

THE EASTER STORY

by Peggy Haslar



CHRISTIANPUBLISHERS

Copyright Notice

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this Work is subject to a royalty. This Work is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America and all countries with which the United States has reciprocal copyright relations, whether through bilateral or multilateral treaties or otherwise, and including, but not limited to, all countries covered by the Pan-American Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention and the Berne Convention.

RIGHTS RESERVED: All rights to this Work are strictly reserved, including professional and amateur stage performance rights. Also reserved are: motion picture, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video or sound recording, all forms of mechanical or electronic reproduction, such as CD-ROM, CD-I, DVD, information and storage retrieval systems and photocopying, and the rights of translation into non-English languages.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS AND ROYALTY PAYMENTS: All amateur and stock performance rights to this Work are controlled exclusively by Christian Publishers. No amateur or stock production groups or individuals may perform this play without securing license and royalty arrangements in advance from Christian Publishers. Questions concerning other rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers. Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Professional and stock fees will be set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. Any licensing requests and inquiries relating to amateur and stock (professional) performance rights should be addressed to Christian Publishers.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid, whether the play is presented for charity or profit and whether or not admission is charged.

AUTHOR CREDIT: All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisement and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line where no other written matter appears. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s).

PUBLISHER CREDIT: Whenever this play is produced, all programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice: ***Produced by special arrangement with Christian Publishers.***

COPYING: Any unauthorized copying of this Work or excerpts from this Work is strictly forbidden by law. No part of this Work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form, by any means now known or yet to be invented, including photocopying or scanning, without prior permission from Christian Publishers.

THE EASTER STORY

By Peggy Haslar

Scripture is based on the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

The “NIV” and “New International Version” trademarks are registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by International Bible Society. Use of either trademark requires the permission of International Bible Society.

CAST

Reader 1	Moses
Reader 2	David
Reader 3	Micah
Reader 4	Malachi
Reader 5	Isaiah
Reader 6	

NOTE: Readers' parts can be divided or coupled to accommodate the number of available narrators.

PRODUCTION NOTES

COSTUMES/PROPS

Readers dress as themselves. Moses and the prophets dress in biblical robes; David is dressed as a king. Moses carries a rod or stone tablets facsimile, and the others carry a scroll from which to read their prophecies.

SET

A special set is not needed. Readers may stand in a semicircle or two lines (as an inverted V) with a space between Readers 3 and 4, where the biblical characters will stand at the appropriate time.

MUSIC

The service opens with congregational singing of traditional Easter hymns such as "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" and "Low in the Grave He Lay." The hymn "Crown Him With Many Crowns" is sung at the close of the program. This may be congregational singing or as special music (choral or solo).

1 OPENING: Congregational singing of Easter hymns.

2 READER 1: Good Friday is passed; it's Easter morning! He is
3 risen! But let us begin by remembering the final events of
4 Good Friday so that we can fully appreciate the power
5 that is Easter. Jesus of Nazareth was crucified during
6 Passover by the Roman procurator, Pontius Pilate, at the
7 request of the religious leadership of the Jews and the
8 cries of an angry mob. The traitor, Judas Iscariot, hung
9 himself in despair. With the exception of John, the
10 disciples fled the scene. Peter even denied Christ with
11 curses. A few women, including his mother, were all who
12 remained with John as loyal followers of Christ as he
13 died on the cross for the crime of blasphemy — claiming
14 equality with God. After his death Jesus was taken from
15 the cross, wrapped in linen cloths, and buried in the tomb
16 of Joseph of Arimathea, a wealthy admirer. The women
17 went home to prepare spices, but rested on Saturday, the
18 Sabbath.

19 READER 2: According to Luke, this is what happened next:
20 Very early Sunday morning, the women took the spices
21 they'd prepared to the tomb, but when they arrived, they
22 found the tomb empty! While they were wondering about
23 this, two men in shining clothes appeared. Stunned and
24 afraid, the women fell, their faces to the ground, but the
25 men said:

26 Why do you look for the living among the dead?

27 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told
28 you, while he was still with you in Galilee: "The Son
29 of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful
30 men, be crucified and on the third day be raised
31 again." (Luke 24:5b-7)

32 And they remembered. They hurried to tell the
33 disciples, who didn't believe them, because their words
34 seemed like "nonsense" or "an idle tale."

35 READER 3: Who can blame the disciples for not immediately

believing the women's words? The reality that Christ had risen had to sink into each one in his own way. Mary Magdalene saw him outside the tomb; Peter and John came to inspect the premises. Christ began visiting his confused followers, and some were quicker than others to believe. Thomas would become famous for holding out unless he could see Christ for himself. There were so many pieces to fit together. What did it all mean?

READER 4: Two of Christ's followers were given an extraordinary Bible lesson which explained it all. They were walking about seven miles from Jerusalem to the little village of Emmaus, talking as they went about everything that had happened over the weekend, when they were joined by Jesus himself. But naturally, they didn't recognize him. He asked what they were talking about, and out spilled the bewildering story of the beloved prophet, Jesus, who'd been handed over by the chief priests and crucified, and who some were now saying was alive. And then Jesus explained the meaning of these events to them. He began with Moses and all the prophets in the Old Testament and showed them the pattern of prophecy concerning himself. It had been there all along, but they had missed it.

READER 5: The two on the road to Emmaus finally recognized Jesus when he broke bread with them. But suddenly he was gone. They rushed back to Jerusalem, and while they were still telling the disciples what had happened, Jesus appeared. After he reassured them and ate a piece of fish in what must have seemed an astonishingly casual way, Jesus began to teach them all, again unraveling the threads of prophecy which had been there, undetected, in their Scriptures.

He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the

Prophets and the Psalms. (Luke 24:44)

READER 6: Many of those outside our faith have the misconception that Christianity sprang out of nowhere some two thousand years ago when a Jewish carpenter's son decided to start a new religion. Nothing could be further from the truth. Christ himself said it: "Everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." And he opened their minds to understand that from the law of Moses (Genesis to Deuteronomy) to the Psalms and the prophets — *all* Scripture in the Old Testament had been pointing to him. Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism. The promise that God's blessing to all people would come through the seed of woman, heritage of Abraham, tribe of Judah, line of David — would be realized in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This morning we will be visited by some prophets of the ancient Scriptures. They will tell us what they believed would happen, and we will hear their words fulfilled in the life of Christ.

(MOSES, dressed in biblical robes and carrying a rod or stone tablets facsimile, walks to Center Stage and stands between READERS 3 and 4.)

MOSES: I am Moses. You know me as the leader of Israel, who led the Hebrew people out of the land of Egypt to the Promised Land. As the risen Christ explained the Scriptures to his followers, he began with my writings: the books of Moses, which are also called the Pentateuch. They are the first five books of the Old Testament. What prophecies are contained in these books? There are many. They begin with Genesis, the book in which God tells us of our origins, and of how he chose the nation of Israel to be the people through whom he would reveal himself to mankind. The first prophecy of a savior occurred when God cursed the serpent, Satan, after the sin of Adam and Eve. He promised that one day someone

born of woman would crush Satan's head, though Satan would succeed in bruising him. Christ *was* bruised on the cross, but on Easter Sunday Satan was crushed, for death, his best weapon, was defeated forever!

There are many foreshadowings of the future Messiah in the Pentateuch, as well. Some of them came from my own experiences in the wilderness. Of course, I didn't understand all this as it was happening, but it was recorded for you, who would see it fulfilled. For example, the book of Exodus records the feeding of the people with manna — bread from heaven.

READER 1: John's gospel tells us that the manna was a picture of Christ:

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

"Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread."

Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:32-35)

MOSES: I wrote in the book of Numbers of the thirst of the Israelites in the wilderness, and the way God instructed me to strike a rock. When I did, water for the people came pouring out.

READER 2: In 1 Corinthians 10, Paul writes:

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that

1 **rock was Christ. (Verses 1-4)**

2 **MOSES:** I often wrote about problems that occurred when the
3 Israelites grew impatient and murmured against God. It
4 grew so serious at one point that God sent snakes which
5 bit the people, and many died. When the people repented,
6 the Lord instructed me to make a bronze snake and put
7 it on a pole, and whoever looked on it was healed.

8 **READER 3:** The bronze serpent, which brought healing to all
9 who looked on it, also represented Christ. These are his
10 own words to Nicodemus:

11 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so
12 the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who
13 believes in him may have eternal life. (John 3:14-15)

14 **MOSES:** How awesome it is to know that my experiences in
15 the wilderness were planned by God as prophecies
16 concerning his Son! Though I didn't enter the Promised
17 Land with the people, I had a much greater honor on the
18 Mount of Transfiguration. The fulfillment of all that was
19 written occupied my mind, and Elijah's, too, as we
20 spoke with the very Son of God on the Mount of
21 Transfiguration, just before he was to be crucified. And
22 now he is risen, and the new covenant has arrived! May
23 the fulfillment of what is written give confidence to all
24 who believe. (*MOSES slowly walks Off-stage.*)

25 **READER 4:** The risen Christ began "with Moses" as he opened
26 the Scriptures to the understanding of his followers.
27 After Moses, he went on to the Psalms, for in them, David
28 had also foretold his coming. (*DAVID, dressed as a king and*
29 *carrying a scroll, walks to center and stands between READERS*
30 *3 and 4.*)

31 **DAVID:** I am David: shepherd boy, killer of Goliath, King of
32 Israel, writer of psalms. I have been honored with the
33 promise that the Messiah would come from my lineage. It
34 is recorded in the eighty-ninth Psalm: (*Opens scroll and*
35 *reads.*)

1 **You said, “I have made a covenant with my**
2 **chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, I will**
3 **establish your line forever and make your throne**
4 **firm through all generations.’” (Verses 3 and 4)**

5 **READER 5: Matthew begins his gospel with these words: “A**
6 **record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David,”**
7 **and he traces Christ’s ancestors through David and to**
8 **Abraham. In Revelation, Christ identifies himself as “him**
9 **who is holy and true, who holds the key of David.” (3:7)**

10 **DAVID: In another psalm, God revealed to me the brutal**
11 **manner in which the Messiah would die: (*Reads from***
12 ***scroll.*)**

13 **My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?**
14 **Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the**
15 **words of my groaning?...**

16 **I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and**
17 **despised by the people. All who see me mock me;**
18 **they hurl insults, shaking their heads: “He trusts in**
19 **the Lord; let the Lord rescue him, since he delights**
20 **in him.”...I am poured out like water, and all my**
21 **bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it**
22 **has melted away within me. My strength is dried up**
23 **like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of**
24 **my mouth...A band of evil men has encircled me,**
25 **they have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count**
26 **all my bones; people stare and gloat over me. They**
27 **divide my garments among them and cast lots for my**
28 **clothing. (22:1, 6-8, 14-18)**

29 **READER 6: Christ cried the opening words of this psalm as he**
30 **died on the cross, and David’s words were fulfilled quite**
31 **literally in the angry crowd, the pierced hands and feet of**
32 **Christ, his agony and thirst, and the gambling for his**
33 **garment. How awed the followers of the risen Christ must**
34 **have been as he reminded them of the words of this**
35 **psalm!**

1 **DAVID:** The death of the Messiah was not all that was
 2 revealed to me. I also saw that death would not be the
 3 final end for him; there would be resurrection and
 4 exaltation. The promises are recorded in Psalms 16 and
 5 110. *(Reads from scroll.)*

6 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue
 7 rejoices; my body will also rest secure, because you
 8 will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let
 9 your Holy One see decay. (16:9, 10) *(Looks up and*
 10 *unrolls scroll a bit further and continues to read.)*

11 The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand
 12 until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet."
 13 (110:1)

14 **READER 2:** Peter would use David's words to explain the
 15 Resurrection to the crowd gathered at Pentecost. His
 16 sermon is recorded in the second chapter of Acts. "Men of
 17 Israel," Peter began, "listen to this:"

18 Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God
 19 to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God
 20 did among you through him, as you yourselves
 21 know. This man was handed over to you by God's set
 22 purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help
 23 of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to
 24 the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing
 25 him from the agony of death, because it was
 26 impossible for death to keep its hold on him. David
 27 said about him:

28 ...my body will also live in hope, because you
 29 will not abandon me to the grave, nor let your
 30 Holy One see decay... *(Verses 22-27)*

31 **READER 3:** Peter continued, again referring to David:

32 Brothers, I can tell you confidently that the
 33 patriarch David died and was buried, and his
 34 tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet
 35 and knew that God had promised him on oath

1 that he would place one of his descendants on
 2 his throne. Seeing what was ahead, he spoke of
 3 the resurrection of Christ, that he was not
 4 abandoned to the grave, nor did his body see
 5 decay...For David did not ascend to heaven,
 6 and yet he said,

7 The Lord said to my Lord:

8 Sit at my right hand

9 Until I make your enemies

10 A footstool for your feet.

11 Therefore let all Israel be assured of this:

12 God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified,

13 both Lord and Christ. (Verses 29-36)

14 **DAVID:** I am honored to have been called "the man after
 15 God's own heart" in the Scriptures, but I am, after all,
 16 just a man, with failures as well as victories in my past.
 17 The true conqueror is the Son of God himself. Were it
 18 not for him, the grave would be the final end for each of
 19 us. Glory to God! (*DAVID leaves stage. MICAH, dressed in a*
 20 *biblical robe and carrying a scroll, walks to the center and*
 21 *stands between READERS 3 and 4.*)

22 **MICAH:** I am Micah. The messages God gave me were
 23 primarily judgments against Israel and Judah for their
 24 sins against the Lord God. But amid the harsh words of
 25 judgment, the Lord revealed to me the word of hope
 26 that out of Bethlehem would come one who would be a
 27 ruler for Israel, one whose origins were from ancient
 28 times.

29 **READER 1:** Today, Micah's prophecy concerning Bethlehem
 30 is one of the most famous prophecies concerning Christ,
 31 for it led the Magi to the infant Jesus.

32 **MICAH:** Yes. But his birthplace is not the only fact God
 33 showed me about the Messiah. Like David and some of
 34 the other prophets, God gave me a picture of the Christ
 35 as a shepherd for the people. (*Reads from scroll.*)

1 He will stand and shepherd his flock in the
2 strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of
3 the Lord his God. And they will live securely, for
4 then his greatness will reach to the ends of the
5 earth. And he will be their peace. (Micah 5:4, 5a)

6 **READER 2:** Perhaps, as the risen Christ explained the
7 Scriptures to his followers, he reminded them of
8 Micah's words and then of his own, recorded for us in
9 the tenth chapter of John:

10 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd
11 lays his life down for the sheep. (Verse 11)

12 **MICAH:** Every word of God proves true. What he has spoken
13 *always* comes to pass. (*MICAH rolls up his scroll and*
14 *leaves stage. MALACHI enters and stands between READERS*
15 *3 and 4.*)

16 **MALACHI:** I am Malachi. My book is the last in your Old
17 Testament. Like Micah, my words from God proclaim
18 judgment against a faithless people who wearied the
19 Lord with their words while their hearts were not his.
20 But God also showed me that a messenger would come
21 who would prepare the way for the Savior. (*MALACHI*
22 *unrolls scroll and reads.*)

23 “See, I will send my messenger, who will
24 prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the
25 Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the
26 messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will
27 come,” says the Lord Almighty. (Malachi 3:1)
28 (*MALACHI rolls up his scroll.*)

29 God has said that a messenger would be one of the
30 signs by which the Messiah could be recognized by
31 those who believe. Isaiah has also spoken of this
32 messenger. Surely the identity of the Christ will be
33 understood by those who know what the Lord has said
34 through his prophets.

35 **READER 3:** As the followers of Jesus listened to him

1 explaining the Scriptures to them, one can imagine the
 2 eyes of their understanding opening as he showed them
 3 the significance of the ministry of John the Baptist!
 4 (*MALACHI leaves stage. ISAIAH enters, carrying a scroll and*
 5 *standing between READERS 3 and 4.*)

6 **ISAIAH:** I am Isaiah, and it is true that I predicted a
 7 forerunner would precede the Messiah. And much
 8 more. The Lord showed me that the redeemer would be
 9 born of a virgin as well. But my most intense vision of
 10 this future savior is recorded in the fifty-third chapter
 11 of the book that bears my name. Like Father Abraham,
 12 I have rejoiced to see, hundreds of years after these
 13 words were given to me, their realization in the person
 14 of God's Son. (*ISAIAH unrolls scroll and reads.*)

15 He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to
 16 him, nothing in his appearance that we should
 17 desire him. He was despised and rejected by men,
 18 a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like
 19 one from whom men hide their faces he was
 20 despised, and we esteemed him not. (Isaiah 53:2b, 3)

21 **READER 4:** The New Testament clearly shows the
 22 fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy, which tells of the
 23 painful rejection of Jesus Christ.

24 **READER 5:** In Matthew 27 we read:

25 Those who passed by hurled insults at him,
 26 shaking their heads...In the same way the chief
 27 priests, the teachers of the law and the elders
 28 mocked him. (Verses 39-41)

29 **READER 6:** John describes the rejection of which Isaiah
 30 spoke in this way:

31 He was in the world, and though the world was
 32 made through him, the world did not recognize
 33 him when he came. He came to that which was his
 34 own, but his own did not receive him. (John 1:10-11)

35 **ISAIAH:** (*Continues to read from scroll.*)

1 **Surely he took up our infirmities and carried**
2 **our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by**
3 **God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was**
4 **pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for**
5 **our iniquities; the punishment that brought us**
6 **peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are**
7 **healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)**

8 **READER 1: Peter echoed Isaiah's words when he wrote the**
9 **following about the death of Christ:**

10 **He himself bore our sins in his body on the**
11 **tree, so that we might die to sins and live for**
12 **righteousness; by his wounds you have been**
13 **healed. (I Peter 2:24)**

14 **ISAIAH: (Continues to read from scroll.)**

15 **He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not**
16 **open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the**
17 **slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is**
18 **silent, so he did not open his mouth. (Isaiah 53:7-8)**

19 **READER 2: In Matthew 27:12 we read that "when he was**
20 **addressed by the chief priests and the elders," Jesus**
21 **"gave no answer."**

22 **ISAIAH: (Continues to read from scroll.)**

23 **He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and**
24 **with the rich in his death, though he had done no**
25 **violence, nor was there any deceit in his mouth.**
26 **(Isaiah 53:9)**

27 **READER 3: The fulfillment of this prophecy is seen in**
28 **Matthew 27, where we read that a rich man named**
29 **Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus,**
30 **and, upon receiving permission, wrapped it in a clean**
31 **linen cloth and "placed it in his own new tomb that he**
32 **had cut out of the rock." (Verse 60)**

33 **ISAIAH: Many of my prophecies speak of the suffering and**
34 **death of the innocent man who would become the**
35 **Savior. But, like David before me, I was shown that**



Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

EASTER STORY

by Peggy Haslar.

*For performance rights and/or a complete copy of the script,
please contact us at:*

CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

P.O. Box 248 - Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52406

Toll Free: 1-844-841-6387 - Fax (319) 368-8011

customerservice@christianpub.com