

THE MASTERS

by Mark and Karla Jensen



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The Masters

A Lenten collection about
the artisans of 33 A.D.

by Mark and Karla Jensen

PRODUCTION NOTES

Each week of Lent your congregation will meet a new craftsperson from Jerusalem. These individuals unknowingly create the very items that are used for Jesus' crucifixion. These scripts explore the complex emotional relationship between the objects and the One for whom they were destined. A leather tanner fashions a whip by Pilate's order. A weaver's purple cloth may have been used to mock Jesus' kingly claim. Judas and John purchase wine from a winemaker for Passover, unaware that a cup from the same batch will quench Jesus' thirst. Blacksmiths prepare the Crucifixion nails and the sword that will pierce Jesus' side. A stonecutter makes Joseph of Arimathea's tomb, which holds Jesus' body. These episodes provide your congregation with a unique perspective on Jesus' final days.

Each week the scene changes with some simple props. Biblical costumes and props that are easily found or are improvised create the scene.

Easter Sunday often means a very full schedule, so no script is provided for that day. May you find meaning in these simple expressions of lives profoundly affected by Jesus' presence.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Leather Tanner
2. Weaver
3. Winemaker
4. Blacksmiths
5. Stonecutter

Leather Tanner**Week 1****Characters:**

Reuben, a leather tanner master

Elias, a servant and journeyman to leather tanner

Roman Soldier

John, one of Jesus' disciples

Costumes: Biblical robes for all but the Roman soldier.

Props: A whip of cords, leather scraps, leather sandals or belts, other leather products, two pieces of paper, a pencil.

Setting: A small table piled high with leather products sits Stage Right. Items may be scattered around the front to portray a workshop.

NARRATOR: (*Reads weekly introduction to drama.*) To fashion functional necessities out of a simple piece of leather, to weave a beautiful piece of cloth, to age wine to perfection, to fire iron into useful items, and to uncover a memorable dwelling out of stone — these are the stories of the masters, expert artisans in their fields who unknowingly helped shape the Lenten journey that Jesus experienced. From blacksmiths to quarrymen, even their collective degrees of separation from the Savior didn't stop him from challenging their faith and changing their lives. (*Exits.*)

REUBEN: (*Enters and speaks to audience.*) I'm not the first leather tanner in my family, nor will I be the last. It's our tradition, our craft, our trade. To hew tools, essentials, and gear out of an animal's hide for my fellow farmer, fisherman, soldier, or craftsmen is a satisfactory achievement. We masters do it with precision, technique, and style. We are proud of our craft and we aim for perfection. Ah, here comes my delivery of hides for the week.

- 1 ELIAS: (*Enters from Stage Right, holding leather material.*)
2 Master, here are the hides for the three orders you have
3 waiting. Where would you like them placed? Or should
4 I “hide” them somewhere safe?
- 5 REUBEN: You’re in a good mood today, Elias. Place them at
6 the workbench, please.
- 7 ELIAS: (*Looking around room, teasing because of the mess*)
8 Workbench, workbench. I know it’s hiding under this
9 mess somewhere. What will you be fashioning out of
10 this leather? The smell is pleasing but the hide is still
11 rough, not unlike the bottom of my feet, unfortunately.
- 12 REUBEN: I will work the hide, Elias. All journeymen come
13 to understand the process of tanning, cutting, and
14 stitching. This hide will become soft and supple, yet
15 strong and enduring. (*Picks up a belt from table.*) One time
16 it could become a strong belt, (*Displays a whip*) another
17 time a whip of cords, possibly even some sturdy
18 sandals. (*Holds up sandals from table.*)
- 19 ELIAS: These hides will produce at least a dozen sandals,
20 don’t you think? Then we can claim to save “soles,” just
21 like the temple priests.
- 22 REUBEN: Yes, a dozen sandals, perhaps more, but I fear the
23 Sanhedrin will request that this leather be fashioned
24 for their purposes, forgoing the needs of my most loyal
25 clients.
- 26 ELIAS: You mean _____ (*Insert a favorite local furniture*
27 *store*) or Wilson’s Leather? Either way, request isn’t the
28 word that the other masters in the city are using.
29 *Demanding* is more the Sanhedrin’s style.
- 30 REUBEN: Every shrewd businessman knows when to forgo
31 his own desires to meet the demands of the Roman
32 government. In the meantime, we attempt to fulfill
33 other orders and obligations, like this other buyer.
34 (*Picks up a slip of paper and reads.*) Harley Davidson.
35 Needs some good quality leather outerwear.
- 36 ROMAN SOLDIER: (*Enters from Stage Left.*) Obligations? Yes,
37 that is exactly what the Governor expects the city’s best
38 leather tanner to keep. Tanner Reuben — you are

1 advised that Pilate will be requiring five new leather
2 whips to keep the prisoners in check. He has worn out
3 the last batch you produced. Make them stronger.

4 REUBEN: We make them as strong as possible. All the
5 leather products from my workbench are made to last,
6 unless they are used improperly.

7 ROMAN SOLDIER: What Pontius demands is a new style of
8 cord, complete with something that not only stings the
9 flesh but tears at it as well. Most prisoners need a
10 reminder so they won't return to their former way of
11 life. *(Begins to rifle through REUBEN's workbench.)* Surely
12 there is something among your stock of accessories that
13 could produce the necessary pain.

14 REUBEN: Now you've gone and done it. My workbench is a
15 mess!

16 ELIAS: I have seen another whip with bone-like claws.

17 ROMAN SOLDIER: Exactly what we need. With the Passover,
18 there is always more unrest in the city.

19 REUBEN: The Jewish festival doesn't begin until Thursday.
20 When will you require this new order of whips?

21 ROMAN SOLDIER: No later than Thursday morning. I expect
22 them to be done on time. If not, we'll simply award the
23 work to another master tanner. We have many across the
24 city working on Rome's armament. *(ROMAN SOLDIER*
25 *exits.)*

26 REUBEN: *(To ELIAS)* I've only thought about creating evil
27 like this in my worst nightmares. I became a tanner
28 because I seek to make the world a better place through
29 my work.

30 ELIAS: So, are you going to do what Rome asked?

31 REUBEN: I don't have much of a choice, do I? Unless I want
32 to find myself hanging on a Roman cross.

33 ELIAS: I suppose I better fetch some strong and sturdy bones
34 for this new whip of cords. Do you think the Roman
35 guards would notice if we used flimsy fish bones
36 incapable of hurting anyone?

37 REUBEN: I think they would, my friend. I think they would.

38 JOHN: *(Enters from Stage Left.)* Excuse me. I'm looking for the

- 1 best tanner and leathersmith in town.
- 2 ELIAS: You've come to the right place. My master is one of
- 3 the best in the region. (*Whispers.*) Just disregard the mess.
- 4 JOHN: My friends and I are looking for new sandals. Our feet
- 5 are weary and our sandals are worn.
- 6 REUBEN: Are you in town for the Passover then?
- 7 JOHN: Yes, our master and his followers arrived together,
- 8 and we have an upper room reserved over John's Pizza
- 9 Parlor.
- 10 ELIAS: So you're with Jesus then?
- 11 JOHN: Is it that obvious? It's the dirty feet, isn't it? Even after
- 12 wiping the dust from our feet, the grime builds up again
- 13 and again. We have traveled a long distance preaching
- 14 and teaching.
- 15 REUBEN: I've heard of your master's reputation. He brings a
- 16 message of love and a new understanding of God into
- 17 our midst. How many pairs of sandals do you require?
- 18 JOHN: There's twelve of us, thirteen with Jesus. Famous
- 19 Footwear is closed so I came here.
- 20 REUBEN: Stories of his miracles precede you. I've even heard
- 21 that Jesus raised someone from the dead. Is that a true
- 22 story?
- 23 JOHN: That's no idle gossip. It was his friend, Lazarus. He'd
- 24 been in the tomb four days, no less.
- 25 ELIAS: That's amazing. A stench probably worse than those
- 26 dirty feet. Why are you all in Jerusalem?
- 27 JOHN: Some of his disciples think Jesus will be announcing
- 28 his kingship soon.
- 29 REUBEN: I'm not sure Rome would be so appreciative of
- 30 that. I hope your master is a cautious man.
- 31 ELIAS: Indeed, we've been inscripted to fashion dreadful
- 32 whips (*Picks up a whip from the workbench to illustrate*) for
- 33 the purpose of flogging prisoners and making the sting
- 34 last.
- 35 REUBEN: Is Friday soon enough for this batch of sandals?
- 36 JOHN: Thursday would be better. Our group will be
- 37 celebrating the Passover together.
- 38 ELIAS: (*To REUBEN*) Master, I don't mind working some extra

- 1 hours to fulfill this order. These are good men.
- 2 **REUBEN:** Thirteen pair of sandals by Thursday will cost you.
- 3 I could throw in an extra pair and make it an even
- 4 fourteen. We are running a Lenten special — buy one, get
- 5 one half price. Besides, thirteen is an unlucky number.
- 6 **ELIAS:** Here, write down the sandal sizes. (*Hands JOHN a*
- 7 *paper and pencil.*) Are you familiar with what your men
- 8 require?
- 9 **JOHN:** Certainly. (*Thinks out loud and jots notes.*) John is a size
- 10 ten, James size nine, Matthew eight, Thomas eleven,
- 11 Peter twelve.
- 12 **ELIAS:** Someone has a size twelve in your group?
- 13 **JOHN:** Yes, Peter, the bold one among us, but he'll deny that
- 14 the largest sandals belong to him. He denies everything.
- 15 **REUBEN:** Fine, then. We'll get started after our whips are
- 16 completed. We hope none of you run into trouble with
- 17 Rome. Try washing your feet more often with these new
- 18 sandals. That's my advice for keeping your sandals
- 19 intact longer.
- 20 **JOHN:** I'm sure that won't be a problem. There's usually a
- 21 servant around to wash our feet for us.
- 22 **ELIAS:** It's usually the lowest servant of the house who takes
- 23 care of that job.
- 24 **JOHN:** Our master has told us many times that it's more
- 25 important to serve than to be served. It's difficult to
- 26 understand that. Not all of us grasp that. It might take a
- 27 pretty dramatic example for us to truly understand
- 28 Jesus' meaning on that subject. See you on Thursday,
- 29 then. (*Begins to leave.*)
- 30 **REUBEN:** We'll have your sandals prepared. Even the size
- 31 twelve.
- 32 **JOHN:** (*Laughing*) I'm sure my master will be pleased. (*Exits.*)
- 33 **ELIAS:** We better get to our other work so we can complete
- 34 the whips in time to begin this big project.
- 35 **REUBEN:** Yes, Elias. I wish there was a way to avoid this
- 36 whip-making.
- 37 **ELIAS:** Yes, master. I'm sure those stung by the whip wish the
- 38 very same.

Weaver**Week 2****Characters:**

Asher, the owner and master weaver

Hannah, Asher's wife

Daniel, teenage son of Asher and Hannah

Customer, from the governor's palace

Costumes: Biblical robes, headpieces, and sandals for all.

Props: Purple cloth, broom, money bag/pouch, other materials/fabrics

Setting: A weaving shop. Use a laundry drying rack or a quilt hanger as a loom. Material is draped on chairs or tables.

NARRATOR: (*Reads weekly introduction to drama.*) **To fashion functional necessities out of a simple piece of leather, to weave a beautiful piece of cloth, to age wine to perfection, to fire iron into useful items, and to uncover a memorable dwelling out of stone — these are the stories of the masters, expert artisans in their fields who unknowingly helped shape the Lenten journey that Jesus experienced. From blacksmiths to quarrymen, even their collective degrees of separation from the Savior didn't stop him from challenging their faith and changing their lives. (*Exits. Scene begins with ASHER working by himself on weaving cloth at the loom, but he pauses before his wife HANNAH enters to contemplate a previous discussion. He appears far off in his own thoughts.*)**

HANNAH: (*Enters and watches ASHER, who doesn't see her come in.*) **Why aren't you weaving, Asher? It's not yet noon, and there is great work yet to be accomplished.**

ASHER: Hannah, my dear. (*They go to each other, embrace.*) **You just missed the heated "discussion" with my opinionated brother, Laban, about the faulty business practices we seem to be engaging in here at the shop.**

HANNAH: He didn't say that to you, did he? (*She grabs a*

1 *broom and moves toward Stage Right like she is about to go*
2 *after him.) Then Laban won't be eating at our table again*
3 *soon. (ASHER stops her from leaving.)*

4 ASHER: My brother fails to understand that Romans pay
5 well for fine fabric. And besides, I don't receive the
6 lion's share of business from them. We have a wonderful
7 collection of other clients. What he can't understand is
8 that by doing business with the Romans, they are more
9 lenient when the tax man arrives.

10 HANNAH: Has he forgotten what it was like for your father?
11 He chose not to have anything to do with the rotten
12 Romans, and did it make him a better or wealthier
13 person?

14 ASHER: Removing himself from connecting with Romans
15 has only made Laban a poorer person.

16 HANNAH: (*Picks up one of ASHER's finest cloths to illustrate.*)
17 You are one of the finest weavers and spinners in the
18 area. Why wouldn't Rome want what you offer? You are
19 a master at your craft. Your reputation is good and
20 solid.

21 ASHER: Bless you, Hannah. You're a fine wife, but a bit
22 prejudiced, I believe.

23 DANIEL: (*Enters with fabric.*) Father, I wove that new cloth I
24 was telling you about.

25 ASHER: Wonderful. You are resourceful like your father.
26 What did you name it?

27 DANIEL: Polyester, after the beautiful girl, Esther, down
28 the street. Our neighbor.

29 HANNAH: What will become of our future generations with
30 ideas like that, my son? You have a ways to go before
31 reaching the heights of master weaver and fiber artisan
32 like your father. Find out what other fabrics your
33 father needs to complete today. He is behind.

34 DANIEL: Father, what is on this loom? It certainly looks
35 beautiful spinning. Is this why Uncle Laban criticizes
36 you?

37 HANNAH: Daniel, let up on the eavesdropping of store
38 gossip, or you'll be sorry.

- 1 DANIEL: By the sheer volume of that customer's voice and
2 his demanding tone, I knew it must have been the
3 Roman buyer from the governor's house. What is such
4 expensive cloth used for in the governor's house?
- 5 ASHER: Your uncle believes the purple cloth is used
6 specifically to mock the prisoners.
- 7 DANIEL: That's what my friend, Joshua, claims. He says he's
8 even seen the soldiers.
- 9 HANNAH: You mean that he's been spying, don't you,
10 Daniel?
- 11 DANIEL: Not exactly. Joshua has seen the soldiers flogging
12 prisoners accused of insurrection. After the Romans
13 are done whipping the prisoners, they drape a purple
14 robe on them.
- 15 HANNAH: How hideous!
- 16 ASHER: Daniel, these are stories, rumors.
- 17 DANIEL: Father, I tell you that Joshua witnessed this with
18 his own eyes.
- 19 HANNAH: Your father's cloth should never be used to
20 torture Rome's prisoners.
- 21 ASHER: Yet it is a master weaver's job only to bind the cloth
22 together and sell it, is it not? If I made it my business to
23 know, I could not bear to continue my work. So far, the
24 business arrangement we have with many customers
25 ends as they walk out the door. And my purse is heavy.
- 26 HANNAH: It is time for you to complete your household
27 chores, Daniel. Your father and I will solve the world's
28 problems together. You are too young to worry over
29 such things. Go now. (*DANIEL leaves as HANNAH waits for*
30 *his exit before she speaks.*) My dear, do you believe our
31 son's tale?
- 32 ASHER: It's not our fault. I am only the master weaver. We
33 don't create this fabric to be used for evil. The fabric
34 linens are neither good nor bad. Only the people who
35 touch the cloth and are touched by it determine its true
36 destiny and final fate. (*Male CUSTOMER enters.*)
- 37 CUSTOMER: Good day, Asher. How's the master weaver
38 today? (*They hug.*)

1 ASHER: Excellent, but I just sold some cloth to you only a
2 few weeks back. Don't tell me you've had a problem or
3 snag already!

4 CUSTOMER: Not with your fabric. Never. I did, however,
5 involve myself in last week's procession when the
6 famous rabbi entered Jerusalem.

7 ASHER: I heard about the rabbi's grand entrance.

8 CUSTOMER: You two should have been a part of the crowd.
9 (*Moves to Center Stage with CUSTOMER in the middle*
10 *between ASHER and HANNAH.*) People cut palm branches
11 and laid them on the road Jesus took. (*Acts this out for*
12 *them.*) Others of us who had means removed our cloaks
13 and spread them before Jesus, as if he were a king. It
14 was thrilling!

15 HANNAH: So your coat was trampled by the people or the
16 donkey?

17 CUSTOMER: Both. The street was so clogged that Jesus, the
18 son of David, could barely make his way through the
19 city.

20 ASHER: That sounds like quite an entrance.

21 CUSTOMER: (*Motions them closer, whispering*) Many among us
22 believe Jesus is the Messiah, God's promised one. But
23 disturbing news just arrived. He was arrested last night
24 and taken before the Sanhedrin.

25 HANNAH: Oh, how terrible! Surely he'll be released.
26 (*DANIEL appears at exit, eavesdropping.*)

27 CUSTOMER: Latest word says that Jesus has been handed
28 over to Pilate, charged with claiming to be the King of
29 the Jews.

30 HANNAH: (*Rushes to ASHER's arms.*) Oh, Asher, you know
31 what that means.

32 ASHER: Then our Messiah doesn't have long to live!

33 CUSTOMER: I fear as much. I wish God could perform a
34 miracle here, but we've seen too many of our own men
35 die upon the Roman crosses.

36 DANIEL: (*Enters.*) I couldn't help but overhear the news of
37 Jesus. He's been accused of insurrection.

38 ASHER: This is my son, Daniel, my apprentice. He's quite

1 interested in these matters.

2 CUSTOMER: Daniel, Asher could be correct. If Jesus
3 appears before Pilate, then all may be lost. Rome
4 doesn't tolerate anyone who claims to be a leader of the
5 Jews.

6 DANIEL: I wonder if the soldiers will play the mocking
7 game with Jesus. He doesn't deserve it.

8 CUSTOMER: Some of my contacts claim that Jesus was
9 recently seen adorned with a crown of thorns atop his
10 bleeding head and a purple robe across his scarred
11 back.

12 DANIEL: (*Rushes to ASHER, upset.*) Father, that could be *our*
13 cloth upon his back!

14 HANNAH: We have no way of knowing that, Daniel. Don't
15 jump to conclusions.

16 ASHER: Yes, Rome has several master weavers in their
17 circle.

18 DANIEL: But it is possible it could have come from this very
19 shop.

20 ASHER: (*Turns away from everyone.*) It's not my fault or
21 problem once the cloth leaves the premises.

22 DANIEL: (*Gets in ASHER's face.*) Isn't it, Father? (*Picks up*
23 *purple cloth and holds it in front of ASHER.*) Shouldn't we
24 try to prevent the suffering of innocent people because
25 of our majestic purple cloth? (*Throws cloth to the ground.*)

26 HANNAH: Daniel, you're overstepping your bounds. (*Picks*
27 *up cloth, appalled.*) Show respect to your father.

28 DANIEL: Who else will suffer by our hands? We should
29 refuse to create any more purple cloth for Rome.

30 ASHER: Daniel, you may be excused.

31 DANIEL: But, Father ... I —

32 ASHER: I must conclude my business. Go now. Dinner will
33 be soon. (*DANIEL exits with HANNAH.*) Forgive our
34 strong emotions over the events concerning Jesus.

35 CUSTOMER: Your son is wise for his young age.

36 ASHER: I agree. For years, I have justified what I create and
37 how I make a living. With your words and Daniel's
38 accusation, I know I play a role as well in Jesus'

suffering and the suffering of many innocents. (*Pauses to think.*) Perhaps Rome has purchased its last purple cloth from me. I'll just have to think of another way to pay my bills.

Winemaker Week 3

Characters:

Selah, the grower of grapes and winemaker

Benjamin, Selah's husband (This is an older couple with no children.)

Judas

John, (The disciples are buying wine for Maundy Thursday)

Tirus, a Roman jailer buying wine for Good Friday

Costumes: Biblical robes, headpieces, and sandals for all. Tirus will need something to distinguish himself as a Roman, like a helmet or a sword tucked in his belt.

Props: Real or artificial grapes, various wine bottles, jug, basket, dusting cloth, coins

Setting: A home-based winery with the above props on tables.

NARRATOR: (*Reads weekly introduction to drama.*) To fashion functional necessities out of a simple piece of leather, to weave a beautiful piece of cloth, to age wine to perfection, to fire iron into useful items, and to uncover a memorable dwelling out of stone — these are the stories of the masters, expert artisans in their fields who unknowingly helped shape the Lenten journey that Jesus experienced. From blacksmiths to quarrymen, even their collective degrees of separation from the Savior didn't stop him from challenging their faith and changing their lives. (*Exits. Scene opens with SELAH working on the grapes in her vineyard. She holds a*

1 *basket with grapes.)*

2 **SELAH:** *(At Center Stage, spreading grapes out on the ground or*
 3 *table, wiping sweat from her brow.)* **Could this day be any**
 4 **warmer, and could my back be any tighter?** *(Bends over*
 5 *and lets out a yelp of pain. BENJAMIN, SELAH's husband,*
 6 *enters.)*

7 **BENJAMIN:** Selah, are you all right?

8 **SELAH:** I'm fine, Benjamin. Just spreading the grapes out to
 9 dry. I'm glad I have a husband who comes running
 10 whenever I shout.

11 **BENJAMIN:** Well, the way you were yelling, I think the
 12 entire village next door might have heard you as well.

13 **SELAH:** Is it me, or does today feel warmer than usual?

14 **BENJAMIN:** It feels warm enough, Selah. I must remind
 15 you, however, that you *did* pick the hottest part of the
 16 day to work on the grapevines.

17 **SELAH:** Benjamin, we've talked about this. If we don't get
 18 the grapes in the vats now, this year's vintage won't
 19 ferment adequately. *(BENJAMIN takes her hands in his.)*

20 **BENJAMIN:** Selah, this labor should be reserved for
 21 children or hired hands, not for you.

22 **SELAH:** Benjamin, you know that we have neither.
 23 *(BENJAMIN looks down.)*

24 **BENJAMIN:** I'm sorry, Selah. I didn't mean to hurt you.

25 **SELAH:** *(Lifts his head to look at her.)* I know. I know ... But we
 26 haven't been able to have children, and we can't afford
 27 hired hands.

28 **BENJAMIN:** So here I am beside my wife, who is toiling
 29 among the grapevines, drying grapes. I wish I could do
 30 more.

31 **SELAH:** *(Moves around stage.)* When my father died, there was
 32 no one to take over his business. My mother and I
 33 couldn't do it by ourselves. By marrying me, you took
 34 on this business and gave it a male face. In a world such
 35 as ours ruled by men, presenting a male as the face of
 36 this vineyard and winery enables us to be well
 37 respected in the community.

38 **BENJAMIN:** *(Goes to SELAH.)* Yes, but I am not very good at

1 growing the grapes or pressing the grapes into wine.
 2 Then when it comes to selling the wine, well ... (*Picks up*
 3 *a bottle.*) When it comes to selling the wine, frankly, I
 4 would be completely lost without you.

5 **SELAH:** Benjamin, you have learned so much over the years.
 6 (*Grabs a jug and hands it to BENJAMIN.*) Could you strain
 7 the dinner wine? We don't want to find insects in our
 8 own wine.

9 **BENJAMIN:** I do my best, thanks to your continued
 10 complaining — I mean, coaching. (*JUDAS and JOHN*
 11 *enter. SELAH motions to BENJAMIN that the two of them*
 12 *should go over and talk to JUDAS and JOHN.*)

13 **BENJAMIN:** Gentlemen, may I help you?

14 **JUDAS:** Yes, my name is Judas, and this is John. We are
 15 disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, and we've come to
 16 purchase some wine for the Passover.

17 **BENJAMIN:** Welcome, guests. My name is Benjamin, and
 18 this is my wife Selah. We run this vineyard and winery.
 19 Is this a last-minute preparation for the Passover?

20 **JOHN:** (*Steps forward to speak frankly.*) It shouldn't have been.
 21 We were told by our master that the room was all
 22 prepared, but when we checked this morning, the room
 23 remained without wine.

24 **BENJAMIN:** I see. Sounds like a simple catering error. What
 25 kind of wine are you looking for, and how many people
 26 must be served? (*JUDAS and JOHN begin shopping around*
 27 *for different wines.*)

28 **JOHN:** There will be at least thirteen of us.

29 **BENJAMIN:** Feel free to look around. Otherwise, I can offer
 30 you something. (*Looks to SELAH for cues, then grabs the*
 31 *correct bottle.*) Here you go.

32 **JUDAS:** (*Examining bottle*) That looks too expensive. What
 33 about that one over there? (*From behind the DISCIPLES,*
 34 *SELAH nods "no" to BENJAMIN, so that only he can see.*)

35 **BENJAMIN:** No, sir ... You wouldn't want that. That is our
 36 least expensive wine. The bouquet is ... is —

37 **SELAH:** (*Interrupts.*) That wine is as close as one could get to
 38 vinegar.

1 JUDAS: I like vinegar!

2 JOHN: Judas, we can't serve that to our master and the rest
3 of the disciples — especially not for the Passover.

4 JUDAS: Why not? It might remind them of the bitterness
5 that our ancestors endured in Egypt.

6 JOHN: Judas!

7 JUDAS: (*Walks toward BENJAMIN.*) Benjamin, why would
8 anyone keep poor wine around?

9 BENJAMIN: Oh, you would be surprised.

10 SELAH: (*Moves to others.*) Often at a banquet the best wine is
11 served first, and then the cheaper wine is served after
12 the guests have had too much to drink.

13 BENJAMIN: Except for that wedding at Cana a few years
14 ago.

15 SELAH: (*Dusting and listening to the men's conversations*) We
16 heard about that wedding banquet, which was the
17 exception and highly unusual. From what we heard, the
18 family saved the best wine for last. (*The DISCIPLES look*
19 *at one another in surprise.*)

20 JOHN: Yes, our master had something to do with that.
21 Friend of the family. He pulled some strings to stretch
22 that wine.

23 SELAH: Then your master certainly turned party etiquette
24 upside down on that occasion.

25 JOHN: (*Smiles.*) Yes, Jesus has been known to do that from
26 time to time.

27 JUDAS: Is there any other purpose for the cheaper wine?
28 (*BENJAMIN and SELAH look at each other. SELAH moves*
29 *behind the DISCIPLES.*)

30 BENJAMIN: We have ... (*SELAH shakes her head "no" with fear.*)
31 We have no other buyers for the cheaper wine, which is
32 only used at banquets upon request.

33 JUDAS: Very well. Is there a midgrade wine?

34 BENJAMIN: (*Goes into sacristy or back area to retrieve other*
35 *wine.*) Try this. It's called Mogan David. A lot of
36 churches use Mogan David, and they love the taste.

37 JOHN: OK, we'll use the Mogan David. (*Takes the wine jug from*
38 *BENJAMIN.*)

- 1 JUDAS: The price is certainly right. (*JUDAS hands coins over*
2 *to BENJAMIN.*)
- 3 BENJAMIN: Thank you both for your kindness and
4 generosity.
- 5 JOHN: You're welcome.
- 6 JUDAS: We should be on our way. Thank you again. (*JUDAS*
7 *and JOHN exit*)
- 8 SELAH: Benjamin, shame on you! I can't believe you nearly
9 told them who purchases the cheap wine.
- 10 BENJAMIN: I'm sorry. I don't see what harm it would have
11 done.
- 12 SELAH: (*Begins to pick up bottles.*) We would be ostracized by
13 our people. Your honesty is one of the reasons I love
14 you, but if word got out about who buys the cheap wine,
15 our business would dry up as grapes to raisins forever.
16 (*TIRUS enters.*)
- 17 TIRUS: If the word got out about what, Selah?
- 18 SELAH: Nothing, Tirus. How are you today?
- 19 TIRUS: Fine. (*Walks close to BENJAMIN.*) Benjamin, fill my
20 clay jars with that cheap wine of yours. Our Roman
21 prisons thirst for your best worst wine. We will mix it
22 with myrrh and make it into gall.
- 23 BENJAMIN: (*With no emotion, goes to pulpit to write down order.*)
24 How many do you need this time?
- 25 TIRUS: The governor has ordered at least another dozen
26 jars.
- 27 BENJAMIN: I'll have the jars ready for you to pick up later
28 today.
- 29 TIRUS: Good! I would hate to tell Pontius Pilate we had no
30 wine. But then again, if the order wasn't complete, I
31 wouldn't be the one to tell Pilate. *You* would do that on
32 my behalf.
- 33 BENJAMIN: Our wine is meant for festive occasions. But
34 you use it for criminals who are dying on Roman
35 crosses. Our wine flows down their faces, just as their
36 blood flows down their cross. Our wine is meant to give
37 life, not take it away.
- 38 TIRUS: (*Intimidatingly*) If you have a problem selling your

1 wine to us, we can easily go elsewhere. Of course, in the
 2 meantime, we might have need to house some of our
 3 soldiers in your home to protect Jerusalem.

4 BENJAMIN: Please go Tirus. I'll make the arrangements.

5 TIRUS: Very well. Our soldiers will be here this afternoon to
 6 pick up the wine. (*TIRUS leaves.*)

7 SELAH: (*She goes to BENJAMIN's side.*) I know it grieves you,
 8 Benjamin.

9 BENJAMIN: I will do what I must in order to protect you
 10 and save this vineyard. I'll even sell to animals like
 11 Tirus.

12 SELAH: Like I said, you are a good man.

13 BENJAMIN: (*They begin to exit arm in arm.*) Someday our wine
 14 will only bring life and not help take it. Someday God
 15 will use this wine to bring hope — for us and for all
 16 people.

17 SELAH: I know, Benjamin, and that will be a glorious day!

18

19

20 Blacksmiths

21 Week 4

22

23 Characters:

24 Aaron, master blacksmith

25 Jeremiah, an assistant blacksmith

26 Matthias, another blacksmith in training

27 Customer

28

29 Costumes: Biblical robes, headpieces, and sandals for all. Add
 30 simple aprons if you like.

31

32 Props: Tools, hammers, long nails, armor (may be as simple as
 33 cardboard shapes covered with aluminum foil), calculator,
 34 swords, helmets

35

36 Setting: A blacksmith's shop. A table may display the above props.

37

38 NARRATOR: (*Reads weekly introduction to drama.*) To fashion

1 functional necessities out of a simple piece of leather, to
 2 weave a beautiful piece of cloth, to age wine to
 3 perfection, to fire iron into useful items, and to uncover
 4 a memorable dwelling out of stone — these are the
 5 stories of the masters, expert artisans in their fields
 6 who unknowingly helped shape the Lenten journey
 7 that Jesus experienced. From blacksmiths to
 8 quarrymen, even their collective degrees of separation
 9 from the Savior didn't stop him from challenging their
 10 faith and changing their lives. *(Exits. AARON sits at a*
 11 *work table. He creates special high-tech equipment for the*
 12 *Roman army such as swords, spears, body armor, and nails for*
 13 *crucifixions. AARON has two assistants, MATTHIAS and*
 14 *JEREMIAH, who help him with his work. JEREMIAH enters*
 15 *and begins talking to AARON.)*

16 JEREMIAH: There you are, Aaron. How is the latest
 17 invention of Rome's most prestigious master
 18 blacksmith coming?

19 AARON: Not very well I'm afraid, Jeremiah. *(They both stare*
 20 *at a piece of Roman armor. MATTHIAS enters.)*

21 MATTHIAS: What seems to be the problem, Aaron?
 22 *(JEREMIAH and MATTHIAS stand between AARON and the*
 23 *armor.)*

24 AARON: It's this body armor, Matthias. The Roman army
 25 wants us to come up with a cooling system to make it
 26 more comfortable and not so blessed hot to wear.

27 MATTHIAS: *(Picks up armor to examine.)* I think you may have
 28 it entirely wrong, Aaron. What if Rome really meant
 29 that by making it cooler, they preferred an armor that
 30 had a great stylish look to it? You know, armor that
 31 looked cool.

32 AARON: *(Considers this for a moment, scratching his chin.)* Then
 33 they should have been more specific. I've spent three
 34 and a half days trying to create an air-conditioning unit
 35 that could be installed in this heavy armor.

36 JEREMIAH: Aaron, maybe next time we should clarify with
 37 customers before we begin a big project like this,
 38 especially for Rome. God only knows what they really

1 want of us master blacksmiths.

2 AARON: Listen, Jeremiah and Matthias — you work for me
3 as blacksmith apprentices, not the other way around. If
4 I believe a project should be handled a certain way,
5 then that's the way it will be handled. We're not some
6 underground spy agency working for rival sides.
7 Understood?

8 JEREMIAH: No, but we could be.

9 MATTHIAS: It would only take a couple of phone calls.
10 James Bond had Q, so maybe we could shorten Aaron to
11 A. If we made you sound more mysterious, we might get
12 a lot more work.

13 AARON: Hmmmm. I'm not sure Rome's quite ready for that.

14 MATTHIAS: (*Moves behind Communion table or pulpit.*) Yes, sir.
15 Now then, what's our next assignment, A?

16 AARON: Glad you asked. The Roman government has
17 assigned us the job of making nails (*Holds up a very long,*
18 *large nail from table*) that would withstand days of
19 criminals hanging from their crosses. We've been asked
20 to move forward on this project without anyone's
21 knowledge. (*AARON hands each of his COLLEAGUES a*
22 *long nail to examine.*)

23 JEREMIAH: If no one had knowledge of it, then we wouldn't
24 have a project. (*He tosses the nail back on the work bench.*)
25 Let's go for ice cream. (*He turns to leave, pulling*
26 *MATTHIAS with him.*)

27 MATTHIAS: (*Refusing to leave with JEREMIAH*) Maybe we
28 should be concentrating more forces on finding
29 something that will finish these guys off quicker.
30 (*Roams around the stage, thinking of ideas.*) A bad smell,
31 higher taxes, food poisoning ...

32 JEREMIAH: And the nails, I suppose, are not just meant to
33 attach the pieces of wood that keep those crosses
34 together?

35 MATTHIAS: You don't mean, A, that Rome wants us to
36 configure new nails that are superior in strength to
37 pierce a man's ankles and wrists as well. What will they
38 ask of us next? A coliseum that would withstand

- 1 thousands of years of weather?
- 2 AARON: I'm afraid it's true. Stronger nails, yes.
3 Indestructible nails. Exactly. That's what we get the big
4 bucks for. Let's get to work. *(They all grab hammers.)*
- 5 JEREMIAH: What other masters in their fields are wasting
6 their precious knowledge on helping ensure that the
7 dying remain dead?
- 8 MATTHIAS: Perhaps more masters than we know. We are
9 free and we are not, both at the same time.
- 10 JEREMIAH: Ah, that is how Rome has devised their
11 government, to keep us all in check. *(Moves Stage Right.)*
12 Has anyone been close enough to witness who uses
13 these nails and who might know if they are or are not
14 strong enough to bear the weight of a man?
- 15 AARON: Yes, but it is *not* something I wish to repeat often or
16 recollect.
- 17 MATTHIAS: Stronger nails will only make the suffering
18 worse, won't it? I'm not sure we should participate in
19 this ... new endeavor.
- 20 JEREMIAH: Can't we refuse? Ask Rome to find another
21 master blacksmith whose conscience isn't as soft as
22 mine. I won't be able to sleep at night. *(Queasy, holds*
23 *stomach.)* Look, my stomach is already upset. *(Walks away*
24 *to find a seat.)*
- 25 AARON: This is nonsense. We can't make nails out of
26 aluminum, that's for sure. We're master blacksmithies.
27 We use only the finest and strongest materials. People
28 depend on our products to work. We'd like to someday
29 become distributed through Home Depot. We can't
30 create a substandard product.
- 31 JEREMIAH: OK, let's say we create these nearly
32 indestructible nails. Who will be the next person we
33 know to hang from our handiwork?
- 34 AARON: The first rule of espionage is to remove yourself
35 from feelings.
- 36 MATTHIAS: How can a craftsman simply separate feelings
37 from his completed products? I don't think I could do it.
38 It would be like trying to remove the sky from the stars

- 1 or pebbles from sand at the beach. They go together.
2 (*CUSTOMER enters from Stage Left.*)
- 3 **AARON:** Good morning, sir. May we help you?
- 4 **CUSTOMER:** I hope I've come to the right place. I'm a
5 collector of sorts, looking for some specialty items to
6 complete my collection of swords. (*Begins to roam the*
7 *area, viewing specialty items displayed.*) I own swords from
8 Greece, Asia, and even parts of the world most of us
9 have yet to explore.
- 10 **AARON:** So what can we do for you specifically?
- 11 **CUSTOMER:** Might you have a specialty Roman sword with
12 an ornate hilt? They are difficult to come by, unless
13 you're a rabble-rouser. (*Picks up a sword and holds it near*
14 *AARON's face.*) Then you might find one right under your
15 nose.
- 16 **MATTHIAS:** (*Quickly removes sword from CUSTOMER's hands.*)
17 It's our business only to fashion the finest products for
18 our customers.
- 19 **AARON:** You want us to forge a Roman soldier's sword for
20 you?
- 21 **CUSTOMER:** Yes. I trust that you know how.
- 22 **JEREMIAH:** Do we know how? I could craft one in my sleep,
23 sir.
- 24 **CUSTOMER:** Well then, I've come to the right place, haven't
25 I?
- 26 **AARON:** (*Moves over to work table.*) Roman swords aren't made
27 for the general public. Most people can't stand the sight
28 of them. Too many covered with blood, I guess.
- 29 **CUSTOMER:** Indeed. But I have a letter from Pontius Pilate
30 himself granting me permission to acquire such a
31 sword from a reputable establishment such as yours. I'll
32 guard it with my life since the people of Jerusalem are
33 obsessed with their unusual mysteries. I don't want it
34 stolen from me. Right now, their favorite puzzle is the
35 preacher Jesus, who continually finds himself at the
36 end of a very sharp sword, pointed toward the cross.
- 37 **AARON:** Yes, the crowds are unpredictable. I hope you
38 won't have to use this.



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