

THE UPPER ROOM

by Gary R. Shiplett



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 UPPER ROOM

By Gary R. Shiplett

CAST OF CHARACTERS

JESUS

READER # 1

READER # 2

PETER

JOHN

PHILIP

THOMAS

JUDAS ISCARIOT

ANDREW

JAMES

JUDAS, SON OF JAMES

EXTRAS (as other disciples and women servants)

PRODUCTION NOTES

Jesus and the disciples sit (or recline) about a table, leaving one side empty for visibility. A seat is placed in front of the table (or elevated behind it) where the congregation can see. Those disciples with speaking parts are brought by Jesus to this seat for the foot washing. The remaining disciples have their feet washed while at the table. On the table are foods for Passover: wafers of unleavened bread (matzoth), shank bone of a lamb (a prop can be made for this) and small plates with a mixture of chopped fruits and nuts. Cups for wine (or grape juice) are at each setting. A goblet or chalice for wine sits in the center of the table.

The disciples at the table interact, but do not speak during the foot washing. Only with the announcement of betrayal and the pledging of loyalty are they vocal. Candles help light the table, and one or two women can serve. Speaking parts may be printed on 3" X 5" cards, if needed. The two readers should be in position, but motionless when not speaking, preferably at separate podiums.

All of the words Jesus speaks are direct quotations from *The New Testament in Today's English Version*, Copyright © American Bible Society, 1966, 1971, 1976.

NOTE: This presentation may be preceded by a brief worship service of scripture, prayer and an anthem or hymn.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

READER # 1: The day came during the feast of unleavened bread when the lambs for the Passover meal had to be killed. Jesus sent Peter and John with these instructions: "Go and get our Passover supper ready for us to eat." "Where do you want us to get it ready?" they asked him. He said: "Listen! As you go into the city a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters, and say to the owner of the house: 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the room where my disciples and I will eat the Passover supper?' He will show you a large furnished room upstairs, where you will get everything ready." They went off and found everything just as Jesus had told them, and prepared the Passover supper.

READER # 2: When the hour came, Jesus took his place at the table with the apostles. And he said to them:

JESUS: I have wanted so much to eat this Passover meal with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will never eat it until it is given its real meaning in the Kingdom of God.

READER # 1: It was customary for servants to wash the

1 feet of guests who had come together for a meal. But
2 Jesus refused to allow the servant to perform this duty
3 (*A woman enters with a basin, pitcher and towel, but*
4 *JESUS takes them from her and sends her away.*)

5 READER # 2: Then Jesus rose from the table, took off
6 his garment and tied a towel around his waist. He
7 went to the table, took the pitcher and poured water
8 into the basin. Then he called his disciples to him
9 one by one in order that he might wash their feet
10 himself. First, he called Simon Peter to him.
11 (*JESUS leads PETER to a chair in clear view before*
12 *the table. PETER is seated.*)

13 PETER: Are you going to wash my feet, Lord?

14 READER # 1: Jesus tried to reassure Simon Peter by
15 saying that while Simon did not now understand
16 what Jesus was doing for the disciples, he would
17 understand later. But Peter, in his typically impulsive
18 manner, resisted.

19 PETER: You will never, at any time, wash my feet!

20 JESUS: If I do not wash your feet, Peter, you will no
21 longer be my disciple.

22 PETER: Lord, do not wash only my feet, then! Wash my
23 hands and head, too! (*JESUS washes and dries*
24 *PETER'S feet. Then he leaves PETER to call another*
25 *disciple. PETER turns to the congregation.*)

26 PETER: It was always like that. Jesus made demands
27 upon us that we didn't always understand. Of course,
28 I often thought I understood. I have always been
29 quick to speak — and slow to listen. I was always
30 so impatient, yet Jesus was always so patient with me.
31 (*PETER takes his place again at the table. JESUS*
32 *leads ANDREW to the front to wash his feet.*)

33 READER # 1: Next, Jesus kneels to wash the feet of
34 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, the apostle who
35 would become patron saint of three different

1 countries — Russia, Greece and Scotland.

2 ANDREW: My Lord, we have left all to follow you, and
3 we do it willingly.

4 JESUS: You did not choose me; I chose you, and
5 appointed you to go and bear much fruit, the kind
6 of fruit that endures." (*JESUS dries ANDREW'S feet,*
7 *then leaves to call another disciple. ANDREW turns*
8 *to the congregation.*)

9 ANDREW: From that first day when I met him, while I
10 was still a disciple of John the Baptist, I knew that
11 I must follow him. I remember running to my brother
12 Simon Peter and telling him, "We have found the
13 Messiah." Then I led my brother to Jesus, and Simon
14 became his disciple also. (*Pause*) Those were happy
15 days! But now danger and darkness hang like clouds
16 over all of us. (*ANDREW returns to his place at the*
17 *table. JESUS leads JAMES to the front.*)

18 READER # 1: Again Jesus washes the feet of one of
19 his disciples. This time it is James, the brother of
20 John, whose father is Zebedee. Together the family
21 had fished Lake Galilee until that fateful day, when
22 James and John had left their father's nets and
23 followed Jesus.

24 JESUS: Do not be worried and upset. Believe in God,
25 and believe also in me.

26 JAMES: Lord, you know that I believe. See how, with
27 my brother, I turned my back on my father's
28 fishing business to become your disciple. (*JESUS*
29 *washes and dries JAMES' feet. Then he leaves to*
30 *call another disciple. JAMES turns to the congregation.*)

31 JAMES: I could not let Jesus know how deeply troubled
32 I really am. I worry for his safety. He seems so
33 confident. How could I burden him with my fears?
34 Yet, he sensed it, didn't he? His confidence in God
35 is so strong. If only I could find such faith. (*JAMES*

1 *returns to his place at the table. JESUS leads JOHN*
 2 *to the front to wash his feet.)*

3 **READER #2:** Now it is John, the beloved disciple's
 4 turn. Along with his brother James, and Simon Peter,
 5 they form the inner circle of Jesus' followers. John is
 6 young, but wise beyond his years. His love for God
 7 is burning fire which has consumed the selfishness in
 8 him. This man whom Jesus had nicknamed "son of
 9 thunder" because of his temper, has become a son
 10 of peace. John sits closest to Jesus at table.

11 **JESUS:** A new commandment I give you: love one
 12 another. As I have loved you, so you must love one
 13 another. If you have love for one another, then all
 14 will know that you are my disciples.

15 **JOHN:** Lord, more than anything else I have learned love
 16 from you. From my childhood, I was taught to love
 17 God with all my heart and soul and mind and
 18 strength. But you have taught me also to love my
 19 neighbor as myself. (*JESUS washes and dries JOHN'S*
 20 *feet. Then he leaves to call another disciple. JOHN*
 21 *turns to the congregation.)*

22 **JOHN:** If ever I shall write about the things Jesus taught
 23 us, I will write about love. He seemed to bring all
 24 that the law had taught us, to focus on the demand
 25 of God to love. Surely, God is love. (*Then JOHN*
 26 *takes his place at the table. JESUS leads PHILIP to*
 27 *the front to wash his feet.)*

28 **READER #1:** Next comes Philip, clear-thinking,
 29 philosophical Philip, the first man to hear Jesus' call
 30 to follow him. Philip said to him:

31 **PHILIP:** Lord, show us the Father; that is all we need.

32 **READER #2:** Jesus answered him: "For a long time I
 33 have been with you all; yet you do not know me,
 34 Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father!"

35 **JESUS:** The words that I have spoken to you do not

1 come from me. The Father, who remains in me, does
2 his own works.

3 **READER # 1:** Jesus continued to explain to Philip in
4 these words: "I tell you the truth: whoever believes
5 in me will do the works I do — yes, he will do
6 even greater ones, for I am going to the Father."
7 *(JESUS has completed washing and drying PHILIP'S*
8 *feet. Now he leaves to call another disciple. PHILIP*
9 *turns to the congregation.)*

10 **PHILIP:** It seemed such a simple request, to show us the
11 Father. Jesus tells us to see God in him, but our
12 vision is not yet clear. What more will it take before
13 he becomes for us a clear reflection of God's glory?
14 With all his teaching, yet we are still not able to
15 penetrate the mystery. *(PHILIP takes his place at the*
16 *table. JESUS leads THOMAS forward to wash his*
17 *feet.)*

18 **READER # 2:** Jesus kneels to wash the feet of Thomas
19 who is called Didymus. His name means that he was
20 a twin. Thomas is the Hebrew, and Didymus is the
21 Greek word for a twin. He is remembered most as
22 "Doubting Thomas."

23 **READER # 1:** We must not forget that Thomas' doubt
24 did not mean that Thomas lacked conviction. The
25 record is clear that Thomas was a loyal and whole-
26 hearted disciple of Jesus. He was a man of courage.
27 Remember how the disciples tried to discourage
28 Jesus from going to Bethany, near Jerusalem, for
29 fear he would be put to death? Jesus' life was in
30 grave danger, and the disciples felt it would be
31 foolhardy to travel in the area near Jerusalem. But
32 Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, who was
33 a close friend to Jesus, lay dying. Jesus was
34 determined to see him.

35 **READER # 2:** Thomas declared, "Let us all go along

1 with the Teacher, that we may die with him." Ahead
2 Thomas saw no hope, but nevertheless he was
3 determined to be faithful even unto death. *(Pause)*
4 Now the disciples have gathered for the Passover
5 observance within the very shadow of Jerusalem, and
6 Jesus kneels before brave and loyal Thomas to wash
7 his feet. Now Thomas, with his questioning mind, asks
8 of Jesus:

9 THOMAS: Lord, we do not know where you are going;
10 how can we know the way to get there?

11 JESUS: I am the way, I am the truth, I am the Life;
12 no one goes to the Father except by me. Now that
13 you have known me, you will know my Father also;
14 and from now on you do know him, and you have
15 seen him. *(JESUS has dried THOMAS' feet. Now he*
16 *leaves to call another disciple. THOMAS turns to the*
17 *congregation.)*

18 THOMAS: How I would die for this man! No one ever
19 spoke like he spoke. While he taught us so much,
20 yet many of my questions go unanswered. At times
21 his answers seem more like riddles. Does the truth
22 he has to tell us require such indirect language?
23 Would the simple answers I seek only rob the power
24 of his truth? *(THOMAS takes his place at the table*
25 *again. JESUS leads JUDAS ISCARIOT forward to*
26 *wash his feet.)*

27 READER # 1: Now comes Judas Iscariot, the one who
28 betrayed Jesus. We know that he was the treasurer
29 who carried the money bag for the band of Jesus
30 and his followers. The record tells us that when
31 Mary anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume
32 six days before this night, Judas protested, saying,
33 "Why wasn't this perfume sold for three hundred
34 dollars and the money given to the poor?"

35 READER # 2: But Jesus replied, "Leave her alone! Let

1 her keep what she has for the day of my burial. You
 2 will always have poor people with you, but I will
 3 not be with you always." Now Judas, who for thirty
 4 pieces of silver would betray his master with a kiss
 5 this same night, has his feet washed by Jesus.

6 JESUS: I tell you the truth: one of you is going to
 7 betray me. (*The disciples hear JESUS, and react*
 8 *verbally to his warning.*)

9 JUDAS: Surely you don't mean me, Teacher?

10 JESUS: So you say.

11 (*JESUS has dried JUDAS' feet. Now he leaves to wash*
 12 *the feet of the remaining disciples. JUDAS turns to*
 13 *the congregation.*)

14 JUDAS: You wonder why one of Jesus' own disciples
 15 would betray him. Was it for profit? Thirty pieces of
 16 silver is a modest amount. Was it for personal
 17 advancement? Hardly! I like to think of my decision
 18 (why do you insist on calling it betrayal?) as an
 19 attempt to take the affairs of God into my own
 20 hands. Now we will know for certain the outcome
 21 of Jesus' purposes. I did the right thing. I only sealed
 22 his glorious destiny! (*JUDAS starts to leave, and,*
 23 *walking past the table, he pauses to place his hand*
 24 *on JESUS' shoulder.*)

25 JESUS: (*To JUDAS*) Hurry and do what you must!
 26 (*JUDAS leaves.*)

27 READER # 1: When Judas went out, the others did not
 28 know where he was going. If they had known, we can
 29 be sure Judas would never have left the room alive.
 30 It is one of the supreme mysteries of the New
 31 Testament that one of Jesus' own disciples could
 32 betray him into the hands of his enemies. Why did
 33 he betray his master?

34 READER # 2: We are always on dangerous ground when
 35 we try to assign motives to others. We can never be

1 certain. Surely it was an awesome thing for Judas to
 2 take the affairs of God into his own hands, to force
 3 the hour of God's decisive saving moment. To play
 4 the role of God! Such failure on the part of Judas
 5 should humble us all. Because in Judas there was the
 6 potential to be an apostle, but instead he destroyed
 7 himself. The fall of any human being is an awful
 8 tragedy!

9 READER # 1: Later that night, Judas would lead the
 10 temple police to Jesus and betray him with a kiss.
 11 A series of events would be set in motion which
 12 would sweep over the disciples, leading to desertion
 13 and even denial. Jesus would suffer torture and
 14 crucifixion. And Judas (*Pause*), repentant at the end,
 15 would hang himself.

16 READER # 2: After he washed the disciples' feet, Jesus
 17 put his outer garment back on and returned to his
 18 place at the table.

19 JESUS: Do you understand what I have just done to
 20 you? I am your Lord and Teacher, and I have just
 21 washed your feet. You, then, should wash each
 22 other's feet. If one of you wants to be great, he
 23 must be the servant of the rest, and if one of you
 24 wants to be first, he must be your slave — like the
 25 Son of Man, who did not come to be served, but to
 26 serve and to give his life to redeem many people.

27 Whoever accepts my commandments and obeys them,
 28 he is the one who loves me. My Father will love him
 29 who loves me; I, too, will love him and reveal myself
 30 to him.

31 JUDAS SON OF JAMES: (*Not Judas Iscariot*) Lord, how
 32 can it be that you will reveal yourself to us and not
 33 to the world?

34 JESUS: Whoever loves me will obey my message. My
 35 Father will love him, and my Father and I will come

1 to him and live with him. Whoever does not love me
2 does not obey my words. The message you have
3 heard is not mine, but comes from the Father, who
4 sent me.

5 READER #1: Jesus promises his disciples the presence
6 of the Holy Spirit, saying: "I will ask the Father, and
7 he will give you another Helper, the Spirit of truth,
8 to stay with you forever. The Helper, the Holy Spirit,
9 whom the Father will send in my name, will teach
10 you everything, and make you remember all that I
11 have told you."

12 JESUS: This very night all of you will run away and
13 leave me, for the scripture says, 'God will kill the
14 shepherd and the sheep of the flock will be
15 scattered.' But after I am raised to life, I will go
16 to Galilee ahead of you.

17 PETER: I will never leave you, even though all the rest
18 do!

19 JESUS: Remember this, Peter! Before the rooster crows
20 tonight you will say three times that you do not
21 know me.

22 PETER: I will never say I do not know you, even if I
23 have to die with you! *(The other disciples agree,*
24 *pledging their loyalty.)*

25 READER #2: And all the disciples said the same thing.
26 While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, gave
27 a prayer of thanks, broke it, and gave it to his
28 disciples.

29 JESUS: *(Standing to pray)* Father, the hour has come.
30 Give glory to your Son, that the Son may give glory
31 to you. For you gave him authority over all men, so
32 that he might give eternal life to all those you gave
33 him. . . . For the bread that God gives is he who
34 comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.
35 . . . If anyone eats this bread he will live forever.



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

UPPER ROOM

by Gary Shiplett.

*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