

SIGHTLESS VISION

by Elizabeth Van Etten



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SIGHTLESS VISION

A one-act play for Lent

By Elisabeth Van Etten

CAST OF CHARACTERS

NICODEMUS

Age 30. A younger Pharisee with an inquisitive mind.
Zealous and passionate.

GAMALIEL

Age 55. The head of the Pharisees.
An older, well respected man of high lineage.

BLIND MAN

Age 25. The blind beggar whom Jesus healed.
An enthusiastic, simple man. (Can double as Father.)

FATHER

Age 47. The Blind Man's father.
A farmer who hates conflict.

MOTHER

Age 45. The Blind Man's mother.
An opinionated woman who cares greatly for her son.

PRODUCTION NOTES

Synopsis

Sightless Vision adapts two biblical characters in a modern “what if” situation — Nicodemus from John 3 meets the Blind Man who receives his sight in John 9. In a day where the seeing are spiritually blind and the blind see, will Nicodemus open his eyes to the truth?

Time and Place

Present time, as if it were happening today. The action is set on the Sabbath morning at the synagogue and the Pool of Siloam.

Scene 1 – The Pool of Siloam and the inner chamber of the synagogue.

Scene 2 – The outside area of the synagogue.

Scene 3 – The inner chamber of the synagogue.

Costumes

Gamaliel and Nicodemus wear black dress suits. Gamaliel must wear a red tie and a watch. The other characters wear work clothes. All characters except the Blind Man wear sunglasses throughout the play. You may substitute sleeping masks for the sunglasses if desired. Blind Man wears a black cloth over his eyes when the play starts.

Props

Collapsible walking cane, two Rubik’s Cubes (one still an unfinished puzzle and the other one turn away from completion), two letters, knitting needles and yarn in a bag, a large book (representing the Old Testament), pen, paper, and envelopes.

Set

A writing desk and two long tables compose the synagogue set. The desk has paper and pens on it. One long table has a magenta tablecloth and silver bowl and the large book. The other table holds a candlestick with a lit candle on top of a lace doily, and a red velvet cushion. Designate one corner of the stage as the Pool of Siloam area, and place a bowl filled with water there.

Sound Effects

Birds chirping and the rippling sound of water over pebbles to signify change of location to Pool of Siloam (optional).

Lighting

Some lighting instructions are given as enhancements to the drama. However, if your stage is not equipped with theatrical lighting, the play still works and does not rely on effects to reach the audience.

Director's Options

Nicodemus and Gamaliel slightly lower their sunglasses to make eye contact with one another when they are alone. The moment another person enters the room, they push the sunglasses back over their eyes.

Nicodemus and Gamaliel's actions could mirror a blind person's actions, e.g., they may stumble or bump into set pieces.

Voiceovers are optional for the beginning and end of the play. The effect works very well with a church audience.

All Scripture is taken from The King James Version.

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Scene 1

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(The synagogue on a Sabbath day. Light: pin-spot sunglasses on cushion, or use PowerPoint to project an image of the sunglasses on the cushion on a screen up front.)

VOICEOVER: *(Optional)* “There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews” *(John 3:1)*. A man whose vision would soon be altered. In this drama foreshadowing John chapter 3, two timeless biblical characters collide. *(Spot on NICODEMUS and GAMALIEL at the Pharisee’s initiation ceremony.)*

GAMALIEL: Tradition made you a disciple of Moses. Training ordains you a Pharisee. For many years you have anticipated the day — *(Picks up the sunglasses from the red velvet cushion, opens them, and places them on Nicodemus.)* you might see as we do. May the law open your eyes.

NICODEMUS: I vow to uphold law and tradition. May truth be my guide.

GAMALIEL: *(Extends his hand in a warm greeting.)* Welcome, Rabbi Nicodemus.

NICODEMUS: Thank you, Rabbi Gamaliel. *(Adjusts sunglasses.)* I have long awaited this day.

GAMALIEL: And the day is young. *(Produces a letter from his pocket.)*

NICODEMUS: What’s this?

GAMALIEL: One never lacks work in God’s house. There’s a small ruckus in Jerusalem. Report back to me what you see.

NICODEMUS: Yes, sir. I will bring an honest report. *(NICODEMUS starts to leave and bumps into the chair, then rubs his leg.)*

GAMALIEL: Careful. Watch your step.

NICODEMUS: *(Adjusts glasses.)* Yes, sir. *(He exits. GAMALIEL pushes the chair in before exiting. Optional sound of birds chirping and the rippling sound of water over pebbles. Spot on BLIND MAN as he enters, black cloth over eyes, using a collapsible walking cane. He puts the cane down and feels his*

1 *way until he comes close to the water's edge. He kneels and feels*
 2 *with his hands to find the water bowl.)*

3 **BLIND MAN: "Wash in the pool of Siloam," he said.** *(Turns face*
 4 *upward.) Jesus, Light of the World, open my eyes!*
 5 *(Removes the black cloth and splashes the cool water onto his*
 6 *face. He blinks and shakes his head. He looks around, at first*
 7 *nervously. He stares at his hands and begins to laugh, then*
 8 *looks in the water. He touches his face — the first time he has*
 9 *ever seen his face — and plunges his hand into the water.) My*
 10 **eyes! Water! I can see water! The sky! It's — ah — it must**
 11 **be — um, b-blue! The sky is blue and grass is — green. I**
 12 **have a shadow! Look at my shadow! Flowers.** *(Breathes in*
 13 *a deep breath.) Honeysuckle. I can see! I can see! I can*
 14 **see! Jesus opened my eyes!** *(Runs Off-stage, yelling.) Jesus*
 15 **opened my eyes!** *(Cross fade light to synagogue. GAMALIEL*
 16 *reads a letter. Frustrated, he crumples it and throws it to the*
 17 *ground. NICODEMUS stands with hands folded by the side of*
 18 *GAMALIEL.)*

19 **NICODEMUS: (Solemn) He must be stopped!**

20 **GAMALIEL: Nicodemus, lower your voice. The services.**
 21 *(Paces.)*

22 **NICODEMUS: (Attempts to whisper.) Every week the situation**
 23 **worsens. He could enter our synagogue today. He**
 24 **causes havoc, Gamaliel.**

25 **GAMALIEL: And you saw it?**

26 **NICODEMUS: With my own eyes!**

27 **GAMALIEL: Such an uproar —**

28 **NICODEMUS: Should never be allowed in the temple! As a**
 29 **chief Pharisee, Gamaliel, you must stop Jesus.**

30 **GAMALIEL: Jesus is not an ordinary disturbance. The**
 31 **people call him the Light of the World. They consider**
 32 **him their —**

33 **NICODEMUS: King? Oh, Gamaliel, you dare not arrest their**
 34 **King —**

35 **GAMALIEL: Even if he disrupts the entire temple and**
 36 **Jerusalem. No, I cannot.**

37 **NICODEMUS: (Picking up crumpled paper) But this proves his**
 38 **blasphemy.**

- 1 **GAMALIEL:** Do you think I am unaware of that factor?
- 2 **NICODEMUS:** Jesus must be stopped, and the chief priests
- 3 seek your aid! (*Shoves the crumpled paper back into*
- 4 *GAMALIEL's hand. GAMALIEL lays the crumpled paper on*
- 5 *the table.*)
- 6 **NICODEMUS:** That's it. You'll do nothing.
- 7 **GAMALIEL:** (*Places hands on NICODEMUS' shoulders.*) **Timing,**
- 8 **Nicodemus, timing.** (*BLIND MAN enters running.*)
- 9 **BLIND MAN:** I see! I see! I see! (*Abruptly stops and stares with*
- 10 *jaw agape.*)
- 11 **GAMALIEL:** How dare you intrude!
- 12 **NICODEMUS:** Impeccable timing on his part. You can see
- 13 what?
- 14 **BLIND MAN:** You! And you. (*Pointing to GAMALIEL's tie*)
- 15 Ohhhh, what's that?
- 16 **GAMALIEL:** My tie.
- 17 **BLIND MAN:** (*Grabs the tie, almost choking GAMALIEL.*) **The**
- 18 **color?**
- 19 **GAMALIEL:** (*Yanks the tie away.*) **Red.**
- 20 **BLIND MAN:** Red. That'll be my favorite color!
- 21 **NICODEMUS:** (*Annoyed*) **I'm thrilled.** (*BLIND MAN walks over to*
- 22 *table and picks up the paper.*)
- 23 **BLIND MAN:** Ahhhh! Letters!
- 24 **GAMALIEL:** Put that down!
- 25 **BLIND MAN:** Letters. Never saw 'em before.
- 26 **GAMALIEL:** (*Pries letter from BLIND MAN's hands.*) **Do you**
- 27 **have family in the vicinity?**
- 28 **BLIND MAN:** Family! Ahhhh! Yeah, but they don't know yet!
- 29 **GAMALIEL:** Shhhh! The services. Lower your voice.
- 30 **BLIND MAN:** Oh, sorry. Don't tell 'em, huh?
- 31 **NICODEMUS:** Tell whom?
- 32 **BLIND MAN:** My parents. I wanna surprise 'em.
- 33 **GAMALIEL:** (*Takes the BLIND MAN by the arm.*) **I believe they**
- 34 **should know.**
- 35 **NICODEMUS:** (*Takes the BLIND MAN by the other arm.*) **You**
- 36 **must definitely tell them.**
- 37 **BLIND MAN:** Why are you — you think I'm — oh, but I'm not
- 38 **really — it's just — I was blind.**

- 1 **NICODEMUS:** *(Releases his hold on the BLIND MAN.)* What?
- 2 **GAMALIEL:** *(Also lets go of BLIND MAN.)* What did you say?
- 3 **BLIND MAN:** I said, I was blind, but now I see.
- 4 **GAMALIEL:** My dear boy, that is impossible.
- 5 **BLIND MAN:** No. I was blind. Certainly you remember me.
- 6 *(Pauses, but GAMALIEL and NICODEMUS do not react.)* I
- 7 sat at the gate — begging. *(BLIND MAN demonstrates*
- 8 *begging at the gate.)* Alms! Alms!
- 9 **GAMALIEL:** That does strike a chord, but no, nothing.
- 10 **BLIND MAN:** I sat there for twenty-some-odd years. You
- 11 passed me every day.
- 12 **NICODEMUS:** We pass thousands —
- 13 **BLIND MAN:** That were blind but now see? *(To GAMALIEL)*
- 14 You put a penny in my cup every day. *(Closes his eyes and*
- 15 *walks around the room, replicating his blindness.)* Alms. Alms
- 16 for a poor beggar! *(Bumps into NICODEMUS.)*
- 17 **NICODEMUS:** I remember once we rushed by so quickly that
- 18 I knocked into a blind beggar, and his eyes met mine —
- 19 so cold and dark.
- 20 **BLIND MAN:** Yes, yes, that was me! But look — look, I see!
- 21 *(Stares at NICODEMUS.)*
- 22 **NICODEMUS:** *(Uncomfortably moves away.)* No, you just look
- 23 like him.
- 24 **BLIND MAN:** I *am* him. Y-you did knock into me and dropped
- 25 something. I handed it to you. It had a box.
- 26 *(NICODEMUS reaches into his pocket and pulls out the*
- 27 *unfinished Rubik's Cube.)*
- 28 **GAMALIEL:** *(Takes NICODEMUS aside.)* Nothing more than an
- 29 excellent con —
- 30 **NICODEMUS:** Perhaps ...
- 31 **GAMALIEL:** Undoubtedly a pickpocket as well. I'll give him
- 32 that much.
- 33 **NICODEMUS:** But I remember —
- 34 **GAMALIEL:** And one minute before I —
- 35 **NICODEMUS:** How would he know? Look. *(Holds out Rubik's*
- 36 *Cube.)*
- 37 **BLIND MAN:** *(Watching them uncomfortably, rushes over.)* I was
- 38 that blind beggar, but now I see.

1 **GAMALIEL: How?**

2 **NICODEMUS: *He* has come.**

3 **GAMALIEL: Preposterous!**

4 **NICODEMUS: Is it? The day he threw the merchants from**
 5 the temple, he also healed the lame and gave sight to
 6 the blind. He is here!

7 **GAMALIEL: Blind man, how came you to see?**

8 **BLIND MAN: A man spat on the ground and made clay for**
 9 my eyes, then told me to wash in Siloam. When I did, I
 10 could see!

11 **GAMALIEL: This man —**

12 **BLIND MAN: He was of —**

13 **NICODEMUS: The Devil.**

14 **BLIND MAN: No. He was a man of God.**

15 **NICODEMUS: Or poses as such.**

16 **BLIND MAN: They call him Jesus.**

17 **NICODEMUS: (*Sarcastic*) The Light of the World.**

18 **BLIND MAN: He has given light to my darkness.**

19 **NICODEMUS: And confusion to your soul. If he were a man**
 20 of God, he would not heal on the Sabbath. (*To*
 21 **GAMALIEL**) I warned you. He has come!

22 **GAMALIEL: Not here. He cannot be here.**

23 **NICODEMUS: Open your eyes, Gamaliel. The man worships**
 24 a demon.

25 **BLIND MAN: Good sirs, you are Pharisees of the highest**
 26 order. Surely it cannot be wrong to give life on God's
 27 day.

28 **NICODEMUS: It is wrong to work on the Sabbath.**

29 **GAMALIEL: If he heals on the Sabbath, he breaks tradition;**
 30 therefore, he is a sinner.

31 **NICODEMUS: (*To GAMALIEL*) And must be stopped.**

32 **BLIND MAN: (*Grabs NICODEMUS by the shoulders.*) Look, look,**
 33 my eyes! Could a sinner do such miracles?

34 **NICODEMUS: (*Forcibly shoves away and turns back on BLIND***
 35 **MAN.**) Devils appear as angels of light. You believe —

36 **BLIND MAN: In what I now see.**

37 **NICODEMUS: Yes, what you now see, if ever you were blind.**
 38 Perhaps Jesus did heal him, and perhaps he is one of

1 his disciples trying to proselytize us. Your parents are
2 here?
3 BLIND MAN: They come every Sab —
4 GAMALIEL: Bring them.
5 NICODEMUS: (*Sarcastic*) If you can find them. Do you even
6 know what they look like?
7 BLIND MAN: No. I was blind.
8 NICODEMUS: Insistent, isn't he?
9 GAMALIEL: We'll find the truth soon enough.
10 BLIND MAN: (*Panicked*) I-I don't know how to find them.
11 GAMALIEL: Nicodemus will aid you.
12 NICODEMUS: Me?
13 GAMALIEL: It's the least we can do. (*He exits.*)

Scene 2

18 *NICODEMUS stands in the outside area of the synagogue,*
19 *shaking his head and looking perturbed.)*

20 **BLIND MAN:** *(Looking for his parents)* No, not them.

21 **NICODEMUS:** This is ridiculous. *(Stares at BLIND MAN.)*

22 **BLIND MAN:** What are you doing?

23 **NICODEMUS:** Deciding if I've seen you before.

24 **BLIND MAN:** Have you? *(NICODEMUS quickly looks away. He*
25 *remains silent.)* You have. Your eyes answered.

26 **NICODEMUS:** They said nothing. *(Refusing to make eye contact,*
27 *he pulls out the Rubik's Cube and begins to play with it.)*

28 **BLIND MAN:** You know I was blind, don't you?

29 **NICODEMUS:** It's possible to be mistaken.

30 **BLIND MAN:** Why didn't you tell Rabbi Gamaliel? *(Grabs*
31 *NICODEMUS by the coat and shakes him.)* You knew! Tell
32 me you knew!

33 **NICODEMUS:** *(Slowly)* From the moment I saw your eyes.
34 How could I forget those dark eyes — your eyes that
35 now stare back at me? Every day we passed you, I
36 wondered what you felt like sitting there — blind.

37 **BLIND MAN:** *(Remains silent for a moment.)* Kinda like the
38 world never turned on its lights. Lonely. Forgotten.

- 1 *(Pauses, then brightens.)* But now that I have sight, there's
 2 so much I want to know!
- 3 **NICODEMUS:** Like?
- 4 **BLIND MAN:** *(Gestures to candlestick.)* Like that. *(BLIND MAN*
 5 *walks over to the candlestick.)*
- 6 **NICODEMUS:** A candlestick?
- 7 **BLIND MAN:** What's that thing on top of it? *(BLIND MAN tries*
 8 *to touch the flame. NICODEMUS grabs his hand.)*
- 9 **NICODEMUS:** Don't touch! That's fire!
- 10 **BLIND MAN:** Fire. *(Stares at the flame, then, to NICODEMUS)*
 11 Close your eyes. Keep 'em shut.
- 12 **NICODEMUS:** *(Shuts eyes.)* They're closed.
- 13 **BLIND MAN:** *(Takes NICODEMUS's hand and places it above the*
 14 *flame.)* This is my fire. *(NICODEMUS retracts his hand from*
 15 *the flame as if burned.)* Now open them. *(NICODEMUS*
 16 *opens his eyes.)* That's fire.
- 17 **NICODEMUS:** I've never looked through a blind man's eyes.
- 18 **BLIND MAN:** Nor I through seeing, until today.
- 19 **NICODEMUS:** *(Takes the Rubik's Cube from his pocket.)* You've
 20 never seen one of these. *(BLIND MAN takes the Rubik's*
 21 *Cube and looks at it.)* Red, like Gamaliel's tie, green —
- 22 **BLIND MAN:** Like grass.
- 23 **NICODEMUS:** Orange and yellow, like fire — or like the sky
 24 in the morning. Why, your first sunrise will be
 25 tomorrow.
- 26 **BLIND MAN:** Sunrise.
- 27 **NICODEMUS:** *(Puts a hand on BLIND MAN's shoulder.)* And
 28 your first sunset tonight. *(Moves other hand across the*
 29 *horizon.)* It'll be pink and purple with some shades of red
 30 — *(Suddenly drops arms at sides in frustration.)* We'll never
 31 find your parents.
- 32 **BLIND MAN:** What?
- 33 **NICODEMUS:** You were blind. You've never seen them.
- 34 **BLIND MAN:** But I can listen. I'd know their voices
 35 anywhere. Tell me more — about colors.
- 36 **NICODEMUS:** *(Laughs to himself, pointing outward.)* That lady's
 37 hat — those are peacock feathers. They call the color
 38 indigo blue.

- 1 **BLIND MAN:** *(In awe)* Oh! *(Then changes tone.)* She ain't my
 2 mother.
- 3 **NICODEMUS:** Turquoise. We must find something turquoise.
- 4 **BLIND MAN:** Turquoise?
- 5 **NICODEMUS:** A fascinating color.
- 6 **BLIND MAN:** Oh, I see it! That's gotta be turquoise! *(BLIND*
 7 *MAN points to the magenta tablecloth.)*
- 8 **NICODEMUS:** No — that's magenta. *(Points.)* There —the gem
 9 on that necklace. That's turquoise.
- 10 **BLIND MAN:** *(Slowly)* Wow!
- 11 **NICODEMUS:** *(Picks up the lace doily from the table.)* This is lace.
 12 The color's white, like snow in winter.
- 13 **BLIND MAN:** *(Thoughtful)* Cold snow is white — like lace.
 14 *(Picks up a silver bowl.)* What's this?
- 15 **NICODEMUS:** Silver. See your face?
- 16 **BLIND MAN:** *(For the first time, he's seeing his own eye color and*
 17 *features in great detail. Slowly)* Still hard to believe it's me.
- 18 **NICODEMUS:** Yet it is you.
- 19 **BLIND MAN:** But it's a new me because of Jesus.
 20 *(NICODEMUS turns away with a perturbed look.)* What?
 21 Don't you believe —
- 22 **NICODEMUS:** They tell me what to believe.
- 23 **BLIND MAN:** Jesus did heal me.
- 24 **NICODEMUS:** Jesus is a sinner.
- 25 **BLIND MAN:** No!
- 26 **NICODEMUS:** *(Puts his hands on BLIND MAN's shoulders and*
 27 *looks into his eyes.)* A con. I don't expect you to
 28 understand.
- 29 **BLIND MAN:** Then how did he heal me?
- 30 **NICODEMUS:** *(Tries to walk away.)* I don't know!
- 31 **BLIND MAN:** *(Grabs NICODEMUS' arm.)* God gave him the
 32 power!
- 33 **NICODEMUS:** He heals by the Devil.
- 34 **BLIND MAN:** Why would the Devil aid people? Since the
 35 beginning of time — *(NICODEMUS shoves away from the*
 36 *BLIND MAN. He turns away and raises his hands in*
 37 *exasperation, then clenches his fists. He is frustrated. BLIND*
 38 *MAN follows NICODEMUS.)* Since the beginning of time,

- 1 no man has given sight to the blind! He is no ordinary
2 man.
- 3 **NICODEMUS:** Blasphemy!
- 4 **BLIND MAN:** You hypocrite! You blaspheme Jesus, a true
5 man of God.
- 6 **NICODEMUS:** He is *not* of God!
- 7 **BLIND MAN:** Then how did he open my eyes?
- 8 **NICODEMUS:** I don't know.
- 9 **BLIND MAN:** Unless God opened them. (*NICODEMUS walks*
10 *farther away and sits down to think. He runs his fingers*
11 *through his hair and covers his head with his hands, clenches*
12 *his fists, and shakes his head no. He continues in this*
13 *agonizing state of uncertainty until BLIND MAN comes over.*)
14 I'm sorry you don't believe me.
- 15 **NICODEMUS:** (*Takes the Rubik's Cube from the BLIND MAN's*
16 *hand and holds it up.*) I believe you — (*NICODEMUS drops*
17 *the Rubik's Cube into the BLIND MAN's hands*) but not
18 Jesus.
- 19 **BLIND MAN:** Why?
- 20 **NICODEMUS:** I'm told not to. (*Silent*) My simple friend, the
21 law holds so many things you cannot understand. Do
22 not try.
- 23 **BLIND MAN:** When you don't understand, you hide behind
24 the law?
- 25 **NICODEMUS:** I'm not hiding!
- 26 **BLIND MAN:** (*Disgusted*) No, you're not. You're doing what
27 you're told to do. But you know nothing of Jesus.
- 28 **NICODEMUS:** And you're an expert, I suppose?
- 29 **BLIND MAN:** You've never even spoken with him.
- 30 **NICODEMUS:** I don't need to speak with him. (*Stands up,*
31 *agitated.*) I've seen what he does —
- 32 **BLIND MAN:** And you hate him.
- 33 **NICODEMUS:** I never said that.
- 34 **BLIND MAN:** But you thought it. (*Throws the Rubik's Cube at*
35 *NICODEMUS, who catches it.*)
- 36 **NICODEMUS:** No. I strongly dislike the man. If he is of the
37 Devil —
- 38 **BLIND MAN:** If —

1 **NICODEMUS:** *(Plays with the Rubik's Cube.)* If. To put it simply,
 2 I hate sin.
 3 **BLIND MAN:** Then you hate me.
 4 **NICODEMUS:** No.
 5 **BLIND MAN:** Well, I'm a sinner.
 6 **NICODEMUS:** You are confused.
 7 **BLIND MAN:** The feeling's mutual. You "dislike" Jesus as
 8 much as I love him.
 9 **NICODEMUS:** Funny how closely those feelings associate.
 10 **BLIND MAN:** But you're not a sinner.
 11 **NICODEMUS:** What?
 12 **BLIND MAN:** If you hate sin and refuse to associate with it,
 13 then you must be sinless.
 14 **NICODEMUS:** I'm not sinless. All men are sinners.
 15 **BLIND MAN:** Then you hate yourself.
 16 **NICODEMUS:** No, I don't hate myself.
 17 **BLIND MAN:** But you hate me.
 18 **NICODEMUS:** No.
 19 **BLIND MAN:** Then why don't you believe me? Jesus is of
 20 God.
 21 **NICODEMUS:** You have no —
 22 **BLIND MAN:** Mother!
 23 **NICODEMUS:** What?
 24 **BLIND MAN:** Humming! My mother's here. *(BLIND MAN*
 25 *rushes Off-stage.)*

Scene 3

30 *(GAMALIEL is in the inner chamber sitting at the desk,*
 31 *writing.)*
 32 **NICODEMUS:** *(Comes up from behind and clears his throat, trying*
 33 *to get GAMALIEL's attention.)* Gamaliel. *(GAMALIEL checks*
 34 *his watch for the time.)*
 35 **GAMALIEL:** Ah, Nicodemus.
 36 **NICODEMUS:** He and his parents are reuniting.
 37 **GAMALIEL:** Excellent. Do you know what I am writing?
 38 *(NICODEMUS shakes his head no.)* You are zealous,

- 1 Nicodemus. You will go far. Perhaps the zeal of youth is
2 forgotten in old age. Something will be done about
3 Jesus. (*GAMALIEL waves letter at NICODEMUS.*
4 *NICODEMUS grabs the letter as GAMALIEL waves it at him.*
5 *Both men momentarily hold the letter.*)
- 6 **NICODEMEUS:** Gamaliel, who is Jesus?
- 7 **GAMALIEL:** Who knows? A prophet, perhaps. More than
8 likely, a false prophet. (*GAMALIEL releases the letter to*
9 *NICODEMUS.*)
- 10 **NICODEMUS:** Some say he's the Christ.
- 11 **GAMALIEL:** Out of Galilee? The records show otherwise.
12 (*NICODEMUS puts the letter down and quickly picks up the*
13 *book of the Old Testament. He thumps it on the table and then*
14 *flips pages, searching through it.*) You doubt my word?
- 15 **NICODEMUS:** I'm verifying.
- 16 **GAMALIEL:** The Messiah will come from —
- 17 **NICODEMUS:** I know, Bethlehem. But has anyone ever
18 asked this Jesus where he was born?
- 19 **GAMALIEL:** A zealous spirit. I admire that in you. An
20 inquisitive mind is a good thing.
- 21 **NICODEMUS:** I just want to know — to see.
- 22 **GAMALIEL:** (*Shoves the letter at NICODEMUS.*) Then see this. I
23 think you'll find it acceptable. He is a disturbance, a
24 mortal man easily silenced.
- 25 **NICODEMUS:** (*Opens the letter and reads.*) You would kill him?
- 26 **GAMALIEL:** Do you have another plan?
- 27 **NICODEMUS:** The law forbids judgment on any man without
28 first knowing what he believes.
- 29 **GAMALIEL:** (*Takes the letter from NICODEMUS.*) You gave me
30 all the proof I needed this morning.
- 31 **NICODEMUS:** Perhaps I was wrong.
- 32 **GAMALIEL:** Or right.
- 33 **NICODEMUS:** I just think that maybe I should first speak
34 with this Jesus.
- 35 **GAMALIEL:** (*Sarcastic*) You wish to speak with him *now*.
- 36 **NICODEMUS:** Let me search out his lineage, listen to his
37 views. He is in the area.
- 38 **GAMALIEL:** That little lunatic has polluted your mind.

- 1 **NICODEMUS:** No, Gamaliel, no. I — thought about — (*A weak*
2 *laugh*) timing. We should be certain before we act. What
3 you said about time —
- 4 **GAMALIEL:** I am certain — certain none of the Pharisees
5 have believed in this madman, and if you —
- 6 **NICODEMUS:** But since the beginning of time, has anyone
7 given sight to the blind?
- 8 **GAMALIEL:** I am short on time, Nic —
- 9 **NICODEMUS:** No man has given sight to the sightless, has
10 he?
- 11 **GAMALIEL:** No. None. (*NICODEMUS grabs letter from*
12 *GAMALIEL.*)
- 13 **NICODEMUS:** Then could this be wrong? Could Jesus —
- 14 **GAMALIEL:** Absolutely not!
- 15 **NICODEMUS:** Why couldn't he be —
- 16 **GAMALIEL:** (*Growls the words as he forces NICODEMUS into the*
17 *chair.*) Silence! Listen to me. Do you know what will
18 happen to us if this Jesus gains the people?
- 19 **NICODEMUS:** But if he is —
- 20 **GAMALIEL:** He is not! (*Grabs the letter back from NICODEMUS.*)
21 He's another Barabbas, rousing the people. Think about
22 it. If word gets back to Rome that he claims to be the
23 Son of God, they will blame the elders. (*Strikes him with*
24 *the letter as he says "synagogue," "temple," "line of Levi."*) The
25 synagogue, the temple, the line of Levi, will end. Do you
26 understand? (*Throws the letter on the table.*)
- 27 **NICODEMUS:** I'm beginning to. (*Rises from the chair in*
28 *frustration.*) But couldn't I —
- 29 **GAMALIEL:** You will *not* speak with him! (*MOTHER and*
30 *FATHER enter and shake hands with GAMALIEL.*)
- 31 **FATHER:** Rabbi Gamaliel.
- 32 **MOTHER:** Such wonderful news! (*GAMALIEL grabs*
33 *NICODEMUS' arm to warn him not to speak.*)
- 34 **GAMALIEL:** (*To NICODEMUS*) Sit down. (*NICODEMUS sits*
35 *and looks at the letter.*) That is your son?
- 36 **FATHER:** Yeah, sir, he is.
- 37 **GAMALIEL:** He was blind?
- 38 **MOTHER:** Yes, from birth.

- 1 **NICODEMUS:** But he sees.
- 2 **FATHER:** Yeah, that's the oddest thing. It's gotta be a
3 miracle —
- 4 **NICODEMUS:** Did Jesus heal him?
- 5 **FATHER:** *(Hesitant)* I —
- 6 **GAMALIEL:** Nicodemus! *(To MOTHER and FATHER)* Pardon
7 us. *(GAMALIEL grabs NICODEMUS by the arm and forces*
8 *him aside.)*
- 9 **NICODEMUS:** You didn't let him answer.
- 10 **GAMALIEL:** You will stop.
- 11 **NICODEMUS:** But the possibility —
- 12 **GAMALIEL:** I warned you. If these people — if you profess
13 belief in Jesus, I will not hesitate for a moment to cast
14 you out. You know what happens to those who believe.
- 15 **NICODEMUS:** I only want to speak to him. I'm not one of
16 them.
- 17 **GAMALIEL:** If you so much as lay eyes on him, you will never
18 set foot in this synagogue again.
- 19 **NICODEMUS:** I just want the truth.
- 20 **GAMALIEL:** What is true? *(NICODEMUS remains silent in*
21 *thought.)* Answer me.
- 22 **NICODEMUS:** *(A deep sigh of despair. He doesn't want to answer.)*
23 The law.
- 24 **GAMALIEL:** The law, and this Jesus ignores our law, our
25 traditions. You will *not* follow him! *(Lights go down on*
26 *Pharisees. Cross fade to PARENTS. MOTHER shakes her head*
27 *"no" and moves closer, trying to listen to NICODEMUS and*
28 *GAMALIEL's pantomimed conversation.)*
- 29 **FATHER:** *(Quietly)* So many questions. Seems odd.
- 30 **MOTHER:** Shhhh.
- 31 **FATHER:** Don't be afraid.
- 32 **MOTHER:** But they asked ...
- 33 **FATHER:** *(Presses his finger to MOTHER's lips.)* They just want
34 to know what we believe.
- 35 **MOTHER:** He was blind. But my boy looked into my eyes
36 because of Jesus.
- 37 **FATHER:** *(Clasps his hand over MOTHER's mouth.)* Want to be
38 thrown out of the synagogue? *(MOTHER throws down*

- 1 *FATHER's hand.*) I got a hankerin' inside; this Jesus is
 2 trouble.
- 3 MOTHER: How?
- 4 FATHER: Don't know. Ask him.
- 5 MOTHER: All right. *(She starts to leave.)*
- 6 FATHER: No!
- 7 MOTHER: I don't understand —
- 8 FATHER: If the Pharisees heard the way you're talking —
- 9 MOTHER: I don't care!
- 10 FATHER: Just don't mention Jesus. I knowed I heard his
 11 name somewheres.
- 12 MOTHER: But he healed our son.
- 13 FATHER: Uh-huh, uh-huh, I got it. Read in the paper this
 14 morning. He's a heretic, an' my wife ain't associating
 15 with —
- 16 MOTHER: Our son.
- 17 FATHER: A heretic!
- 18 MOTHER: That's what I said.
- 19 FATHER: Ah, shush up!
- 20 MOTHER: All right, I'll stay quiet.
- 21 FATHER: Good.
- 22 MOTHER: One question.
- 23 FATHER: What happened to staying quiet? *(MOTHER gives*
 24 *FATHER an annoyed look. FATHER sighs and nods.)*
- 25 MOTHER: What's gonna happen to him?
- 26 FATHER: Well, Jesus. The papers say —
- 27 MOTHER: Our son, your flesh and blood.
- 28 FATHER: Oh. *(Quiet for a few moments)*
- 29 MOTHER: Well? *(FATHER stays quiet and thinks. MOTHER*
 30 *shakes her head, then pulls out a bag and begins knitting.*
 31 *FATHER drags MOTHER over to the side and looks around*
 32 *nervously. He gets tangled up in the yarn.)*
- 33 FATHER: What is — ?
- 34 MOTHER: Yarn. Figure he'll need some warm socks —
- 35 FATHER: Mother.
- 36 MOTHER: If he's leaving us.
- 37 FATHER: Mother, he's not —
- 38 MOTHER: After all, you don't —



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