out. All the bugs are gone. It should stick for the rest of the night without any updates” Jesus explains.

He throws the dice. They strike the wall, bounce off and both spin on their points for two seconds and then fall into a six and one. Jesus continues to throw the dice.

The dice come up with seven in different combinations every time.

Soon a noisy crowd of onlookers surrounds Jesus at the table. They cheer loudly after every throw. Suddenly, Gabriel begins tugging on Jesus’s arm.

“Remember what I told you about winning too much?” he whispers.

Jesus pulls away, “Don't bother me when I'm hot!”

Jesus throws the dice again. Another seven!

Suddenly two men in black suits and wearing dark

sunglasses appear behind Jesus and Gabriel at the table.

“What are you boys up to?” says the bigger of the two men in a gruff, raspy voice.

“About twenty thou” replies Jesus without even turning around.

“That's not what I'm talking about, smart guy.”

“We think you're cheatin'” chimes in the other man.

“So, whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin” Jesus turns and answers.

“What the hell does that mean?” exclaims the larger man in bewilderment.

“We didn't cheat! Do you think the Savior would break the Seventh Commandment?” Gabriel asks.

“I don't know nothing about breaking the Seventh Commandment, but I do know a bunch about breakin' arms and legs!” the man growls.

“We think you've been cheatin'. Nobody wins that much except on TV commercials and in the movies. Now you can walk out the front door or be carried out the back

door. Which is it gonna be?"

"I think we'll take door number one" Jesus replies.

Jesus and Gabriel turn and walk towards the front door.

When they are halfway to the door Jesus turns and shouts back, "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord!"

"What did he just yell?" asks the bigger man.

"I'm not sure. Somethin' about your lips and his constipation!"

"I think we better teach the two wise men here a lesson" answers the other man.

Gabriel immediately gives Jesus a startled look as he sees the two men start to run towards them.

"What are you crazy? Come on let's get outta here!"

Gabriel grabs Jesus by the arm and they both run out the door and down the street. Jesus pulls a wad of bills out from under his robe and begins counting. Out from an adjacent alley, two masked men with guns approach them.

"Dame tu dinero" shouts the first man.

Gabriel turns to Jesus, "What did he just say?"

"I think he said, 'Give me your money'?"

"You think?" questions Gabriel with surprise.

"I understand Espanol un poco."

"A little? But Master, I thought you could understand all languages? Don't you get prayers from all peoples of the Earth?"

"Yes, I do!" Jesus replies.

"Is it true that you always answer all prayers?"

"Thou hast said it!"

Gabriel is puzzled for a moment.

"Well if you don't understand their language, how can you answer them?"

"Google Translate!"

"Toma mi dinero, pero por favor no me lastimes" Jesus answers while holding out the money to the man.

"What was that?" asks Gabriel with a perplexed look.

"The first safety tip for every tourist in a foreign country - learn how to say, 'Take my money but please don't hurt

me!”

Jesus then turns to the robbers.

“You guys look Samaritan. You're not from Samaria are you?” Jesus asks.

“Donde diablos es eso?” the man replies.

“What did he say?”

He said, “Where the fuck is that?”

“No se joda, estamos visitando desde el sur del Bronx”
chimes in the second man.

“Shit no man - we're visiting from the South Bronx” Jesus translates.

The robbers grab the money and take off.

“Why did you ask if they were from Samaria? Didn't you tell a story about the Good Samaritan?”

“Well back in the old days Samaria didn't always send their best. They sent drug dealers, criminals, rapists, and muggers. I assume there are some good ones in the bunch but evidently not these two” Jesus answers.

“Why didn't you stop them? What are we gonna do

now?" Gabriel sighs.

Jesus bends down and then straightens up, holding several hundred-dollar bills.

"Another miracle? Praise be!" Gabriel exclaims.

Jesus points to one of his sandals with a small open slit in the side.

"Sweet! I didn't know you had those Secret Pocket Sandals?"

"The Holy Mother didn't raise no fool!" Jesus answers.

"Where did you get them?"

"From this ad in the Galilee Gazette."

Jesus pulls out a scrap of paper bearing the advertisement.

The heading reads - "Secret Pocket Sandals". It shows a picture of Noah, David, and Moses, all smiling broadly while pulling up their robes and pointing to their sandals.

Beneath the picture "Get your sandal for only three easy payments of 19.95 drachmas plus postage and handling.

But wait - get a second sandal free while this offer lasts.

Just pay separate postage and handling.”

At the bottom of the ad - "Secret Pocket Sandals - TM - All our sandals are made right here in Galilee by Jews for Jews - Call now - HIDYURSHIT (443-987-7448)”

Chapter Three

The Wedding Feast

Jesus and Gabriel continue walking and are passing by a VFW hall. A loud commotion is coming from the hall.

They go in to investigate. A wedding reception is being held. The guests at the reception are shouting and waving their arms wildly.

“No más cerveza! Queremos mas cerveza ahora!” echoes from the hall.

“What are they saying?”

“They said 'No more beer! The beer ran out and it looks like the crowd is getting pretty rowdy.’”

Jesus calls over the waiter.

“Bring me ten cases of Pellegrino Sparkling Mineral Water. No store brands!” he commands.

“Why can't you use just any water Master?”

“Garbage in - garbage out!”

The waiter rushes into the kitchen. He and an assistant hurriedly return with the cases of water and place them on the table in front of Jesus.

Jesus closes his eyes, mutters to himself and waves his hands right over left above the cases of water. Several seconds pass and he opens his eyes. Ten cases of Yoo-hoo lay on the table before him.

The crowd begins to boo. Jesus looks with embarrassment at the transfigured beverages.

He turns to the waiter and says “Bring me ten cases of...” Gabriel grabs his arm before he can finish.

“Wait a minute. You're just a little rusty. What did you expect? You've been out of the miracle business for two thousand years. You need a little more practice to get the old mojo back.”

“What do you mean practice?” asks Jesus.

“You should have warmed up on some of the homeless we saw on the way here. You could have healed a few of

the handicapped. You know what I mean, polish up some of your skills a bit.”

“You mean some of the lames we passed?”

“They're not lame. They're handicapped. You don't see any parking spaces labeled 'Lame Only' do you?” Gabriel chides him.

“No that's true!” Jesus agrees.

“That's because lame is old school! All the lame aren't lame anymore' now they're all the 'handicapped'.”

Jesus pauses and then muses out loud - “We need to send out a Bible update. Something like -

‘Then the eyes of the visually handicapped will be opened. And the ears of the auditory deficient will be unstopped. Then the ambulatory impaired will leap like a deer. And the tongue of the conversationally disadvantaged will shout for joy’.”

Jesus arouses from his musings and speaks.

“Oh, now, I remember. Water to Yoo-hoo is right over left. Water to beer is left over right” and he proceeds to close

his eyes once again. This time he waves his hands palms up, right over left and the Yoo-hoo becomes water once again. Then once more, he closes his eyes, mutters, and waves his hands, palms down left over right. Loud applause and cheers rise from the crowd; Jesus opens his eyes to see ten cases of Bud Lite.

Suddenly, the doors of the kitchen springs open and the short chubby manager of the hall rushes toward Jesus waving a sheet of paper. He thrusts the paper in Jesus's face and begins to shout angrily.

"Do you see this? This is the contract for the hall rental. What does it say right there? 'No outside alcohol!' Now get that Bud Lite out of here before I call the cops."

Jesus looks closely at the contract.

"Gab - get over here."

Gabriel rushes to Jesus' side. Jesus points to the contract.

"Tell me what this says. It's got all those funny looking letters. I think it's Hebrew?"

Gabriel begins to read the contract aloud in English.

“This contract shall be ...”

Twenty minutes pass and Gabriel is still reading. Jesus is sitting next to him with his feet up on a chair and his eyes half-closed. The crowd is snoozing, yawning and snoring as Gabriel finally finishes reading of the contract.

“So, sworn by me on this....”

Jesus opens his eyes, takes his feet off the chair, stands, and interrupts Gabriel in mid-sentence.

“So, do we have to get rid of the beer or what?”

“I think the man's right, but I've got to read this last line on the bottom to be sure. Anybody got a microscope on them?” Gabriel answers.

“Never mind. This guy has an honest face and besides he's Jewish, so he probably remembers Proverbs 13:5.”

“What's that?”

“The righteous hate what is false, but the wicked make themselves a stench and bring shame on themselves” quotes Jesus.

Then he turns to the manager and speaks.

“Now with all these sweaty people and the broken AC we certainly don’t need more stench in here, do we?”

“Correcto! Absolutamente!” agrees the manager.

Jesus turns back to the cases of beer, closes his eyes, waves his hands and the beer turns back into water. The crowd begins to boo.

“What are we going to do now?” cries Gabriel.

“No problemo my little amigo!”

Jesus reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out a wad of cash. He stands before the group both arms raised, with the money in hand says -

“Peace I say unto you. Look at the birds of the air, they neither toil nor reap yet their Father feeds them. Look at the lilies of the field, they neither sow nor spin yet their Father clothes them. Are you less than they in His eyes?”

Someone in the crowd shouts, “What the hell does all that mean? “

“What it means, my son is - 'Open bar' - on me!” Jesus shouts back and the crowd roars.

Jesus hands the money to the manager and the crowd cheers jubilantly.

Suddenly, the Best Man in the wedding party rushes up to Jesus.

“Welcome. I am honored to behold un hombre of such great miracles. Please, let me introduce you to my sister and her new husband.”

After the introduction, the Best Man calls Jesus aside and whispers.

“Did you notice my sister's upper lip?”

“No. What do you mean?” Jesus asks.

“El bigote! The hair! It's very hairy! Maybe you could help her out with the mostacho. Kinda like a wedding miracle. What do you think?”

Jesus stops and thinks. He then answers reluctantly.

“Well, it is her wedding day. Even Don Vito grants favors on wedding days. Okay!”

Jesus walks over to the bride and runs his finger over her upper lip.

“Si, mucho el bigote. Esto requerirá mucho trabajo.”

Jesus runs his finger over her upper lip several times and prays. The hair finally disappears.

Gabriel extends his hand out to the Best Man.

“That will be ten dollars please!”

The Best Man is completely surprised.

“Why ten dollars?”

“Cosmetic miracles come with a copay” answers Gabriel.

Chapter Four

Water and Wine

Jesus and Gabriel have left the wedding and are walking down the street together.

“Why did you have to give all our money away like that?”

“It is said 'Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for they shall be satisfied'” Jesus answers.

“But where did it say that you should buy the house?”

“Do not fear, the Lord will provide” Jesus reassures him.

“But you're the Lord and I don't see much providing going on?” Gabriel snaps.

They walk a bit more and suddenly Gabriel stops.

“I got it! We'll open a bar and you can make all the drinks right on the spot!”

The next evening Gabriel is tending bar. Jesus is standing in the backroom behind the bar in an open serving

window. The place is crowded and boisterous. Gabriel addresses the customers as they come up to the bar.

“What'll you have?”

“Gimme a Sam Adams!”

Gabriel calls to Jesus “One Sammie!”

Jesus fills a pint glass with water, waves his hands over it and passes it through the window to Gabriel. Immediately another customer calls to Gabriel.

“Gin and tonic.”

Gabriel again calls to Jesus “One G and T here!”

Jesus grabs another glass, waves his hands differently than before and hands the glass to Gabriel.

An instant later, Gabriel calls “Miller on the light side”.

Jesus again grabs a glass, waves his hands again differently than before and hands the glass to Gabriel.

Gabriel hands the glass to the customer. The customer takes a sip, makes face and draws back in revulsion.

“Hey, this ain't Miller its Bud Lite!”

Gabriel snatches the glass back from the customer and

hands it to Jesus.

“Come on man, you're costing me tips out here!” he shouts at Jesus.

As the evening wears on, Gabriel continues shouting customer orders to Jesus in machine gun-like succession.

“One Seven and Seven! Dry martini straight up! Jack on the rocks! Two straw daqs! A couple of.....”

Jesus is in the backroom waving his hands at breakneck speed trying to keep up. Sweat is pouring down his face and he is breathing heavily.

Soon the clock approaches two a.m.

“Last call” Gabriel shouts.

The bar is finally closed. Jesus is slumped in a chair, wearing his beer and sweat-stained robe. He has an ice pack on each of his hands. He is still trying to catch his breath and speaks in a slow, exhausted voice.

“How did we do?”

“Well, after sales tax, income tax, business tax, alcoholic beverage tax, real estate tax, F.I.C.A., estate tax and

entertainment tax we wound up with \$13.46 not counting tips” Gabriel answers.

“How much were the tips?”

“I tried to tell you to stop screwing up like you did. We only got a slimily \$5.12 in tips” Gabriel replies.

“Slimily?”

“Yeah, it looks like somebody spit in the tip jar.”

“And estate tax? What’s that for?” asks Jesus.

“Didn't you die one time?”

“Yes, I did.”

“There you go! It’s on your record!” Gabriel explains.

“But that was two thousand years ago. What about the Statute of Limitations?”

“It doesn't apply in murders, student loans and resurrections” Gabriel answers.

“Why entertainment tax?”

“An A.B.C. guy walked in just as everybody was staring at you waving your arms all around making the drinks? He figured you were the entertainment!”

“It’s a good thing we just closed up. I was just about miracled out there towards the end. I can’t do another night of this. We have to come up with something else.”

Chapter Five

Satan Says

Gabriel stops and turns towards Jesus.

“Wait a minute! Isn't your Father a real estate mogul?”

“Sure! He owns the Universe!”

“Why can't he spot you a little cash then?”

“Didn't I already tell you, he's got financial problems?”

“Like how?” Gabriel continues.

“Illiquid assets and poor cash flow.”

“Are you sure? Did he show you his tax returns?”

“No! He can't; he was being audited.”

“Audited? By who?”

“The Holy Ghost!”

“Well, maybe we can get a personal loan? What do you think?” Gabriel asks.

“From whom? We don't even have any collateral.”

“Did you ever read 'The Devil and Daniel Webster'?”

“Old Scratch? I haven't seen him in centuries. In the old days, he was always hanging around. I can't tell you how many times he bullied me. He did it all - teasing, tempting, and wedgies!” Jesus replies.

“You mean you wore underwear under your robe?”

“Of course!”

“Boxers or briefs?” Gabriel snickers.

“Clavin Klein Loincloths!”

“I think I know somebody who can get in touch with him” Gabriel muses aloud.

“Who's that?”

“Johnny Cocoran!”

“How do you know Johnny Cocoran?” Jesus replies in surprise.

“I met him when he presented a case before the Supreme Being. He was representing all the lawyers down in Hell. I was the bailiff.”

“About what?”

“He said 'The Pit is shit and you must acquit'.”

“How did it go for him?” Jesus asks.

“He got an extra five trillion years added to his sentence.”

Jesus hesitates and thinks.

“So, one of us will have to put up his soul as collateral.

We'll use yours?”

“I'm an angel. I'm the one of us that doesn't have a soul.

It's gotta be you.”

“Do you know the Apostle's Creed?”

“Of course, I do!” Gabriel snaps resentfully.

“Then you do remember the part where ‘He descended into Hell’, right?”

“Sure, I do!”

“Well Johnny was right on the money and I'm not taking any chances, so we'll have to think of something else.”

They pass an alleyway as they continue their walk down the street. Ominous snorting sounds come from the alley and Jesus begins sniffing the air.

“It smells like a sewer leak.”

“It smells like Johnny Cocoran's clothes” Gabriel adds.

Jesus stops and turns towards Gabriel with a suspicious glance.

“Don't look at me. I think it's coming from the alley”

Gabriel hastily exclaims.

They walk a little further passed another dark alley.

Again, snorting sounds come from the alley. Jesus speaks as they walk.

“I don't know about you, but I'm famished. We haven't eaten since this morning.”

A low, hoarse, raspy whisper echoes from the alley.

“Psst! Jesus! Over here.”

“Who's that?” Gabriel questions.

“I'm not sure but the voice sounds vaguely familiar.”

Jesus walks over to the alleyway. A silhouetted outline of the speaker can barely be seen in the shadows. Jesus immediately recognizes him.

“I thought it was you, but I wasn't sure. What happened to your voice?”

“The Air Quality Index is ten plus at home and that's on a

good day. There's no such thing as 'clean coal' trust me on that" the figure replies.

"So, what do you want now?"

"I heard you say you were hungry. If you are really the Son of God, then prove it! Make these scraps of paper on the ground become Burger King Coupons."

"It is written 'Man does not live by Whoppers alone'"

Jesus answers.

In the next instant, Satan transports Jesus to the top of a nearby skyscraper.

"If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down for it is written 'He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Satan commands.

"It sounds like my foot will be safe but what about the rest of me?" Jesus answers.

"You're on your own!"

"I'll pass on that one then."

Jesus then finds himself at a scenic overlook and Satan

again speaks.

“Got any change?”

Jesus takes out a quarter and hands it to Satan. Satan puts it in the binocular coin slot.

“Here Jesus, look through these. All this can be yours with no money down and low monthly payments if only you will bow down and worship me.”

“Begone! Begone!” and Satan disappears.

Jesus returns to Gabriel’s side.

“Who was that?”

“Just another slimy New York real estate developer,” Jesus says with disgust.

“I think I’ll call my Father after all. Let’s find a phone.”

They see an old payphone on the street corner. The receiver cord is ripped from the phone and the mouthpiece is packed with chewing gum.

“Wait a minute! Don’t you have a prayer hotline to your Father?”

Jesus immediately gets down on his knees, folds his hands

and begins to pray. After several seconds he stands and speaks.

“All I get is a busy signal!”

“How's that?” asks Gabriel.

“He's probably on with Pat Robertson.”

“You mean your Father really does talk to Pat Robertson?”

“Well, kind of! As soon as Dad sees his name on caller I.D. he lets the answering machine get it. Pat goes on and on until the voicemail box is full.”

“Then what?”

“The delete button!” Jesus answers.

“So, Robertson is just a name-dropper then?”

Gabriel hesitates and then continues.

“Is he the only one that is always tying up the line?”

“Not always. Could be Graham, Osteen or Jimmy Swaggart.

Well, not Jimmy so much anymore.”

“How about Pope Francis?”

“No, he's too busy actually doing good stuff.”

Chapter Six

Climbing "The Mount"

The next morning Jesus and Gabriel walk to a park bench and sit to think. Both are bent over with their heads in their hands. Suddenly Gabriel sits upright.

"I got it! Why not just perform a really big miracle? That's sure to get everybody's attention."

"I already suggested that with you and the bus, but you went pussy on me, remember?"

Gabriel pretends not to hear Jesus's comment and continues to speak.

"I mean like televangelists do every Sunday on TV.

Curing lepers and making the blind see isn't going to do it anymore. Yours will have to be a whopper. Like Super Bowl half time stuff?"

"Even bigger than that! How about a Great Flood?" Jesus adds.

“Been done! And by the way why was your Father always so pissed off back in the day?”

“He was very insecure. He was always checking to see if people really loved him or if they were just kissing ass and besides he had poor anger management skills” Jesus explains.

“How about raining down fire and brimstone on a couple of Middle Eastern towns?”

“Being done!”

“Okay, then you can do earthquakes, cyclones, and good, old fashion death and destruction?”

“Listen, the Holy Mother raised me up right. Why do you think I didn't just smote all those Romans back in the day? I'm not like Dad. Remember children can't pick their parents.”

Jesus and Gabriel walk passed an open-air bar with a TV playing. They stop and watch. A politician on TV is giving a speech and the crowd is being panned. Gabriel points to the TV.

“That's it! You just have to tell them what you're going to do. That's what they want to hear. You don't really have to do it!”

“But that would be lying?” Jesus corrects him.

“Well kinda but not really. Nowadays only the stupid people think politicians are going to actually do what they say. Most people know they're lying so technically it's not really lying. It's called campaigning.”

Jesus stares more intently at the TV.

“Look at that crowd! Thousands of them!”

“Yeah - so that's what I'm saying, maybe we could do the same kind of thing?”

“You mean lie? Like 'I did not have sex with that woman', 'They have WMDs' or 'I can't show my tax returns because I'm being audited'?”

“No! No! I just told you that's not lying, it's called politics!” Gabriel reminds him.

Jesus hesitates.

“Okay - How do we start?” he says with a sigh.

“We'll have to find a place for a rally. Like a park.”

“Okay but definitely not Gethsemane. More like the Mount of Olives.”

Jesus and Gabriel begin their search for a local park in which to hold the rally. They are standing at the entrance a park when a cop approaches swinging his baton. The immediately begins to question them.

“What are you guys doing here? Loitering, I suppose?”

“No. We're going to have a rally here.”

Soon several people gather around to see what is happening.

“A rally huh! Do you have a permit?”

“No” answers Jesus.

The Cop points to the onlookers.

“Who are these people?”

“They are as all people - part of my flock” Jesus replies.

“Well then, as a matter of fact - let me see - how many are there here now?”

The cop counts the onlookers and then takes out a small

book and begins to thumb through it. He then calls Jesus over and points to the book.

“Let’s take a look. You might need a permit right now. I have to look this up. Hold on a minute.

Oh yeah! Here it is right here. Section 4-12:5. ‘Crowds of fifteen or more require a park permit. Usage of facilities without a permit is subject to a fine of fifty dollars’. I counted fifteen people. Looks like I gotta write you a ticket.”

Gabriel turns around and quickly counts the people himself.

“Wait a minute! I count fourteen people here?” he exclaims.

“Right you are. But he said, ‘all people are part of his flock’ didn’t he?” replies the cop.

“Yes, he did!”

“Okay, fourteen plus me makes fifteen. You got a crowd of fifteen. Just like I said. Conducting a rally in the park without a permit with fifteen people requires a permit.

Here! You can pay this down at City Hall when you get your permit.”

The cop hands the ticket to Jesus, turns and walks away still swinging his baton and whistling.

That afternoon, Gabriel and Jesus go to City Hall to get the permit and pay the ticket.

A women clerk sits behind the counter wearing a scowl. She’s eating a donut with the jelly squeezing out of the end and dribbling down the front of her dress.

“We would like to get a permit to use the park for a rally,” Jesus asks.

“Wait here!” the clerk replies.

With that, she leaves the counter taking the half-eaten donut with her and walks ever so slowly towards the backroom. She is gone for thirty minutes.

She reappears with several sheets of paper in hand. A large coffee stain is down the front of her blouse alongside the jelly spots. She points to the stain and glares at Jesus.

“Look! Ya made me rush my break and look what

happened.”

She hands the papers to Jesus.

“Here, fill these out and bring 'em back and don't be comin' back around ten again. It's my break time.”

Jesus and Gabriel walk towards the door while perusing the papers.

“Look at all these questions. Father's name, mother's maiden name, last employment, and down here at the bottom, penciled in, a two-hundred-and-fifty-word essay on 'Why We Should Never Interrupt Municipal Employee Coffee Breaks'” he reads aloud.

“Let's see - your name - you can't put down you're Jesus Christ. They'll never believe you. How about 'Isus Hristos'? It's Romanian for Jesus Christ” Gabriel suggests.

“No, I'll put down Issy Hristos - Isus sounds a little too Muslim. Issy sounds more Jewy.”

“And Father's name? “

“God!” Jesus answers.

“That's not going to work” Gabriel complains.

“Then how about I put your name down. You were the one who sneaked into to my mom's bedroom that night - so who knows?”

“No way man! You're not going to stick it on me. I was only the messenger of God. Remember?” Gabriel snaps.

“Okay then- Joe Christ!”

“No, let's put in Joe Hristo. And mother's maiden name? What was your mother's maiden name?”

“She was always a maiden. Haven't you read the Bible?” Jesus replies indignantly.

“You know I see her statute on every Italian's lawn. She must have been at least part Italian.”

“I think you've got something there! Okay then, put down Mary BadaBing” Jesus agrees.

They arrive at City Hall the next morning at nine o'clock. Jesus hands in the filled-out permit forms to the woman behind the counter. She looks them over intently and begins to question Jesus.

“Mr. Hristo. I see here that you will be having

entertainment at your event. Is that true?"

"Yes"

She turns and disappears into the back room. She returns in several minutes and hands Jesus more papers.

"You'll have to fill out these."

"What's this?"

"You said you're having entertainment. It's an application for an entertainment license."

It is the following morning. Jesus and Gabriel again return to City Hall with the completed forms. Again, the clerk intently peruses the filled-out forms. She suddenly looks up.

"Will food and beverages be served?"

"Yes," Jesus answers.

"That requires a food handler's license. What kind of beverages will be served, Mr. Hristo?"

"Wine! Red wine!"

"Sorry, Mr. Hristo - no alcoholic beverages on public property."

“Okay, then - Dansai water!” Jesus replies.

Gabriel whispers to Jesus - “Good pick! I think left, right, left makes that into Manischewitz.”

Jesus and Gabriel go to the corner of the room and fill out the remaining paperwork. They return to the desk and hand the papers to the clerk.

She then walks over to the computer and begins typing.

She returns to the window.

“It appears that all your paperwork is in order.”

She hands Jesus a sheet of paper. He looks at the paper and is puzzled by what he sees.

“What's this? All these red marks and coffee stains?”

“It's your two-hundred-and-fifty-word essay. You have lots of spelling and grammar mistakes. You're lucky I just passed you with a seventy. Now, will that be cash, check or charge?”

“What do you mean?” Gabriel asks loudly.

“Your fees come out to be one hundred and fifty dollars and you will also have to pay your park usage without a

permit fine of fifty bucks. So that adds up to two hundred dollars. Will that be cash, check or charge?"

Gabriel looks at Jesus and Jesus looks at Gabriel with surprised expressions. Jesus and Gabriel then turn and start to walk away. The woman yells to them as they depart.

"I'll keep all this crap on file until you come back with the money. You got two weeks before it goes in the shit can."

It is two days later. Jesus and Gabriel are walking into the recycle center dragging a train of transparent plastic bags filled with empty aluminum cans.

"That was great the way you conjured up those ten thousand empty beer cans like that." Gabriel pauses and then continues.

"But why didn't you just come up with the two hundred dollars in the first place?"

"Give unto Uncle Sam that which is Uncle Sam's and to God that which is God's."

"What does that mean?"

“Counterfeiting is against the law” Jesus answers.

They soon leave the recycle center with money in hand go back to City Hall. This time they leave finally holding the permit.

“We even have an extra twenty bucks left to make flyers for the rally.”

As they walk down City Hall steps they are met by a hoodlum with slicked-back hair, wearing a high rolled collar and smoking a cigar.

“Hey - you guys - come here. I heard yous is gonna have a rally down at the park next week, right?”

“Yes”

“And yous gonna have food. What kinda food?” the hoodlum continues.

“We're not sure yet.”

“Well, I'm comin' with some of my friends and we like hot dogs and we only like the dogs from the Mr. Weenie trucks. If we get any other kind we all get very upset and when we get upset we upset everybody else if you know

what I mean?"

"I think they call this extortion, Boss," Gabriel says to Jesus in a low voice.

"That's a sin and we can't participate in sinful activities" Jesus answers the hoodlum.

"Sin huh! When we show up at your rally you'll see a real sin!"

"What are the names of your friends?"

"Three Finger Sal, Petey the Wire and Pinochle Mike. Why ya gonna give 'em free tickets?" he laughs.

Jesus waves his hands over the Hoodlum's eyes.

"I'm blind! I can't see!" cries the hoodlum.

His cell phone rings and he fumbles to find it while rubbing his eyes.

"Joey! Joey! I'm blind! So is Sally and Mikey!" the voice comes over the phone.

"Boss - whatever happened to 'whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other'?" Gabriel reminds him.

“An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth!” Jesus answers.

“Whatever happened to 'Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'?” Gabriel again reminds him.

“Vengeance be mine sayeth the Lord!”

“Whatever happened to 'If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink'?”

“Whatever happened to you minding your own business and shutting up?”

Jesus waves his hands again. The Hoodlum opens his eyes widely and looks around. He then turns and runs down the street. Jesus and Gabriel continue to walk.

“I've never seen you get that upset before?” Gabriel says inquisitively.

“I just hate it when people break the Eleventh Commandant.”

“Eleventh? I thought there were ten?”

“Actually, there were Eleven Commandants, but Moses wasn't exactly a speed writer with that hammer and chisel.”

“What was the last one?”

“I am the Lord thy God and don't ever, ever piss me off!”
Jesus recites.

The next morning, they go to Staples to get some flyers made for the rally. It reads -

Armageddon Miracle Rally -No miracle left undone.
Blind, cripples, lame, deaf and dumb, acne sufferers,
even the dead* are welcome.

There will be valet parking for wheelchairs and clean up bags for those attending with service animals.

A light lunch of loaves and fishes will be served. Fun for the whole family.

Bring grandma and grandpa before it's too late.

*Conditions apply - Only the recently deceased will be raised.

No embalmees accepted.

Past performance is no indication of future results.

BYOB.

Later that day Jesus sits pondering his next move. Gabriel runs up to him holding a handful of the flyers.

“I was passing these out on car windshields...”

“Another ticket?” Jesus interrupts.

“Well yeah, but a guy came up to me and said he does interviews for NPR and he'd like to have you on. So what do you think?”

“As long as it's not the 700 Club, sure!”

“Here I got his card.”

Gabriel hands the card to Jesus and they walk off together towards the radio station studio.

Chapter Seven

Interview

A sign over the studio door reads - Charlie's Chats - On Air. Jesus is seated across from Charlie.

The Charlie Show begins.

“Today, we have with us Mr. Jesus Christ. Mr. Christ has a long history of miracle-working, demon casting and raising the dead. His biography has been written by numerous bestselling authors including Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

His performance on Easter Sunday, thirty-three CE has received rave reviews. One of His best-known feats was ascending into Heaven without the aid of any mechanical devices and no prior stagecraft experience.

He has recently arrived here after a two-thousand-year hiatus. It is my pleasure to welcome Him to this table.”

“Thank you, Charlie. You can just call me Jesus or JC.”

“I'm sorry I forgot to mention more details of the Resurrection in my introduction. It was one of your most remarkable achievements. Was that accomplished with or without performance enhancing drugs?”

“I know that some people have been talking about the sponge. Let me put all the rumors to rest right now. Absolutely no drugs or outside assistance of any sort was involved. It was all strictly supernatural” Jesus answers while sniffing heavily.

“Okay, Jesus - You claim to be the Lord and Savior - is that true?”

“I who speak to you am he!”

“Do you have any proof?”

“I can do miracles. Huge miracles! Bigly miracles! I do the best miracles. Did you ever hear the story about the time Papa Joe cut a board too short? I told him over and over 'measure twice and cut once' but he wouldn't listen.”

“No, I never heard that one.”

“Probably because it was in an off-brand gospel. The

Infancy Gospel of Thomas.”

“Well, what happened?” asks Charlie.

“Simple, I just stretched it back to the right size and told him if he cuts another one short don’t try to call me. I’m going down to the Temple and beat up some of the money changers this afternoon.”

“Could you show us one of your miracles right now?”

“Sure, do have any dead people around here!”

“No.”

“Well how about lepers, blind, deaf, dumb or lame? I’ll even go for athlete’s foot.”

“No, I’m sorry, none of them.”

“Okay, then you’ll have to settle for this one.”

Jesus does the fake elastic thumb trick.

“Big deal! My Uncle John used to show me that one when I was a three-year-old kid” Charlie scoffs.

Suddenly Jesus stretches his thumb out two feet beyond his hand.

“Wow! That was much better than Uncle John ever did.

He could only do an inch at on a good day.”

“Oh, ye of little faith.”

“Okay! Let's talk about your birth and early life. Tell us about the Immaculate Conception” Charlie continues.

“Well, one night Gabriel showed up in Mom's bedroom and said - ‘I bring you tidings of great joy’ and the next thing we know is she's pregnant. That’s all he would tell me so I’m too sure about the details. That's all I know!”

“Then what?”

“When her father found out he went to her boyfriend Joe’s house with a slingshot. They didn't have shotguns in those days.”

“And they got married? That was in Nazareth, right?”

“Right!”

“But you were born in Bethlehem. How come your family left town?” asks Charlie curiously.

“It seems that Papa Joe was spreading more than just the word!”

“I read that when you got to inn in Bethlehem there was a

'No Vacancy' sign."

"Well not exactly. When we got to the Inn there was a big sign that read - - 'We'll Leave the Oil Lamp on for You' and right below that it said - 'Gentiles Only - No Jews' in large letters.

"So, you born in a stable then?"

"Yes! And to this day the smell of goat dung and camel droppings makes me nauseous."

Jesus hesitates and then continues.

"Speaking of bad smells did you ever hang around with a bunch of fishermen on a hot summer day?"

Charlie continues with the interview.

"And how about the Three Kings?"

"You mean Larry, Bennie, and Don?"

"No, the Magi, the Three Wise Men. They brought you gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

"They weren't really that wise. They should have realized that even as a baby, I was all-knowing. I could tell knock off perfumes with one sniff and as far the gold goes, gold-

filled doesn't count.”

“Okay then, tell us about your early years when you disappeared between the ages of twelve and thirty. Where were you?”

“If a man has one hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, doesn't he leave the ninety-nine, go to the mountains, and seek that which has gone astray? I went into the wilderness to seek and speak with all of my Father's creatures great and small.”

“You said speak 'with' your Father's creatures. Does that mean you granted all the animals the power of speech?”

“Almost all” Jesus answers.

“What do you mean ‘almost’ all?”

“All but the sheep” Jesus replies.

“Why not the sheep!”

“You must remember - I was in the wilderness for a very long time and I was very lonely.”

“I have read about you casting the money changers from the Temple. Will you tell us a little more about that?”

“Sure! But it wasn't exactly in the Temple and it wasn't exactly the money changers.

It seems that Papa Joe and I were walking passed a hot dog wagon in front of the Temple. It had a sign on it that said ‘Herod's Hot Dog Hut’ so we stopped for a dog.

The guy behind the counter says ‘What’ll ya have?’ and Pop says, ‘Two dogs with kraut’.

Then the guy turns his back on us and starts making the hot dogs. So, I asked him ‘Wait a minute! Are these Hebrew National?’

And he yells back over his shoulder ‘Sabretts!’

This guy was selling non-kosher dogs right in front of the Temple. Man, I lost it.”

“So, what did you do?”

“I saw an old, broken umbrella in the trash can next to the stand, so I pulled it out and gave him an old fashion ass whippin’ with it.”

“But I read that you used a ‘whip of cords’”?

“What did you think I am - MacGyver? Do you know how

long it takes to make a whip of cords? I had to come up with something really quick. I saw the umbrella right there in front of me and I grabbed it out of the can.”

“Okay then let's get to the final days of your ministry? Tell me about The Last Supper?”

“The true story or the fake news version?”

“The true story of course!”

“Well, we were having a party in a room just like the picture that you always see. Everybody there looked pretty much like the picture except one guy was wearing sunglasses and a hoodie. Bet you can't guess who that was?

So anyway, Mary Mag and her girlfriends were there and...”

“Wait a minute! I never saw any women in those pictures?” Charlie interrupts.

“Of course, you don't, they were taking the pictures!”

“Taking pictures? How could they be taking pictures without a camera?”

“They had a Polaroid.”

“So, you want me to believe that you actually had a camera and took a picture at the Last Supper? How did you get a camera?” Charlie says incredulously.

“‘And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive’”.

“But a camera in 33 CE? That's impossible.”

“So ‘In the beginning, I created the heavens and the Earth’ but now a few billion years later in 33 CE I can’t make a camera?”

“Then what?”

“Now the party was just getting started and they bought out the basket of rolls before dinner. I took one and held it up and...”

Again, Charlie interrupts.

“I know! You said, ‘Take and eat for this is my body’.”

“No! I said, ‘Take and eat for it's not good for the body to drink on an empty stomach’. I hardly finished my sentence when one of the disciples pipes up and says

'Hey! There's no more rolls and I didn't get one. Then somebody yelled 'Where's the butter?'

"So, what did you do then?" Charles asks attentively.

"I did what anyone would do. I stood up and said 'Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap yet their Father feeds them'.

Then the disciple who didn't have a roll yelled back 'So that means my roll got fed to the birds?'

And I replied 'No my son. It means I'll call the waitress over and get you one.'"

"So, you called the waitress over and?" Charlie feigns interest.

"Yes, and I said, 'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst'."

"And her reply was?" Charlie asks.

"What do you mean? And I answered sternly 'Would you bring us another basket of rolls?'"

Charlie yawns widely as Jesus's story continues.

"Then I picked up a cup of wine and said..."

"Wait a minute let me guess - 'Take and drink for this is

my blood” Charlie again interrupts.

“Close but not quite right. I said ‘Take ye and drink for this is some good shit - Manischewitz 52 BCE!’

After a while, when I looked around the room all my boys were lying around pretty much wasted. The table was a mess with wine stains and empty bottles all over the place. Then I heard Peter at the other end of the table yell ‘Hey Master - the wine just ran out!’”

“So, what did he want you to do about it?” asks Charlie.

“That’s exactly what I said - ‘What you want me to do about it?’ I shouted back. So, then he yelled ‘Get some water and make more!’

“I am not your teacher. For you have drunk, you have become intoxicated at the bubbling spring that I have measured out” I answered.

“What do you mean by that?” he shouted back.

“What did you mean?” Charlie was perplexed.

“I meant I was getting tired of being the enabler! I’m done for the night”

“And that was the end of it?” asks Charlie.

“Far from it!

Luke yelled from the other end of the table – ‘I say we all chip and send somebody on a wine run’. Then he reached into his pocket and threw two coins on the table. Next, Matthew tossed in three pieces and then finally they all kicked in. Luke pulled it all together and counted it up. ‘Thirty pieces of silver and two Appian Way tokens’ he announced.

So, I turned to Judas and said ‘You look like you're in the best shape of all of us. You go.’ He took the money, pulled up his hoodie and left for the wine store.”

“So, he came back with the wine and the party kept going, right?”

“Wrong again Charlie!” Jesus answers.

“About an hour goes by and where’s Judas with the wine? Shlomo’s Wine Store was only three blocks away.

‘I'm beginning to think he took off with the money and he's not coming back’ exclaimed Matthew.

I replied, 'Amen I say to thee, thou shalt not go out from thence till thou repay the last farthing.'

'What do you mean by that?' he asked.

'It looks like you might be right. He took off with the cash.

I never did really trust him' I answered.

'No sense waiting anymore. He's not coming back. Let's go over to the park and get some air' Mark suggested and we all left for the Garden of Gethsemane."

"Why the Garden of Gethsemane?"

"It was the only park in town that wasn't taken over at night by the abominations."

"Okay so go on" Charlie rapidly interjects to prevent further commentary on the matter by Jesus.

"So, we got to the park and a half hour or so it looked like I was right after all."

"How so?"

"Well, all of them were passed on the benches sleeping it off that is except for Matthew. He over in the bushes throwing up. And he was the guy who wanted me to

make more wine.

Then all of a sudden, I turned around to see Judas running up to me. He had a black eye; a swollen lip and his clothes were torn and dirty.

'What happened to you' I exclaimed in surprise.

'I was on my way to get the wine and I got mugged by two Samaritans' he explained breathlessly.

I should have known, Samaritans, of course!

'Did they happen to have Spanish accents?' I asked him.

'No - They spoke Muslim!' he answered.

Suddenly Peter woke up from his stupor and upon seeing Judas he began to yell. 'There he is - Lyin' Judas'.

All that shouting awakened the rest of them and soon they were all shouting.

'Where's the wine? We want our money back you traitor!'

The next thing I know is the Roman police arrive.

'What's the problem officer?' I asked.

'We hava to taka you down to da station house.' I could hardly understand him with that heavy Italian accent of

his, but I did get the idea.

'What's the charge?'

'Disturbin' da peace. Itsa capital offense' he said.

'Since when is disturbing the peace a capital crime?'

'When itsa happens in the park right next toa Pontius Pilate's house ata two in the morning'.

"So according to the Gospels, Peter jumped in to help you and cut off the ear of one of the soldiers, right?" Charlie interrupts.

"Are you kidding? The last I saw of any of them they were heading towards the bushes. All my Goombahs just left my flat."

"Goombahs?" Charlie repeats with a puzzled look.

"Yeah! When you hang around with Italians long enough you pick some of the lingo."

"Well what about the Judas kiss?"

"Did you see The Godfather?" Jesus replies.

"Yes."

"There you go! More Italian stuff!"

“You know, there has been a lot of talk about Mary Magdalene being at the Last Supper. As a matter of fact, many have said that she was your girlfriend back in the day. What do you have to say about that?”

“So, you saw 'The DaVinci Code' too?”

“Yes! Okay, let's hear it then” answers Charlie.

“Mary was at the party that night. She even brought her girlfriends for the Apostles. The only one who didn't have a chick was Judas.” Jesus paused for a moment.

“Come to think of it maybe that was why he was so pissed off.”

“And?”

“Like I told you, the boys got so wasted that all the girls decided to leave. All except the Mag that is.”

“Go on.”

“Well, like I said before, we all went over to the park and she came too. When the guys went on the nod the Mag started coming on to me. Then all of a sudden, Judas pulled up and crashed the whole scene.”

“So that's the real reason you gave him such a bad rap in the Bible?” Charlie replies.

“Thou hast said it.”

“Let's talk about happier times. You were baptized by John The Baptism in the River Jordan and that brought about your spiritual awakening? Right?”

“That's almost right! It was John but not the River Jordan exactly. I can remember it like it was yesterday. The place of baptism was at the end of a long, hot, dusty road. As I traveled to the site I passed numerous signs along the way each bearing its own special message.

I encountered the first one; it read - 'A baptism', then thirty cubits on, the second - 'By John' and thirty cubits beyond that one, the third - 'You'll be happy for it' and the fourth - 'When you're gone!'

They continued throughout my trek, '100 cubits to John'; 'Get baptized'; 'It's free'; 'When done'; 'By me!'

And more- '50 cubits to John'; 'There's no toll'; 'To save your soul'; 'At the end of the lane'; 'All your sins go down

the drain!'; 'Only 10 more cubits to John'."

"So, they were kind of like the old Burma Shave signs?" suggests Charlie.

"Right on!

So now when I got to the place of baptism it wasn't the River Jordan for sure.

There was a long line of people standing before an above ground pool made of goat skins. A ladder of leather lashed sticks was leaning against it, so people could climb over the rim. John stood in the middle of the pool, waist-deep, receiving the baptizees one at a time. He was an elderly man with a gaunt look, long grey hair and a flowing beard.

As I stepped into the line a woman walked up and handed me a piece of bark with the number twenty-three scrolled on it. 'Please turn this in when you arrive at the baptismal font' she said and then proceeded to issue numbers to those behind me.

The line snaked slowly forward, and I mean slowly. When

I got to within ten people from the pool there was a sign, 'Please be considerate of fellow baptizes - Restrooms This Way' with an arrow point toward the rear of the pool.

I turned to the guy behind me and spoke.

'Listen would you hold my spot? I'll be right back.'

'Where are you going?' he asked.

"I said 'So shall the last be first and the first last. For many are called but few chosen' I answered.

'What do you mean by that?'

'It means I'm feeling called and chosen right now. I have to use the restroom.'

When I got to the restroom a sign on the door read

'Scheiyt Haus'. Below it, were the words, 'Insert coin here' and an arrow pointing to the lock.

I rustled through my pockets and then immediately ran back to the line.

'Anybody got change of a drachma?' I shouted. I was in luck and scurried back to the Scheiyt Haus just in time.

Eventually, I got to the head of the line.

A large sign in red letters read 'No Cannonballing Please'. I ascended the ladder and there was John. I had finally met him. His eyes were filled with the piety of the Lord and his lip bore a welcoming smile. I began my entry into the holy waters with anticipation of the enlightenment I was to receive.

Suddenly, John held up a sign 'Be back in one hour' - and he started to leave the pool.

I couldn't contain myself. I hastily shouted back 'But I was in line for three hours!'

John stopped and turned. 'Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things.'

'What does that mean'" I retorted.

'Lunchtime' he answered over his shoulder and continued his way out of the pool."

"So, then what? You didn't just leave, did you?" Charlie questioned.

"No, I got down from the ladder and walked over to John

who was eating Chinese food from one of those paper containers.

‘But I have read - John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leather girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. It looks like you've got the dress code going but it's about the menu?’ I asked.

‘Do you know how many locusts you have to catch for a decent meal? Besides Chung King's Palestine Palace is only 200 cubits down the road and they deliver’ he replied between bites of an egg roll.

Finally, the hour had past and I went back to the line.

There was a new guy at the head of the line and when I tried to reclaim my rightful position he yelled ‘Hey! No cutting in. The line starts back there pal!’”

“So, what could you do?”

“I said, ‘Whatever your right-hand does, your left hand should not know what it is doing’ and he said, ‘What do you mean by that pal?’ in a snarky tone.

So, I replied ‘I mean I’ve got a great right jab and a terrific

left hook and if you don't get out of the way I'll show you both of them'.

Once again, I climbed the ladder to be received by John.

'Come forth to be washed in these pure waters of life' he beckoned, and I stepped into his presence.

'Welcome my son' he greeted me.

'I thought you baptized in the River Jordan?' I asked.

'The E.P.A. closed me down.'

'Why?' I continued.

'It seems people weren't paying close attention to the restroom sign and you know what happens when that cold water hits you for the first time.'

I was baptized and exited by the ladder. I happened to walk passed "John's Baptismal Gift Shop and Snack Bar".

On a table in front of the shop were small bottles labeled "Pee Free Jordan Water" and boxes labeled "John's

Original Recipe Honey Dipped Locust". I picked up one of the boxes for a closer look. On the bottom of the box, it said - 'Made in Babylon'.

As I was perusing the merchandise, suddenly John appeared in the rear of the gift shop tent. He was dripping wet having just left the last baptism of the day. He was heatedly scolding the store clerk. The conversation was unintelligible except for the very end.

‘You’re fired!’ he yelled at her.

She angrily stripped off her apron, threw it on the ground and walked out passed me.

‘You haven’t heard the last of me’ she yelled back at him as she left.

I noticed her name tag as she stormed out the door, ‘Hi - My name is Salome’ it read.”

“That’s quite a story but let’s get on to something else has always puzzled me. I heard that you taught at the Temple as a boy. Would you please tell us more about that?”

Charlie asks.

“Well, the other kids and I were playing on the Temple's front lawn. Suddenly a Pharisee priest appeared in the Temple door and he yelled at us - ‘Hey you kids! Get off

my lawn!

So, I yelled back, 'It's not your lawn! It's God's lawn!'

Then all of a sudden, the High Priest appears in the doorway next to him and says, 'What's going here?'

So, the first priest then says, 'One of these little smart asses won't get off the lawn'.

The High Priest says, 'Let me try!' and then shouted at me 'Get off the lawn or I'm calling the cops!'

'No way! I will turn your lawn into a den of crabgrass' I answered back."

"What happened then?" Charlie interrupted.

"He called the cops on me!"

"So how did you come to teach at the Temple then?"

"When I got to Juvie court they gave me twenty hours of community service as a janitor at the Temple's Hebrew School."

"It is said that you spoke many parables" Charlie mentioned.

"Yes - I was a huge parable teller. Believe me I told better

parables than any other parable teller.”

“Even better than those of Aesop?” Charlie questions.

“You gotta remember Aesop's were called fables. Fake news! Mine are the real stuff.”

“That is true however the meanings of many of your parables are hard to understand. May I give you some examples, so you may explain to them more clearly?”

“So be it” Jesus replies.

“‘ Luke 15:8 What woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it?’ Would you please explain that one for our listeners?”

“Sure, that one is easy. Let's say you come home night after night and the house is a mess. The wife has been sitting around all day watching TV and eating potato chips.”

“And?”

“All you have to do is tell her that you lost a hundred-dollar bill somewhere and you think it's in the house. The

next thing you know she's a regular house cleaning machine."

"I see. What about 'Matthew 22:10-13 - The wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'?"

"Always use a competent dry cleaner that will have your suit done on time."

"And this one - 'Matthew 6:26-27 - Look at the birds of the air they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?'"

"Always feed the birds and be sure to put your car in the garage after it's just been washed."

"And lastly - 'Matthew 6:28-29 - And which of you by

being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.'"

"It's okay to go to a nude beach but be sure to apply the sunscreen evenly and definitely everywhere. If you don't, don't go blaming God for your problem!"

"Let's talk a little about your 'I'm Back and This Time Kicking Ass' rally" Charlie suggests.

"Yes, I want to reach all peoples - Whites, Blacks, Reds, Yellows, and Oranges."

"Oranges?"

"Yes! The Oranges were a semi-human race that spread over all of North America, thousands of them. But their lack of intelligence and moral character doomed them to almost complete extinction."

"What do you mean by almost complete extinction?"

"There are only two known survivors."

“Really?” says Charlie incredulously.

“Yes, John Boehner and Donald Trump.”

“Let's talk about the Apostles who became were your biographers.”

Jesus pulls a picture out from underneath his robe and shows it to Charlie. Charlie leans forward and squints to get a better view of the picture. It is a close-up photograph of the Last Supper showing name tags on four of the Apostles that read Hamish, Moshe, Morty, and Hymen. He points to the four and asks, “Do you mean these guys?”

“No! Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John?” answers Charlie.

“You didn't really think that a bunch of Jews from Galilee had names like Matthew, Mark Luke and John did you? I changed them all when they wrote the Gospels - non de plumes! Could you imagine, 'The Gospel According to Morty'?”

“I see what you mean. But how come you kept your Hispanic name, Jesus?” Charlie continues.

“No, I changed my name too, from Shlomo to Jesus. Jesus Christ has a much better ring to it than Shlomo Christ don't you think?”

“We have some Tweets and call-ins for you from our audience for you Jesus. Here's a call-in from Benedict in Germany. Go ahead, Bennie.”

“I heard Pope Francis is really Mexican. Should he have to show his birth certificate?”

“That's an interesting question. I have heard that the previous Pope's father was a Nazi” Jesus answers and the phone goes dead.

“We have our next caller on the line. Go ahead Mel G. from Australia.”

“I just saw The Passion of the Christ. I thought it was great. What did you think of it?”

“One cross! And that's a gift!”

“Here's Tweet from Pat [R@CBN700](#) ‘What do you think of your puppet Pope Frank accepting gays into the church? #MakeAmericaStraightAgain’.

“Gays?” Jesus repeats with a puzzled look.

“Our homosexual brothers and sisters” Charlie explains.

“Oh, you mean the abominations? Well, my Father was down on them bigly time in the old days.”

“You mean like the Sodom and Gomorrah thing with fire and brimstone?” Charlie adds.

“Exactly! The whole Earth smelled like a giant fart for months afterward.”

“Here's another tweet from Steve B @DJTsBrain.com.

‘Have you converted to Christianity yet or are you still a Jew?’”

“Shtik drek!” Jesus answers.

“What?”

“Just a little Yiddish!”

“Another caller is on the line, Donny T. from WH. Go ahead, caller.”

“Are you gonna be spouting more liberal bull shit like the Sermon on the Mount at your rally?”

“Woe to you who are rich, really rich, really really rich! It

is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven” Jesus replies.

“Just what is that supposed to mean? “asks the caller.

“You better get on a diet and quick if you want to get through that needle. I recommend Kosher Nutrisystems. Marie lost thirty pounds in just one day.”

Chapter Eight

PC Apostles

Jesus and Gabriel are leaving the studio while discussing preparations for the rally.

“We have a problem. We need people to help set the rally up. We need stagehands, security people, and entertainment to warm up the crowd before you go on.”

“You mean apostles?”

“Exactly! I remember seeing a long line of people waiting at the Unemployment Office on our way over here. Prime pickin' I'd say “Gabriel agrees.

They immediately walk to the Unemployment Office.

There is a long line of Hispanic men in front of the building. Jesus and Gabriel approach them.

“Hi fellows. My name's Gabriel and this is the Messiah.

We've just come to Earth - this is our second time here - and we're looking to hire some brand-new disciples. Are

any of you guys interested?"

There is no response just expressionless staring.

Gabriel continues, "Well, what do you say?"

After a moment one of the men speak.

"No habla Ingles."

"Oh, he speaks Spanish. I'll handle this. A lot of my biggest fans are Latinos. They really dig my mother too. It's hard to find anybody in the barrio that doesn't have her picture tattooed on him somewhere. Let me talk to them" he interjects.

"I didn't know you spoke Spanish?"

"Speak it? My Father invented it! Remember that Golden Calf with Moses back in the day? Of course! I can speak any language - well except Ebonics always gave me a little trouble."

Jesus speaks to the man, not in Spanish in English with a fake Spanish accent.

"Listen Hombres, here's what he said - his name is Gabriel - like the Angel Gabriel and I'm the Messiah. What's your

name?"

"Jesus" replies the man.

"No! No! My name is Jesus."

Jesus turns to Gabriel and speaks without the fake accent.

"I guess my Spanish needs some work. Let me try this again."

He turns back to the man and tries again with the same fake accent.

"My name is Jesus. What is your name?"

"Jesus!" the man again answers.

"I'm getting nowhere with this guy. I'll just call him '

Hombre Primo en la línea'. Hmm - That's a bit long. Okay

- I'll just call him 'Hombre Primo' then."

Jesus mutters to himself and then speaks once more.

"Okay, Hombre Primero how would you and your amigos like a job with Gabe and me? You will promote our events and hand out flyers. You will also make sure the sound system is working right, hand out fish tacos at the show; help clean up after and anything else Gab and I think is

beneath us. You know - kind of like our roadies."

"What's the hourly?" asks Hombre Primero.

"What were you making at your last job? Now, tell me the truth. Remember, I'm the Messiah. I'll know if you're lying. And even worse I'll mark it down as a mortal sin!"

Jesus replies.

"Salario mínimo - and no time and a half for overtime and no bennies."

"I can beat that! How about eight denari an hour?"

"Eight what?" says the man.

Gabriel tugs on Jesus's sleeve and whispers to him.

"Master - they don't use denari anymore!"

"I knew that! It was a negotiating tool I read about in The Art of Deal. That's about seven-fifty. Seven fifty an hour.

That's the best I can do" Jesus snaps.

"What about medical?"

"Medical? No problem! You don't need medical. Got a problem - I'll just cure you right on the spot. I'll even give you dental and optical. If you don't believe me get the

Bible and check me out. It's all there. I've done blindness, leprosy - even death. All that without one day in med school!"

A second man suddenly speaks up.

"Sounds good - of course, we'll need a demonstration healing before we sign up."

Hombre Primero turns to the man next to him in line.

"What do you think Jesus?"

"I just told you, I'm Jesus!" Jesus interrupts.

Jesus suddenly has a look of realization that the second man is named Jesus too. He points to the second man and then the first.

"Alright! Here we go again! You'll be el Hombre Número Dos or how about just Hombre Dos and you'll be Hombre Primero. Now find me a leper and I'll show you my stuff."

"Why does he want a leopard?"

"No estupidez! He wants someone with leprosy!" chides Hombre Primero.

"We ain't got no stinkin' lepers around here" Hombre Dos

mumbles back.

Jesus walks over to him and points to a wart on the man's hand.

“Now watch this!”

Jesus waves his hand slowly over the wart. The wart remains. Jesus calls to Gabriel.

“Gab! Come over here and give me some help with this one.”

Gabriel walks over and they both wave their hands over the wart. The wart disappears, and the Hombres stare in amazement.

“Pretty good huh boys? Okay, that will be five dollars.”

“Five dollars? Why five dollars?” Hombre Dos exclaims.

“Didn't I tell you? Your plan comes with a five-dollar copay. Five dollars for regular medical miracles and twenty-five for emergency miracles. You're lucky I didn't charge you the emergency rate!”

Hombre Dos begrudgingly hands Jesus five dollars.

“I think we'll need more than two guys and we should get

some diversity in our hiring practices, don't you think?" suggests Gabriel.

"You mean like hiring Bitches, Honkies, Niggers, Chinks, Dots and Injuns?" Jesus asks.

"Come on Boss - that's old school bigotry. You can't use those terms anymore unless you're doing standup comedy, rap music or own a professional sports team."

Jesus, Gabriel and the new Apostles continue to walk down the street. They soon come upon a playground basketball court. There see are three black guys playing. They stop and peer through the chain-link fence at the game.

"Hey! Any of you guys want a job?" Jesus shouts through the fence.

They stop playing and one walks over to Jesus.

"What's you want, Man?"

"I said - Any of you guys want a job?"

"Not unless it's with the NBA!" and he turns and starts to walk away back to the game.

“NBA? With you playin' like that! You gotta be foolin'”

Jesus yells after him.

The three of them walk over to the fence. One of the men motions toward one of the others as he speaks.

“You know who you're talkin' to? This is Hebe Pretty here.

Do you know what that means? It means 'He be pretty damn good'. That's what it means!

Now if you boys wanta see - then get your lily-white, Whitie asses and beigey, brown Latino asses out here and we'll show you.”

“I think they are challenging us to some basketball Boss”

Gabriel whispers.

Jesus walks towards the open gate and waves all his disciples to come with him.

“Okay, boys. Let's go.”

“No sabemos basketball!”

“Don't worry! Just feed me!” Jesus answers.

Three of them enter the court - Jesus, Gabriel, and the Apostles. The game begins. Jesus gets the ball from the

opposite end of the court and immediately shoots the ball full court into the basket at the far end.

“We got us one lucky white boy on our hands here” yells one of the black guys.

One of the black guys takes the ball out and on the first dribble, the ball bounces into Jesus’ hands. Jesus runs to the basket, jumps four feet into the air, hangs in midair above the rim for a half-second and dunks the ball.

Everyone stares in amazement.

The game goes on and Jesus continues with one astonishing play after another.

The game ends and all the black guys are out of breath and sweating profusely. Their shirts are soaked. Jesus is neither out of breath nor sweating.

“How'd you learn to play like that?” exclaims one of the guys breathlessly.

“A God-given talent! If you three join us I am sure I can help you with your game. It will probably take a miracle, but I think I can get you ready for the NBA after all.”

The three look at one another, a bit bewildered, raise their eyebrows and begin to follow Jesus down the street. He suddenly stops and asks.

“By the way - what's your name?”

“Hebe.”

“No! Your real name?”

“Bbwaddene” the man replies.

“Do you know what that means?”

“Sure - My mother told me. It's African for The Great One” the answers.

Jesus makes a buzzer noise.

“Wrong! It means a large, stray dog with fleas.”

He turns to the second man.

“And what about you? What's your name?”

“Isoke - my mother said it means 'Airy One - like a bird' in Zulu.”

Another buzzer noise by Jesus.

“No! It means 'Hairy One' not 'Airy One' in Swahili.”

Finally, he turns to the last man.

“And you?”

“Tafadzwa - my mamma said it means 'We are pissed at Whitey'.”

“Looks like we finally got one right!”

The group begins walking again. They pass a local college courtyard.

It's a beautiful spring day and several Asian students are sitting on the bench studying. Jesus quietly approaches the bench and looks over the shoulder of one of them.

“Thermodynamics? Tough stuff!” Jesus remarks.

“Sure is” agrees the student without looking up.

“Maybe I can help?”

“Help how?” the student responds again without looking up.

“Let me see the problem.”

Jesus takes the book from the student, glances at the problem and hands it back to him.

“The answer is negative four hundred and eighty joules

and the next one, problem fifty-two is seven hundred and twenty Kelvin!”

“Let me check the answers in the back” and he thumbs back to the answer section.

“Negative four eighty and seven twenty. You’re right!” he exclaims.

“It's got to be a trick. Give him another one” a student next to him questions.

“Bring it on!” says Jesus confidently.

The student point to another problem at random.

“Here! What's the answer to number twenty?”

“Ah! Harmonic motion. Number twenty. It's four pi square meters per second” Jesus explains.

The second student quickly looks up the answer.

“Right again! How did you do that?”

“I am the Light; the person who sees by me will view all things.”

The students look at the each other in bewilderment.

“What does that mean?”

“It means get in line with the Latinos and the black guys and maybe I'll show you later!” Jesus explains.

As they pass by a local bar. Music is blaring, and the place is packed. Three women are standing by the front door smoking cigarettes.

“Hello girls,” Gabriel says in a sing-song voice.

“Who you callin' girls, Buster?”

“We're trying to get some women to work for us” replies Gabriel.

“What are you? Some kind of pimp or somethin'? We're just out here to have a smoke not to get hustled.”

“You don't understand. He's Jesus Christ and...”

Gabriel is abruptly interrupted.

“No! You don't understand. I'm the Virgin Mary, here's Mary Magdalene and that's Saint Joan of Arc over there. Now if you guys don't get out of here, I'm goin' to call Pontius Pilate over there and get your asses arrested” as she points to the cop across the street.

Jesus, Gabriel and the gang hurriedly move on.

“That didn't work out too good. I wonder why they were so mean.”

“I think I noticed a demon on one of their shoulders. I probably should have done a little casting out. That might have helped to make them nicer” Jesus answers.

“Yeah, I remember the kid from Tyre you exorcised back in the day. It really turned him around. No more tantrums, no more whining, no more backtalk. He even cut way back on porn and masturbation. Why didn't you just exorcise them back there?”

“I didn't feel like getting demon vomit all over me. I'd have to go shower up and we don't have time for that” Jesus answers.

“And besides that wasn't no demon on her shoulder, that was just a shitty lookin' tattoo” Tafadzwa chimes in.

They continue to walk and approach three white guys standing on the corner all dressed in wifebeaters with bulging biceps and tattoos.

“Hey Boss - here's our chance to get some white guys. One

of them has a cross on his arm and the other has your picture on his shoulder. This should be easy.”

Jesus walks up to the biggest guy in the group.

“Hey, Dumb Ass! Do you and the guys want a job?”

“Who are you callin' 'Dumb Ass'? What are you some kinda wise guy lookin' for a beatin'?”

Gabriel immediately pulls Jesus back and scolds him.

“What is the matter with you, Jesus? Why are you calling this guy 'Dumb Ass'?” he says anxiously.

All three of the guys take threatening steps toward Jesus.

Jesus immediately raises his hand pointing to the tattoo on Dumb Asses' arm.

“It says right there on your arm 'Call me 'Dumb Ass' in Chinese.”

“No, it doesn't, it says 'Man of Steel'. The guy who did it told me so” the guy protests.

Jesus again points to the tattoo more closely.

“See that second symbol? He spelled it wrong. See that little loop on the end there? That should loop up not

down. Loop up means 'Man of Steel'; loop down means 'Call me Dumb Ass'."

Jesus calls over the Asian guys and points to the tattoo.

"What's do you think?"

"Loop down it says 'Call me Dumb Ass'" the Asian guy agrees.

He then asks the second Asian guy.

"It says 'Call me Dumb Ass!'"

And then the third.

"Yup!' Call me Dumb Ass' alright"

"There you go. Three smart Asians and the Son of God against the tattoo guy. Four to one - it says, 'Call me Dumb Ass'."

"What am I gonna do now? I got this 'Dumb Ass' tattoo thing down both arms and on my ass too" exclaims Dumb Ass.

"I think I can help. Come over here and give me your arm" Jesus answers.

Jesus rubs his hand over the tattoo on one arm and it

disappears.

“That will be twenty dollars please” Gabriel holds out his hand.

“Twenty dollars for what?”

“Out of network!” Gabriel explains.

“Now the other arm” commands Jesus.

“Hey wait a minute! Is this gonna cost another twenty?”

“No - only ten.”

“How’s that?”

“Tattoo removal is on sale all this week. Buy one removal and get the second one at half price” Jesus explains.

Dumb Ass turns his other arm towards Jesus. Again, Jesus runs his hand over the other arm and the tattoo disappears.

“What about the one on my ass?”

“You're on your own with that one” Jesus answers.

“But didn't you once say, 'Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils'?” Gabriel reminds him.

“Yes, I did but when it comes to a butt rub on another

man I draw the line.”

Jesus turns and looks at the dejected Dumb Ass and sighs.

“If any man will follow me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

“What do you mean?” exclaims Dumb Ass.

“If you and your guys come along with us I'll think about getting rid of that last tattoo for you.”

Jesus walks down the street followed by all his newly recruited Apostles.

When evening arrives, the Apostles have gone home for the night. Jesus and Gabriel walk passed a shabby hotel.

“I think we need to find a place to stay tonight. This looks pretty good. You don't see any 'No Jews' sign, do you?”

“No.”

“Good - I couldn't take another night in a stable. Ever since I was a kid I've had allergies to the smell of animal dung. And for some reason, they really seem to kick in strongly every Christmas Eve.”

They go into the hotel and approach the front desk.

“We'd like a room for the night and we want complete privacy. No visitors especially not three guys from the Middle East who might show up riding camels, carrying AK47s and explosives and claiming that they're here bringing me gifts” Jesus explains to the clerk.

“We only have one room left. First floor rear.”

“We'll take it” Gabriel agrees.

Jesus and Gabriel enter the room. The shades are drawn, and the room is sweltering. Gabriel has beads of sweat running down his face.

“It's boiling in here and it looks like the AC isn't working. Let's open a window.”

Suddenly, a loud trumpeting is heard coming from outside the window. Jesus goes to the window puts up and shade and opens it. He immediately steps back and pulls his shirt up over his nose. Through the window is seen a sign 'The Greatest Show on Earth - Elephant Tent'. Several elephant butts are protruding out through the front flap of the tent. Jesus immediately slams the window

closed. He heads for the door and starts to leave the room.

“Where are you going?” shouts Gabriel.

“To find a stable.”

Chapter Nine

The Healing

It is several hours before the rally is to start. Jesus and Gabriel are at the entrance to the park.

Suddenly, a sobbing woman runs up to Jesus. She falls on her knees before him and speaks.

“Master it is written that you can raise the dead.”

“So, it has been written” Jesus replies.

“Will you raise my husband Francisco? I implore you.”

“And where shall I find Francisco?”

The woman opens her jacket pulls out a small plastic baggie filled with ashes and hands it to Jesus.

Jesus stares and pauses.

“You're not giving me a whole lot to work with. I don't know if this is possible, but I'll do my best.”

Gabriel calls Jesus to the side and whispers to him.

“Master - doesn't the Bible tell us that you once said, 'Everything is possible for one who believes'?”

“Sure, I did but I was quoted out of context. What I really said is 'Everything is possible except the impossible for one who believes' and it looks like this one could be in the impossible category.”

Jesus turns back to the woman.

“Place Francisco in a small bowl, add one tablespoon of salt, a dash of Tabasco sauce and a pinch of paprika for color. Boil some holy water and add exactly one drop each day for forty days.”

“Will he then again walk the Earth with me?” she asks.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?”

The woman takes the ashes back from Jesus with a perplexed look and leaves.

“What did that mean?” asks Gabriel.

“What it means I had to come up with something quick and that was the only one of my sayings that I could think

of on the spur of the moment like that!”

“Why did you tell her to do all that stuff with the Tabasco sauce, salt, and holy water if you know that his resurrection is impossible?”

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?”

“But what does that mean?” Gabriel asks again.

“I just told you what it means didn't I?”

Later that day, a singer is on stage warming up the crowd as the rally begins. He is dressed in a robe and wearing sandals while several women in nun's habits dance in the background. He addresses the crowd.

“We come here today to honor the return of our most holy guest and Savior. In so doing I would like to sing my remix of one of his favorite songs with Silent Night in the Hood.”

With that, the curtain behind him opens revealing and a DJ and he begins to rap.

“Silent Night in the hood
It ain't really that good!

It's all quiet in the hood
on Christmas Eve like it should.
then what to my wondering ears do I hear?
It sounds like gunshots loud and clear.

I could tell by the crack, it's no twenty-two,
this I knew.
It could be a three fifty-seven,
like the one that belongs to Devon.

Silent Night in the hood
It ain't really that good!

It was sharp and loud,
like thunder from a cloud.
Could be the Crips or the bloods,

can't really tell unless I see their duds.

Gotta tell if they're red or blue,
to know for true.

Christmas or not,
somebody just got shot.

Silent Night in the hood
It ain't really that good.

Jesus' birth
don't bring no mirth.
Long as guys on the block,
are carryin' a glock.

It's gotta be about crack
or maybe smack.
Sellin' on the wrong corner,
it'll make your mamma a mourner.

Silent Night in the hood
It ain't really that good.

I ran to the window and threw open the sash.
The AC fell out and into the trash.
What to my wondering eyes do I see?
St. Nick on the sidewalk below, dirty and bloody.

He was lying there
with his pack.
It looked like he was on the run
and shot in the back.

The gifts from his sack
were strewn about like firewood.
A bunch of kids from the hood,
where grabbin' all that they could.

Silent Night in the hood
It ain't really that good.

He musta brought the wrong toy,
to some dealer's little boy.
Now, I hear the sirens beginning to scream.
I sure hope it's not all a bad dream.

Then on the rooftop above what caught my eye?
Eight tiny empty harnesses did I spy.
I immediately knew what had been done
Christmas dinner would be venison.

Even if it's true
and Santa is through.
At least he didn't go down without a fight
on this magical night.

The singer finishes and the crowd roars.

Gabriel enters acting as emcee. He stands center stage with the microphone in hand and a large Styrofoam, artificial boulder is behind him.

“Okay, I want to thank Rapper RX Refill for that great tune you just heard.”

The crowd roars again.

“And give a shout out to the band for those other great tunes they played - 'Do You Smell What I Smell - I Think It's Weed', 'God Rest Ye Merry Hooker Asses' and 'I Saw Daddy Kissing Santa Claus'.

Let's hear it for them.”

The crowd roars once more.

“Thank you! Thank you! And now here he is, the one you've all been waiting for.”

More applause and cheers of anticipation rise from the audience. The noise finally subsides, and Gabriel continues.

“Our Apostles will now reveal the very special guest you've all been waiting for - The Son of God!” he shouts.

Two Apostles, Dumb Ass and one of the Asian Apostles jump from the wings onto the stage. They begin to roll the boulder away pretending to do so with great difficulty. More deafening shouts come from the crowd as Jesus is revealed standing behind the boulder with his hands thrust forward toward the crowd. Each hand bears a smear of red lipstick and he has a small plastic wreath on his head.

A person close to the stage shouts as Jesus approaches.

“I can see it from here; that’s no crown of thorns!”

Gabriel immediately steps forward next to Jesus and angrily answers.

“Hey man, I went to The Dollar Store, Ebay, Amazon, and all over the Internet. I’d like to see you find a crown of thorns!”

Suddenly another yells.

“I don’t think that’s real blood on his hands either!”

Gabriel shouts back angrily again.

“Two thousand years! Don’t you think he would have

healed up by now?"

There is a brief silence and Jesus begins his sermon.

"Praise be to our heavenly Father for it is..."

Again, a voice comes from the crowd.

"Hey - There's no more hot dogs!"

Jesus stops his sermon and called to Gabriel.

"Gab - come over here! Here - pull my finger."

Gabriel obliges and a long string of hot dogs issue from Jesus' sleeve. Jesus continues the sermon.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

Gabriel interrupts and yells to the crowd.

"Okay let's hear it from all the poor in spirit out there!"

The crowd cheers loudly and whistles.

Jesus continues.

"Blessed are they who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

Gabriel interrupts again and yells to the crowd.

"Okay let's hear it from all you mourners!"

The crowd cheers loudly and whistles again.

Jesus continues once more.

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth.”

Gabriel interrupts again for the third time and yells to the crowd.

“Now from the meek!”

One person claps very faintly from the back of the crowd.

“Come on meek. If you want to inherit the Earth, you gotta start standing up for yourselves.”

Two people clap very faintly from the back of the crowd.

“Now that's more like it” Gabriel shouts.

Jesus's sermon continues.

“Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

Another voice from the throng shouts.

“Hey - speaking of hunger and thirst, the flyer said free refreshments will be served. The dogs are a buck and a half.”

Jesus calls over one of his disciples and whispers to him.

“So be it. Dumb Ass! Get the boys to hand out the food.”

Dumb Ass and the Apostles start moving through the crowd passing out the food and Jesus continues to speak.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God.”

Another one from the audience yells.

“What is this crap? The Bible said we were getting loaves and fishes not Mrs. Paul’s Fish Sticks on a stale matzah?”

Jesus ignores him.

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”

“Hey, when do the miracles start? I dragged my grandfather's body over here and you better raise him real soon. He's startin' to stiffin'up” someone shouts.

“Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom....” Jesus again ignores the shouts.

“Where's the wine? This is just water. You said there would be wine” comes another call.

Gabriel walks over to Jesus and whispers.

“I thought you said you were going to make water into some Manischewitz for the rally? What happened?”

“I told you to get Perrier! Oh, but you had to cheap it out and buy Shop Rite water. What did you expect? Garbage in, garbage out!” he answers.

Jesus turns back to the crowd and stammers.

“Uh, you didn't read the flyer carefully my son. It said right at the bottom - BYOB in caps.”

After a myriad of interruption, Jesus finally concludes his sermon.

“It is healing time. Come forth to be cleansed of illness and sin.”

The line of those clamoring to be healed assembles. There are several hundred people.

“Boss, how are we going to do this? We'll be here all night” Gabriel asks.

“You're right. Get me the bullhorn.”

Jesus addresses the crowd with the bullhorn.

“Okay, all diseased persons. I need your attention. Those with dementia, please get someone to pay attention for you.

All those with diseases A through I, like acne through ingrown hairs, line up on the left. All those with diseases K through P, like Kuru through Plague, line up in the middle. The rest of you with anything like Scabies or warts, you line up on the right.

And remember, no cutting in line. If you cut in and say it was because you have Alzheimer's and you really didn't know you were cutting, I'm not going to accept that and you will not be cured. I repeat - You will not be cured and no second chances!

Also, please be advised that some receivers of miracle healing have experienced an upset stomach, diarrhea, gas, loose stools and religious image hallucinations in everyday food products and passing clouds. Do not drive or operate machinery immediately after your miracle has been performed.

The crowd scrambles to the proper lines. Jesus faces the crowd on the left closes his eyes waves his hands several times and a roar goes up from the group on the right.

Canes and crutches fly through the air.

Jesus calls to the Apostles.

“Please carry those people in line one that were hit by those flying crutches to line three where concussions and fractured skulls are to be cured. Gabriel, give me that bullhorn back.”

He then addresses the crowd again with the bullhorn.

“There will be no more crutch or cane throwing after you are cured. Anyone caught throwing crutches will be recrippled.”

Jesus faces the centerline, closes his eyes, waves his hands and the crowd roars. Jesus now faces the crowd on the right waves his hands, leans backward, rotates his body three times, pulls his head to the right and then to the left, bends over and touches his toes three times and the crowd roars.

“Boss, why was that last miracle so hard?” Gabriel inquires.

“What do you 'mean hard?”

“Well, you had to do all that bending and twisting and toe touching?”

“Oh, that! My back was a little stiff from sleeping in that manger last night and I was just getting the kinks out”

The crowd begins to leave, and Jesus grabs the bullhorn.

“Attention! All those who have been healed - please remember to turn in your Handicap Parking Tags at the gate. Someone will be there to collect them before you leave and if you want to put a little in the tip jar that would be appreciated too.

Also, please go to www.Miracles-R-Us.com to get your very own DVD of your healing to share with friends and family. Only \$19.95 plus postage and handling.”

The rally is over. Jesus and Gabriel are leaving the park.

They are suddenly surrounded by a small crowd as a man runs up to Jesus and kneels before him. The man is

breathlessly as he speaks.

“Oh, Great Healer I am late to your rally. Forgive me. I have heard of your many miracles. Cure me of this curse, I implore you.”

Jesus pulls his shirt up over his nose, places his other hand on the man's head and speaks.

“All these evil things come from within and defile a man. Be gone from this man now and forever forth. Go and be healed.

And by the way - henceforth avoid eating cabbage, cauliflower, and beans just to name a few.”

The man arises. Jesus pulls his shirt down from his nose and takes a deep breath. He hands the man a small card. The man takes it and leaves rejoicing.

“Master that was wonderful! How did you heal him without even being told of his affliction?” Gabriel wonders.

“Having eyes, see you not? And having ears, hear you not? Having a nose, you smell not?”

“What do you mean?”

“He was a chronic flatulator!”

“What was that card you gave him?”

“Oh, that! I got them yesterday at King James Print Shop.”

Jesus reaches into his pocket, pulls out a card and hands it to Gabriel. The card reads-

“The Happy Healer. Licensed and fully insured.

Specializing in demon expulsion and raising the dead.

Over 2000 years of experience. Established in 0000. Yes,

we make house calls!”

The park is emptied except for one man.

He calls out to Jesus.

“Hey, what about me over here? I didn't get healed.”

“Are you sure my son?” answers Jesus.

The man lifts up his barefoot.

“Look! Do I look like I'm cured?”

Jesus looks intently but sees nothing.

“It's Onychomycosis” the man cries.

Jesus frantically begins to ponder but nothing comes to

mind.

“Were you in the 'O' line like you were supposed to be?”

“Yes! Onychomycosis! Onychomycosis!” the man answers impatiently.

“I'm sorry my son. I don't remember seeing your affliction listed in the MWDR.”

“MWDR? What the hell is that?”

“Miracle Worker's Desk Reference.”

“That's just great! You cured everybody else from acrocephalosyndactyilia to Zollinger-Ellison Syndrome but not me! This whole thing smells of bigotry” the man replies indignantly.

Chapter Ten

Crime and Punishment

It is the next morning and Jesus and Gabriel are seating on a bench at the park entrance. Gabriel is reading the newspaper when he suddenly erupts.

“Boss! Boss! Look at this. It says, 'Local Healer Accused of Discrimination and Bigotry'.”

“What does it say?”

Gabriel read aloud to Jesus.

“Mr. Jason Jorick has accused a local miracle worker of prejudice and civil rights violations. Mr. Jorick is quoted as saying 'I went to the rally at the park and at the end, everybody lined up to be healed so I got in the J through P line because I have Onychomycosis. Then everybody got healed, I mean crutches were flying, wheelchairs were overturned, and all the Seeing Eye dogs were let loose to do their stuff all over the place. I mean I almost stepped in

some of it a couple of times. Everybody was healed but me. I think it was pure discrimination against people with Onychomycosis. There's no doubt. We Onychomycosisists aren't going to take it anymore. We're going to fight back.'

"Is there a byline on the article?"

"It says it was written by Edward Crum - a black, bisexual, six-fingered, transgender, Onychomycosisist midget. And he adds - 'I myself thoroughly understand discrimination.'"

Suddenly, Gabriel jumps to his feet and points across the street. People carrying signs are milling around.

"There's a whole bunch of people over there with signs," he says while squinting.

"Can you read any of them?"

"One of them says 'Healer Sucks'. Oh, here's another. It says 'Cure All? - Not if you're a Onychomyc'"

"If you're a what?" Jesus asks.

"I think it meant to say 'Onychomycosisist' but it wouldn't fit on the sign."

Gabriel hesitates.

“And there's even one of our Apostles over there with a sign.”

“Which one?”

“The white guy with the tats.”

“What does his sign say?”

“It says ‘Healer - my ass!’”

A cop approaches Jesus and Gabriel. It's the same cop that gave them the ticket at the park previously.

“Are you that bigoted healer who ran at the rally last night?”

“Well, uh...” Jesus stammers.

“I have a warrant for your arrest. You'll have to come with me.”

“On what charges?”

“The charge is inflicting injury on a minority. A hate crime” answers the cop.

“I didn't inflict any injury on any minority.”

“How many people do you know that have

Onychomycosis?"

"Well, none."

"There you go! He's a minority" answers the cop.

"Did you cure Mr. Jorick last night?"

"Well, no..." Jesus stutters.

"Did you cure everybody else?"

"Well, yes..." Jesus again stutters.

"Then, how do you think Mr. Jorick felt?"

"Not too good, I guess."

"Not good? I'd say you hurt his feelings bad - really bad - maybe even felony bad! Then you left him writhing in pain with his Onychomycosis while everyone else went on their merry way completely cured. From Mr. Jorick's standpoint, you weren't exactly the Good Samaritan, were you?" the cop chides.

"I guess not!"

"Okay, there you go, you just confessed."

The cop pauses and looks Jesus up and down.

"Wait a minute, aren't you the guy I gave a ticket to at the

park the other day for holding a rally without a permit?"

"Yes," Jesus admits.

"Looks like you got a pretty good rap sheet going. We've got a name for guys like you - 'Career Criminals'. Okay, let's go."

Jesus finds himself at the city jail sitting in a cell with three other hardened prisoners.

"Hey Bro, what's the rap? Me, myself I'm in for murder" one of the fellow prisoners asks him.

"Yeah, what's your sheet? Mine's rape. I raped a nun" a second prisoner interrupts before Jesus can answer.

"I got armed robbery goin' for me" the third one immediately adds.

"I've been charged with a hate crime against an Onychomycosisist" Jesus answers.

A silence fills the cell as the three prisoners gasp. Then one of them looks straight at Jesus and speaks in a startled voice.

"Holy shit! I wouldn't wanta be in your shoes."

“Me neither “the second exclaims.

“It don't look good for you Bro.”

“I'd say you be lookin' at least ten maybe fifteen!”

“I'm bettin' I'm seein' the street before you” the first prisoner continues.

“But you guys are charged with murder, rape and armed robbery” Jesus exclaims.

“Yeah- but Judge Pylot ain't no murderer and he ain't no raper and he never held nobody up” the second prisoner explains.

Jesus mutters to himself quietly, “Boy that name sounds familiar, but I just can't place it.”

Then he speaks aloud.

“And so?”

“But he is an Onychomycosisist!” announces the first prisoner.

Jesus walks to the far corner of the cell, gets down on his knees and begins to pray aloud.

“Father help me in my hour of need I pray.”

The three fellow prisoners huddle at the other side of the cell.

“This guy hasn't even been convicted yet and he's already found Jesus” prisoner two comments.

Suddenly, loud echoing, voice fills the cell as God the Father speaks.

“Moses didn't whine when I sent him down to tell the new rules to that mob of pissed off Jews.

Jonah never whined when he got swallowed by the whale. Imagine sloshing around in whale chyme for three days and without boots no less.

Job never whined when I gave him all those sores and boils just to settle a bet.

Now, you get yourself in a little trouble and what do I get out of you? Whining and sniveling! You gotta man up!”

“Thanks a lot, Dad! Put the Holy Ghost on the line.”

“No can do.”

“Why not?”

“The other day Gabriel was changing the newspaper and

left the cage door open. That's last we saw of Him."

"How could he be so careless?" Jesus exclaims.

"He claimed it wasn't his fault. He was trying to clean the cage and the Holy G. bit him. When he pulled his hand out the G. took off and we haven't seen Him since."

Suddenly the jailer appears at the cell door and speaks to Jesus.

"Hey, you! You just made bail."

The jailer opens the cell and Jesus walks out. He meets Gabriel on the street in front of the jail.

"Where did you get the money to bail me out like that?"

"It wasn't me. It was a guy named Francisco."

Jesus is stunned.

"Francisco?"

"Yeah, and I thought you told her it would take forty days? It's been only two" replies Gabriel.

"I must have given her the fast-acting miracle formula by mistake. I better call her."

"Why?"

“The side effects” answers Jesus.

“Like what?”

“Eating human brains!”

“I don’t think you’re going to get her” Gabriel replies.

“Why is that?” asks Jesus.

“Francisco said he and his wife were going to take a trip to Washington to celebrate his resurrection. They’re going to tour the Capitol Building and the White House.”

“Then I definitely have to warn them!”

“About what?”

“There’s a good chance that he might starve to death” answers Jesus.

“What do you mean?”

“He would have to attack the entire Congress and Senate just to get one decent meal?”

“Well, what about the White House then?”

“Not even a snack!” Jesus answers.

Chapter Eleven

Trial and Tribulation

It is the next morning in Judge Pylot's courtroom. The jury is assembled, and Jesus's trial is ready to start. The Judge addresses the court.

"Order in the court!

Bailiff - please escort all the protesters from the courtroom.

I understand the emotion being an Onychomycosisist myself, but we must have order before we convict this defendant."

The prosecutor begins his argument.

"This man stands before you accused of a most heinous crime. He, with malice and intent, condemned Mr. Jorick to a life of suffering without regard. While curing hundreds of others around him, Mr. Jorick was left to a life of despair and shame by the defendant. This, I say, is the height of bigotry and discrimination and we will

prove it so without a shadow of a doubt.

I would now like to call Mr. Jorick to the stand”

The prosecutor motions Jorick to the stand. He approaches on crutches and takes the stand and is sworn in. The prosecutor begins his questioning.

“Mr. Jorick, I understand that you were so denigrated at the rally that you experienced bouts of severe depression afterward.”

“Yes, very severe” Jorick agrees.

“Is it then true that during one of these episodes you felt driven to choose between two courses of action?”

“Yes, very driven.”

“Tell us, what were those choices?”

“Suicide or writing an emotional cathartic poem relating to this painful incident.”

“Obvious you chose the latter. Would you tell us about this catharsis? Or even better please read it to us.”

“Certainly!” he agrees.

Jorick takes a paper out and begins to read nervously.

“I was told that in days of old
they all came, the sick and the lame.
When I went to the rally,
I thought I too would be healed that day,
but no way!
The healer is a hoax and a scam!
I don't give a damn!
When it's all said and done,
he's a charlatan.
I sat and I waited all through the show,
all I got was a stale fish sandwich to go.
He cured warts, ringworm
and every other germ.
And that wasn't all,
he even made a midget tall!
After all I seen
I know that not curing me was just him being mean.

So here I am,
tricked by his scam.
That's about it,
he treated me like shit!"

"Thank Mr. Jorick for that heart-wrenching account of the crime. That is all Your Honor."

The judge calls Jesus's lawyer, Roy Cohn.

"Okay, Mr. Cohn, how does the defendant plead?"

"Not guilty Your Honor!" Cohn answers.

Gabriel leans over and whispers to Jesus.

"Is that the Roy Cohn who worked with Joe McCarthy on the Un-American Activities Committee in the 50s? Wasn't he charged with witness tampering and perjury? I thought he was dead?"

"Sure is! And you can't imagine the strings Dad had to pull for Satan to give him a three-day pass" Jesus whispers back.

"But isn't he the sleaziest, most conniving, unethical

lawyer that ever lived?"

"I sure hope so! Last time all I got was a just outta Law School Public Defender and look what happened" Jesus answers.

"Not guilty on what basis?" the questions Cohn.

"Your Honor, this man is not guilty of bigotry, not guilty of discrimination, not guilty of hate crimes - he's guilty of misunderstanding.

He was healing Mr. Jorick of Distal Subungual Onychomycosis when in reality Mr. Jorick suffers from Proximal Subungual Onychomycosis.

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, please remove your shoes and socks and put your feet on the railing."

The jury obliges. The judge calls the bailiff to the bench and whispers to him.

The bailiff goes into the judge's chamber and immediately returns with a can of Glade and begins spraying around the jury box.

Cohn continues.

“Your Honor let me use this juror's left big toe as defense exhibit one.

Now let me call Dr. AjatashatruAnshumanAshwatthama to the stand”

Doctor AjatashatruAnshumanAshwatthama takes the stand and is sworn in.

“Now Dr.AjatashatruAnshumanAshwatthama, did I get that right?”

“No. It's AjatashatruAnshumanAshwatthamaAnus. You left out my 'anus'.”

“Okay, then Doctor A - Is it true that you are a world-renown Onychomycosis specialist who has studied over a million feet, maybe a billion, in your native India?”

“Yes, and if you count both feet it could be two billion”

Doctor A answers.

Cohn continues.

“And let me add just a little factoid for the jury to consider. I've done some arithmetic on the back of this napkin here. That number of feet could stretch from here

to the moon and back over fifty times. That's a lotta feet!"

Cohn continues.

"Very truly I am the world's greatest Onychomycosisist doctor in my country" the doctor agrees.

Cohn points to one of the juror's toes

"Now, from your seat in the witness chair can you tell if this toe is Distal Subungual Onychomycosis or Proximal Subungual Onychomycosis?"

"I'm not sure" the doctor squints.

Cohn points to the toe of the next juror.

"Exhibit two your Honor. How about this one?"

The doctor again squints.

"I'm not sure."

Cohn continues down the line pointing to each toe in succession and getting the same answer from Doctor A.

"Ladies and gentlemen let it be shown that even Doctor AjatashatruAnshumanAshwatthamaAnus, a world-renowned specialist in Onychomycosis could not determine the specific type of toenail fungus on any of the

jurors. Let me ask you then, what do you expect out of a carpenter?

Also, let the record reflect my client's concern that the jury has been stacked with Onychomycosisists.

I rest my case!"

The jury adjourns and returns two minutes later.

"Have you reached a verdict?" queries the judge.

"Yes, we have Your Honor. We the jury, find the defendant guilty" exclaims the jury foreman.

The courtroom erupts with cheers as the spectators wave their socks overhead.

"Defendant please rise. The jury having found you guilty of a hate crime..."

The jury foreman interrupts the judge before he can pass sentence.

"Your Honor, we also find the defendant guilty of additional crimes and misdemeanors. Practicing medicine without a license, failure to provide Workman's Compensation Insurance, blasphemy and claiming to be

King of the Jews.”

“I object Your Honor. Blasphemy and claiming to be King of the Jews does not apply in this case. Double jeopardy - they were tried over two thousand years ago” Cohn shouts.

“Objection overruled. The Statute of Limitations does not apply in cases involving murder, taxes, student loan bankruptcy hearings, blasphemy and claiming to be King of the Jews. Do you have anything to say before the jury deliberates your sentence?”

Jesus rises.

“Yes, Your Honor - For this reason, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him.....

So, my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The judge, the jury and the entire courtroom are all

yawning. Jesus finally finishes after an hour and a half. There is a short silence while all struggle to sit up straight and become attentive.

“Just what are you trying to say?” asks the judge.

Jesus replies.

“Amen, I say unto you.”

He hesitates.

“Come on judge - Gimme a break!”

The judge motions to the bailiff. The Bailiff brings a bottle of hand sanitizer and paper towels. The judge proceeds to squirt the sanitizer on his hands and wipe it off on the paper towels.

"I am innocent of this man's blood - But the jury has found you guilty of a hate crime, practicing medicine without a license and sundry other offenses. The sentence may range from a two hundred and fifty dollar fine to death. Will the jury please now adjourn to decide this man's fate?"

The solemn faces of the jury are apparent as one of the jurors picks the lint out from between his toes.

“Before the jury adjourns to decide Mr. Christ's sentence is there anything you would like to add?” the judge asks Cohn.

“Yes, Your Honor. Mr. Christ has asked me to read the following statement. - Forgive them, Father, for they know not what they do.”

He hesitates and then continues.

“And as a token of my complete forgiveness, I'm sending each juror home today with a free sample of my premium "Visions Weed" along with an application form for "JC's Weed of the Month Club"- Our slogan is "A guaranteed holy hallucination in every joint or your money back".

Just return the unsmoked portion and cancel your subscription. You will receive a full refund.

PS - Termination fees will apply.”

Jesus motions to His disciples in the courtroom audience. One disciple approaches each juror makes the sign of the cross before him and hands him a joint.

“You're the Son of God and all you're giving us is a lousy

dime bag of weed? Oprah gave everybody a car! Throw the book at him judge!" shouts one of the jurors.

"Will that be all Mr. Cohn?" Pylot asks.

"No, Your Honor - I would like to present a character witness before the sentence deliberations begin."

Cohn turns to the audience.

"Would anyone in the audience like to come up and testify on behalf of this man?"

A man in the audience raises his hand and Cohn recognizes him. The man approaches. He looks Rastafarian. He is wearing a dirty bathrobe, has long, dreadlocks and a crazed look.

"Will you please state your name and home address for the jury?"

"John - John of Patmos."

"And what do you have to say of Mr. Christ, this man before you?"

"J.C.'s weed is some of the holiest shit I ever smoked. I must have done a kilo when I wrote Revelations. Have

you read it? It's a trip and a half and it's a best seller. I owe it all to this man and his weed."

"But I thought you were doing shrooms?" Cohn asks.

"I was but I ran out and got writer's block right in the middle of the story. Then J.C.'s weed came along and saved a whole book of the Bible."

"Thank you, Mr. Patmos. That is all Your Honor."

Jesus motions to the Apostles and two come up and drag John away.

The jury leaves to begin deliberation. Within seconds they are back.

"Bailiff, will you please hand me the sentencing verdict?"

Judge takes the verdict and reads.

"We hereby sentence you to one year of community service in the Happy Feet Nail Salon. There you will provide free pedicures for all Onychomycosisistic sufferers. So, say we all."

The judge slams the gavel. Jesus stands before the jury and blesses them. He closes his eyes.

“LHaL AiYT B'aD,LaA AeSiYM AaK,ZNaA B'B,eYT,” he repeats it three times in rapid succession.

“What is he saying?,” asks the judge.

“‘ There’s no place like home’ in Aramaic” Gabriel replies.

Jesus clicks his sandals together three times and both he and Gabriel disappear.

THE END