

THE ROOM UPSTAIRS

by John W. Carter



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THE ROOM UPSTAIRS

By John W. Carter

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Followers of Jesus — the audience

Naomi — the lady of the house

Rachael — Naomi's daughter

Jesus

The Disciples:

Peter — the fisherman

James  "Sons of Thunder"

John

Andrew — Peter's brother

Phillip — the P.R. man

Bartholomew — an Israelite with *no guile*

Thomas — the doubter

Matthew — the tax collector

James A. — son of Alphaeus

Thaddaeus

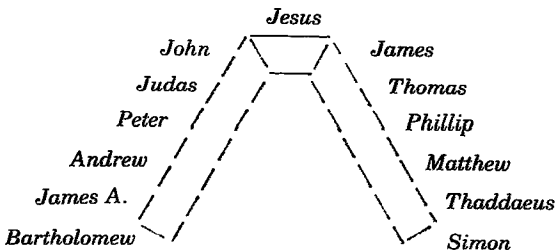
Simon — the zealot

Judas Iscariot — the betrayer

Servants As Needed — to help with the meal and hand washing*

**Non-speaking part*

SEATING CHART



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PRODUCTION NOTES

The play is set in the upper room where Jesus and his followers have gathered to celebrate the Passover on the night on which Jesus was betrayed. It is structured around an actual Jewish Passover Seder, one like which Jesus might have led that night, and involves a meal, either served or potluck. [*Suggestion for authenticity: avoid yeast products (rolls, bread) and pork products (ham, sausage).*] Thus, those in the audience become not only observers, but participants in the event as well. They are additional followers of Jesus who have joined with him this night to *eat the Passover*. At times, they will be called on to respond in word, song, and action; to participate in the ceremony, and the cast should do their best to encourage them.

Jesus and his 12 disciples sit and eat at the head table (*see seating chart*), preferably raised on a stage or platform so everyone can easily see. In addition to whatever table decorations are desired, each place in the audience and onstage should have a small plate containing a soda cracker (*or Matzah if your local grocery store carries them*), a piece of celery, a dab of vegetable dip, and a small (*bite sized*) piece of roast meat. (*Beef or chicken is fine. Lamb or goat would be most authentic.*) At the head table, the dip should be in small bowls, one for every three disciples. At Jesus' place, the cracker should be on a separate, covered plate. Each place should also have a glass of grape juice (*Wine, Kool-Aid, whatever*) large enough to drink from five times. It will be announced in the Prologue, but you may also want to include a notice in the program that the items on the plates and the grape juice are for later use and should not be consumed before their time. The audience will be told when to eat what, and should follow the disciples' example.

Props and costumes can be as authentically detailed or as sparse as desired. The main objective is for everyone to feel as if they are present at a very intimate and important event. The play may take around an hour and a half to present, depending on how many people are present, and how quickly things move along. Remember, don't rush things, but don't drag them out either! A good relaxed pace is important.

Be creative. What might the upper room have looked like? How would it have been decorated? Use your imagination. The more you creatively tailor the presentation to your own situation, the more meaningful and memorable the evening will be for everyone involved. I hope you find it a blessing!

– John W. Carter

PROLOGUE

(To be read from the stage before the play begins.)

PASTOR OR LAYPERSON: On the evening of the Exodus, before God's final plague upon the Egyptians, God gave Israel some specific instructions on how to prepare for that night, when the angel of death would slay the first-born of the Egyptians, but *pass over* the homes of the Israelites. The Passover instructions, recorded in Exodus 12, which included killing, roasting, and eating a lamb along with bitter herbs and unleavened bread (*Ex. 12:8*), were not just for that one time, but as God commanded in Exodus 12:14: *Throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance forever.*

Years later, on the night he was betrayed, Jesus and his disciples obeyed this commandment to celebrate the Passover. In describing what happened that evening, the Gospel writers assumed that their readers, most of whom were Jews, would understand Jesus' words and actions in the context of that familiar festival. Today, most Christians do not come from a Jewish background, and being unfamiliar with the various elements of this celebration, accept the Gospel accounts of what we have come to call *The Last Supper* at a face value, and miss out on much of its significance. We are here this evening in an attempt to put the pieces back together, to discover how the things Jesus said and did during that Last Supper might have fit into the Passover celebration.

This is the upper room, and we are additional followers of Jesus who have come to *eat the passover* with him and his disciples. At times, we will be called upon to respond in word, song, and action to participate in the ceremony, so don't be shy! You will notice at your place a small plate containing the necessary Passover foods: unleavened bread (*a cracker*), bitter herbs (*celery and dip*),

and a small piece of roasted meat. The unleavened bread will be broken at one point, then the first half will be eaten a little later, and the last half will be eaten towards the end. Also at your place is a special cup from which you will need to drink five times. Please do not eat these special foods before you are instructed to do so, or drink your cup all at once, or you may feel left out of the action later on. Jesus will tell everyone what to do and when, and you can follow the disciples' example as well.

May God open our eyes and hearts as we share this evening together.

SCENE I

(Naomi and Rachael, carrying lit candles, make their way to the stage, light the candles on the head table, extinguish their candles, turn, and address the audience.)

NAOMI: Good evening. I am Naomi, and this is our daughter, Rachael. *(RACHAEL waves.)* Aaron, that's my husband, Aaron and I would like to welcome each of you to our home tonight as we celebrate the Passover. Aaron regrets that he cannot be here to welcome you himself, but something came up, and he is having to attend to other business tonight.

RACHAEL: Daddy's downstairs in bed.

NAOMI: Rachael! *(Pause, then to audience)* Um, yes, well, Aaron had a rather unfortunate accident this morning you see, and . . .

RACHAEL: He broke his foot!

NAOMI: *(Firmly)* Thank you, Rachael. *(To audience)* Aaron went to the well after breakfast this morning to get a jar of water. On the way back, he thought he noticed two men following him, but, well, you know Aaron, he soon forgot all about it. When he arrived home, he had just started to set the jar down, when suddenly, he saw those

1 same two men standing in the doorway. It startled him
 2 so that he dropped the jar on his foot, breaking both his
 3 foot and the jar, and sending water all over everywhere!

4 **RACHAEL:** Guess who had to clean it up! (*Points to herself.*)

5 **NAOMI:** Well, poor Aaron started jumping up and down and
 6 hollering at the top of his lungs, so the two men rushed
 7 in to see if they could help. Aaron thought they were
 8 coming to rob him, and tried to run. Unfortunately, he
 9 forgot that the floor was wet. He slipped and, as it is
 10 written, *rose up with wings like an eagle.*¹

11 **RACHAEL:** Yeah, but he landed like a cow! (*NAOMI gives*
 12 *RACHAEL a stern look.*)

13 **NAOMI:** When he came to, both men were kneeling over him,
 14 holding his hands, and praying feverishly! He was
 15 confused, to say the least! But, they finally convinced
 16 him that all they wanted was a room in which to celebrate
 17 the Passover with their teacher, who, as it turned out,
 18 was none other than the famous Jesus of Nazareth.

19 **RACHAEL:** (*Excitedly*) Mom! You mean Jesus is coming here?
 20 Tonight?

21 **NAOMI:** That's right, dear. In fact, he and his disciples
 22 should be arriving any minute now. (*Smiling*) Even in
 23 pain, your father never could say *no*.

24 **RACHAEL:** Oh, boy! (*She dashes Offstage.*)

25 **NAOMI:** (*Shaking her head*) Children! (*To audience*) So, anyway,
 26 Aaron is downstairs in bed with a broken foot and a
 27 throbbing head, and asks that I bring you both his regrets
 28 and his blessing! (*RACHAEL rushes back Onstage with a glass*
 29 *of water.*) And what's that for?

30 **RACHAEL:** It's a glass of water! I'm gonna ask Jesus to turn
 31 it into wine for me! Wait 'til I tell 'em at school!

32 **NAOMI:** Rachael! Don't you dare!

33 **RACHAEL:** But, Mom . . . !

34 **NAOMI:** You heard me, not one drop! Honestly, child, I don't
 35 know where you get these ideas!

1 **RACHAEL:** Gee, Mom, don't you remember? You said
2 that . . .

3 **NAOMI:** (*Interrupting*) Never mind, dear! (*To audience*) Now,
4 where was I? Oh, yes! I want to assure you that all the
5 necessary preparations have been made. Last evening,
6 we went through each room of the house searching for
7 leaven, and every bit and crumb we found has been
8 removed and burned. Also, anything in the house that
9 has been in any way associated with leaven has been
10 washed and scoured clean.

11 **RACHAEL:** They made me go get the water for it, even
12 though it wasn't my fault Daddy dropped the first jar.

13 **NAOMI:** (*Pause*) Rachael dear, why don't you go see how
14 Daddy's doing?

15 **RACHAEL:** Aw, . . . he's probably still asleep!

16 **NAOMI:** I know dear, but he might be thirsty. Why don't you
17 take him your glass of water?

18 **RACHAEL:** I don't think he'll want anymore water, Mom.

19 **NAOMI:** Rachael . . . (*Points Off Right.*)

20 **RACHAEL:** (*Disappointed*) All right, I'm going. (*RACHAEL*
21 *exits.*)

22 **NAOMI:** (*Watches her leave.*) Lovely child. (*To audience*)
23 Anyway, there's not a trace of leaven in the house. In
24 addition, the food has been prepared according to law
25 and statute, the bitter herbs, the roasted meat, and of
26 course, the unleavened bread. Everything has been
27 prepared as God commanded, so please, relax and have
28 a pleasant evening. (*A great commotion and laughter is heard*
29 *outside the doors.*) Well, it sounds as if Jesus is here, so I'd
30 better go check on the meal. Call me if you need anything!
31 (*NAOMI exits.*)

32 **END OF SCENE I**

SCENE II

(The DISCIPLES enter through the audience laughing, and make their way to the head table, followed by JESUS.)

JAMES: I don't believe it! You mean he still let you have the room?

SIMON: *(Looking around)* Say, nice room!

JUDAS: Expensive.

PHILLIP: *(Going through the audience shaking hands)* Hello there!

JOHN: It wasn't our fault he dropped the water jar!

JAMES: Well, you could have at least knocked or something.

MATTHEW: I would have knocked first. I always knock first.

JAMES A: Sure, Matthew, but whenever they hear the tax collector knock, they always beat it out the back door.
(THEY laugh.)

PHILLIP: *(Still shaking hands)* Hello there!

PETER: C'mon, give us a break. We didn't mean to scare him.

THOMAS: Oh, sure. Follow the man half-way across town, walk into his house, and . . .

PETER: We did not! We just stood in the doorway . . .

ANDREW: . . . and said: *Anybody home?* *(They laugh.)*

JOHN: Well, go ahead and laugh. At least he let us have the room. One look at you and he'd have said: *No, thanks!*

PETER: You think so.

JOHN: *(Joking)* I do. *(By now, ALL are at the table except PHILLIP.)*

PHILLIP: *(Still shaking hands)* Hello there!

BARTHOLOMEW: Phillip, will you come on?!

PHILLIP: Hold on. I'm busy with the public here!

BARTHOLOMEW: I believe the public would like to eat!

JAMES A: Yeah, I'm starved!

PHILLIP: *(Looks at audience and shrugs, goes up to BARTHOLOMEW who is seated at one end of the table, grabs his hand, and starts shaking it enthusiastically.)* Hello There!

BARTHOLOMEW: *(Pulls his hand back and waves him off.) Will you stop it?!*

JESUS: My apologies for being late, dear friends, but the streets are full of people. We appreciate your patience, and thank you for allowing us to share this Passover meal with you. So, now that we are all here, let us begin. *(Motions for everyone to stand, then prays.)*

Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, who chose us from all peoples and nations, by making us holy with your commandments. With love, you gave us the festivals for happiness, and holidays and seasons for rejoicing, such as this day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the season of our freedom, which is a holy assembly as we remember the exodus from Egypt. Blessed art thou, who has given us life and health and brought us to this happy occasion.² *(JESUS raises the "first" cup.)*

Let us drink together this first cup, recalling God's promise of redemption to his people, as it is written, "I will free you from the burden of the Egyptians."³ *(DISCIPLES and AUDIENCE raise their cups.)*

Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine.⁴ *(ALL drink the "first" cup and sit.)*

At this point, a servant with a bowl of water and a towel over his/her arm enters and, starting with SIMON, stops beside each DISCIPLE so that each may dip his hand in the bowl and dry them on the towel. When 2-3 DISCIPLES have done this, other SERVANTS with bowls and towels go through the audience so that they may do the same. When the SERVANT reaches JAMES, and while the audience is still washing, the dialog continues.)

JAMES: *(Dipping into the bowl) Hey! That water's cold! (Dries hands.)*

JOHN: Oh, James, you're such a baby! *(JESUS stands as*

- 1 *dialog continues, gets a basin and towel, and starting with*
 2 *SIMON, begins washing the disciples' feet.)*
- 3 **JAMES:** Excuse me? I seem to recall you are the baby of the
 4 family. Mother's baby, Johnny-boy.
- 5 **PETER & ANDREW:** *(To each other)* Johnny-boy?
- 6 **THE 12:** *(To JOHN)* Johnny-boy? *(They laugh.)*
- 7 **JOHN:** Oh, for . . . *(To JAMES)* Thanks a lot, James!
- 8 **JAMES:** Oh, don't be so sensitive.
- 9 **JOHN:** Me? Sensitive?
- 10 **JAMES:** Yes, you. Extremely.
- 11 **JOHN:** Well, at least I don't scream about cold water!
- 12 **JAMES:** And, at least I don't go around sneaking up on
 13 people!
- 14 **ANDREW:** Or breaking and entering!
- 15 **THADDAEUS:** Or scaring 'em half to death!
- 16 **PETER:** Are we back to that again?
- 17 **JOHN:** Don't mind them, Peter. They're just jealous 'cause
 18 Jesus sent us to get the room instead of them.
- 19 **JAMES:** *(Sarcastically)* Oh, right.
- 20 **JOHN:** But then, Jesus always did recognize quality when
 21 he saw it.
- 22 **THOMAS:** Quality? Ha!
- 23 **JUDAS:** Any one of us could have done the job!
- 24 **MATTHEW:** And done it better, too!
- 25 **ALL:** *(Except PETER, JOHN, & JESUS)* Absolutely! That's
 26 right! *(Etc.)*
- 27 **SIMON:** You're just lucky you didn't kill the poor man.
- 28 **PETER:** That's your department, Simon.
- 29 **SIMON:** Well, I have killed a few Romans, but that's different.
 30 Besides, that was long ago.
- 31 **BARTHOLOMEW:** Yes, and you still love a good fight!
- 32 **SIMON:** Let's just say that as a Zealot, I would derive great
 33 pleasure out of busting a few Roman heads for the
 34 Kingdom of God. *(Awkward pause as ALL stare at SIMON.)*
 35 What's the matter, you got a problem with that?

- 1 **THOMAS:** Well, . . . look Simon, don't take this wrong, but
2 I'm not sure that's what . . .
- 3 **SIMON:** (*Stands.*) At least I'm ready to fight for what I believe
4 in! You want to talk about quality? Why do you think
5 Jesus asked me to follow him? Because he knew I'd fight
6 for him, that's why! And when the time comes, you can
7 bet I'll be ready!
- 8 **MATTHEW:** (*Stands.*) Fight the Romans? You can't be serious!
- 9 **SIMON:** Quite serious, Matthew, although I'm sure the
10 thought of rising up against your employer might make
11 you a little nervous! (*He sits.*)
- 12 **MATTHEW:** Former employer, please, former employer.
13 Simon, I can't believe you could be so naive! Jesus has
14 no intention of fighting the Romans. It would be suicide!
15 No, Jesus is much smarter than that! Do you know why
16 he called me to follow him? Certainly, not to fight the
17 Romans. It was to make use of my many contacts in the
18 Roman government! Jesus recognizes quality all right,
19 political clout! You never know when you might need to
20 pull a few strings!
- 21 **BARTHOLOMEW:** Pull a few strings?! Is that what you think
22 this is all about? Politics? What a ridiculous idea!
- 23 **MATTHEW:** Oh, and I suppose, brother Bartholomew, that
24 you have a better one?
- 25 **BARTHOLOMEW:** (*Stands.*) It just so happens I do. (*Matthew*
26 *sits.*) The primary reason for this little group is not
27 political, but spiritual! Our goal is not power, but purity!
28 Being the modest and humble person that I am, I wasn't
29 going to say anything, but that's why Jesus called me: to
30 set an example for you gents.
- 31 **ALL:** Oh, right, sure. (*Etc.*)
- 32 **BARTHOLOMEW:** It's true! When I first met Jesus, he said
33 with a smile, "Behold, an Israelite in whom there is
34 no . . ." Guess what he said!
- 35 **SIMON:** Style!

- 1 **BARTHOLOMEW:** No, guile. In whom there is no guile!
- 2 **THADDAEUS:** (*Smiling*) What a guy.
- 3 **MATTHEW:** Humble, too.
- 4 **BARTHOLOMEW:** (*He sits.*) Yes sir, Jesus saw it right away!
- 5 No guile. Purity of heart. That, my dear friends, is quality!
- 6 **PHILLIP:** (*Standing*) Why you little Pharisee!
- 7 **BARTHOLOMEW:** Pharisee? I hardly think so.
- 8 **PHILLIP:** Oh, all right then, you're a self-righteous Saducee!
- 9 **BARTHOLOMEW:** Hardly.
- 10 **PHILLIP:** Hardly! Have you forgotten? You weren't even
- 11 going to go meet Jesus! Let's see, I believe your exact
- 12 words were: *Can anything good come out of Nazareth?*"
- 13 You only went because I talked you into it! If Jesus hadn't
- 14 called me first, you wouldn't be here! He knew he needed
- 15 someone with good public relations skills. In fact, that's
- 16 the reason for this group: public relations, building an
- 17 image, name recognition, developing grass-roots
- 18 support, that sort of thing. You can't accomplish *anything*
- 19 without it, and that's where I come in. So you see, quality
- 20 is my middle name. (*He bows and sits.*)
- 21 **JAMES A:** I thought it was *Leon*.
- 22 **THADDAEUS:** I didn't even know he had a middle name!
- 23 **JUDAS:** What's a middle name?
- 24 **THOMAS:** Yeah, we don't even have last names!
- 25 **PETER:** You guys are awful.
- 26 **PHILLIP:** Excuse me?
- 27 **PETER:** I said, you guys are awful.
- 28 **PHILLIP:** What's the matter, Peter? Don't you like the truth?
- 29 **PETER:** Truth? You want truth? (*Stands.*) I'll give you truth!
- 30 The truth is, you've all missed the boat! Andrew and I
- 31 were Jesus' first disciples; we were with him from the
- 32 beginning. We know the reason for this group, and it's
- 33 not revolution or politics or piety or publicity. It's people!
- 34 Getting people to believe in Jesus; building up a following
- 35 all over Israel, calling them to righteous living in

- 1 preparation for the Kingdom of God. When Jesus called
2 Andrew and me, we were simple fishermen, experienced
3 at catching fish. Then, he said, "Follow me, and I will
4 make you fishers of men." Jesus called us because he
5 knew we had what it takes to catch souls. (*Sits.*)
- 6 **JAMES:** Like fillet of sole!
- 7 **ALL:** (*Laughing*) Ha! Ha! Fillet of sole! Cute! (*Etc.*)
- 8 **PETER:** Laugh all you like, gentlemen, but you know it's
9 true. Here is your quality! Here is your . . . (*JESUS pours*
10 *water over PETER'S feet.*) **You! That water's cold!**
- 11 **JOHN:** Peter! You, too?
- 12 **PETER:** Well, I . . . (*Recognizes JESUS washing his feet.*) **Master!**
13 (*Pulls his feet back.*) **You? . . . washing my feet?**
- 14 **JESUS:** You may not understand this now, Peter, but you
15 will soon enough.
- 16 **PETER:** But Lord, I can't let you . . .
- 17 **JESUS:** If I don't, then you have no part in me.
- 18 **PETER:** (*Looks intently at JESUS for a moment.*) **Lord, if that is**
19 **true, then wash not only my feet, but my hands and head**
20 **as well!**
- 21 **JESUS:** (*Smiling*) **Did you bathe this morning?**
- 22 **PETER:** (*Puzzled*) **Yes.**
- 23 **JESUS:** (*Taking PETER'S feet and continuing*) **Then only your**
24 **feet need washing.** (*Finishes PETER'S feet.*) **You are clean.**
25 (*He pauses.*) **But, . . . not all of you.** (*The disciples watch in*
26 *silence as JESUS finishes washing the other DISCIPLE'S feet.*
27 *He replaces the bowl and towel and returns to his place at the*
28 *table.*)
- 29 **JESUS:** Do you know what I've just done? You call me
30 Teacher and Lord; and you are right. So if I, your Lord
31 and Teacher, have washed your feet, then you should
32 wash one another's feet. That is the reason you were all
33 called; that is the reason for this group, that you should
34 learn from my example, and do for one another what I
35 have been doing for you. Remember, a servant is not

greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. Understand this, and you will be blessed. Do it, and you will be doubly blessed.⁵ (*Picking up Matzah plate*) Now then, let us continue.

SCENE III

JESUS: (*Raising the matzah plate*) Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the earth.⁶ (*JESUS returns and uncovers the plate.*)

Let us break this bread together. (*DISCIPLES and AUDIENCE imitate JESUS as he breaks the cracker and returns it to the plate.*)

JESUS again raises the plate.)

This the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of Egypt. All who are hungry — let them come and eat. All who are needy — let them come and celebrate the Passover with us. Now we are in bondage to Rome; next year may we be free. Now we are here in the occupied Jerusalem; next year may we celebrate in the new Jerusalem.⁷ (*JESUS returns the plate.*)

My father was a wandering Aramean, and with just a few people, he went down to Egypt and sojourned there. And there, he became a great nation, mighty and numerous. The Egyptians dealt harshly with us, and they imposed hard labor upon us. We cried out to the Lord, and the Lord heard our plea and saw our affliction, our misery, and our oppression. Then the Lord took us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with awesome power, with signs and wonders.⁸ Who can name the ten plagues which the Holy One brought upon the Egyptians?

SIMON: Blood.

BARTHOLOMEW: Frogs.

THADDAEUS: Vermin.

- 1 JAMES A: Beasts.
 2 MATTHEW: Cattle disease.
 3 ANDREW: Boils.
 4 PHILLIP: Hail.
 5 PETER: Locusts.
 6 THOMAS: Darkness.
 7 JUDAS: The slaying of the first-born.
 8 JAMES: Actually, there were *more* than ten plagues.
 9 JOHN: The scriptures say there were only ten!
 10 JAMES: True, there are only ten mentioned *specifically*, but
 11 more are implied.
 12 PETER: And, just how many more would there be?
 13 JAMES: Figure it out. Exodus 8:19 says, "The magicians said
 14 to Pharaoh, the plague is the *finger* of God."⁹ Remember
 15 that. Now, Exodus 14:31 says, "And Israel saw the strong
 16 *hand* which the Eternal had shown against Egypt."¹⁰
 17 Are you with me so far?
 18 ALL: (*Except JESUS and JAMES*) We are. Sure. On with it.
 19 (*Etc.*)
 20 JAMES: All right! All right! Now . . . think about it. If one
 21 finger caused ten plagues, then God's whole hand must
 22 have caused *fifty*! Right?
 23 PETER: That's a bit much.
 24 THOMAS: Do you believe this?
 25 JAMES: No, really! It's true. And, that's not all!
 26 BARTHOLOMEW: What else?
 27 JAMES: Psalm 78:49 tells us that, "He let loose on them,"
 28 (*Counting*) one, "his fierce anger," two, "wrath," three,
 29 "indignation," four, "distress," and five, "a company of
 30 destroying angels."¹¹ Now, if each of the plagues was
 31 *five-fold* in nature, then the actual number of plagues
 32 suffered was 250!
 33 ALL: (*Except JESUS and JAMES*) Really, James! You
 34 exaggerate. (*Etc.*)
 35 JOHN: Did I ever tell you about the time our mother dropped

1 him on his head?

2 **SIMON:** He does get carried away.

3 **ANDREW:** Certifiable!

4 **JAMES:** You're just jealous of my superior intellect!

5 **ANDREW:** Superior what?

6 **JAMES:** My intellect, let me tell you ...

7 **JESUS:** *(Firmly) Meanwhile, back in Egypt ... (JAMES and*
 8 *ANDREW smile at each other, then turn to Jesus.)* When
 9 Pharaoh heard the Jews had fled, he had a change of
 10 heart and said, "What have we done? We let them go!
 11 We'll have to get them back." And so, the Egyptians gave
 12 chase, and overtook them by the sea. Then, the
 13 Israelites went into the sea on dry ground; the waters
 14 forming a wall for them on either side. The Egyptians
 15 followed; all of Pharaoh's horses, chariots, and
 16 horsemen. But the waters turned back and covered the
 17 Egyptians, so that of Pharaoh's entire army, not a single
 18 one remained. Then Miriam, the prophet, took a timbrel
 19 in her hand, and all of the women went out after her
 20 with timbrels, and they danced. And Miriam sang for
 21 them, "Sing to the Lord, for He has triumphed
 22 gloriously; the horse and rider He has hurled into the
 23 sea." ¹² Indeed, *many* are the acts of kindness that God
 24 has performed for us! Had he freed us from Egypt
 25 without judging the Egyptians ...

26 **ALL:** It would have been enough!

27 **JESUS:** Had he judged the Egyptians and not vanquished
 28 their gods ...

29 **ALL:** *(Beginning to chant) It would have been enough!*

30 **JESUS:** Had he vanquished their gods without parting the
 31 sea ...

32 **ALL:** *(Encouraging audience to join in)* It would have been
 33 enough!

34 **JESUS:** Had he parted the sea and not led us across ...

35 **ALL:** *(DISCIPLES begin to clap in rhythm.)* It would have been

1 **enough!**

2 **JESUS:** Had he led us across without care in the desert . . .

3 **ALL:** It would have been enough!

4 **JESUS:** Had he cared in the desert and not fed us manna . . .

5 **ALL:** It would have been enough!

6 **JESUS:** Had he fed us with manna and not given Sabbath . . .

7 **ALL:** It would have been enough!

8 **JESUS:** Had he given us Sabbath, omitting Mount Sinai . . .

9 **ALL:** It would have been enough!

10 **JESUS:** Had he brought us to Sinai, omitting the Law . . .

11 **ALL:** It would have been enough.

12 *(Pause)*

13 **JESUS:** *(Seriously)* Had he given us the Law without leading
14 us into the promised land . . .

15 **ALL:** *(BARTHOLOMEW directs everyone.)* It would *(Pause)* . . .
16 have been *(Pause)* . . . **enough!** ¹³ *(They all cheer and clap.)*

17 **JESUS:** How many and miraculous are the great deeds that
18 our God has done for us, from taking us out of Egypt, to
19 establishing us in this pleasant, spacious, and desirable
20 land, where we can live and serve Him! *(He motions for*
21 *everyone to stand, and raises his "second" cup.)*

22 Let us drink together this second cup, recalling
23 God's promise of redemption to his people, as it is written,
24 "I will deliver you from bondage." ¹⁴ *(ALL raise "second"*
25 *cup.)*

26 Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, Ruler of the
27 Universe, creator of the fruit of the vine. ¹⁵ *(ALL drink*
28 *"second" cup.)*

29 *(Praying)* Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, Ruler
30 of the Universe, who redeemed us and our fathers from
31 Egypt, and brought us to this night to eat unleavened
32 bread and bitter herbs. Thus, may the Lord our God bring
33 us to future feasts and festivals in peace. Blessed art
34 Thou, Eternal our God, Ruler of the Universe, Redeemer
35 of Israel. ¹⁶ *(Motions for all to sit, he remains standing.)* Now

1 **then, . . . Peter, you may begin.**

2 **PETER:** *(Standing)* Master, on all other nights we eat either
3 leavened or unleavened bread. Why, on this night, do we
4 eat only unleavened bread? *(He sits.)*

5 **JESUS:** It is to remind us that even before the dough of our
6 ancestors had time to rise, the Lord our God revealed
7 himself and redeemed them, as it is written, "And they
8 baked the dough which they had brought from Egypt
9 into unleavened cakes; it did not rise since they were
10 hurried out of Egypt, and they could not delay, nor had
11 they prepared other provisions for themselves." ¹⁷
12 *(JESUS lifts the first half of the cracker broken earlier.)*

13 Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, Ruler of the
14 Universe, who made us holy with his commandment, and
15 commanded us concerning the eating of unleavened
16 bread." ¹⁸ *(Everyone eats the first half of their cracker.)*

17 *(JESUS recognizes JAMES' gesture for attention.)* James?

18 **JAMES:** *(Stands.)* Master, on all other nights we eat herbs of
19 any kind. Why, on this night, do we eat only *bitter* herbs?
20 *(He sits.)*

21 **JESUS:** The bitter herbs are to remind us that, as it is
22 written, "the Egyptians 'embittered' the lives of our
23 ancestors with hard labor, in mortar and in brick, and
24 in every kind of drudgery, and worked them ruthlessly
25 in all their labor." ¹⁹ The bitter herbs remind us of
26 bitterness. *(Becoming lost in thought)* Bitterness . . .

27 **JAMES:** *(Touching his arm after a brief pause)* Master?

28 **JESUS:** *(Looking at JAMES, then around at the DISCIPLES)* I'm
29 sorry, it's just that, . . . well . . . one of you is going to
30 betray me.

31 **ALL:** *(Murmur to one another.)*

32 **JESUS:** The Son of Man must go as it is written, but woe to
33 the man who betrays him. It would be better for him if
34 he'd not even been born. ²⁰

35 **SIMON:** *(After an awkward pause)* This cannot be!

- 1 **BARTHOLOMEW:** It's not true!
- 2 **THADDAEUS:** Who among us would do such a thing?
- 3 **JAMES A:** Well, I certainly wouldn't!
- 4 **PHILLIP:** Me neither!
- 5 **PETER:** (*Getting JOHN'S attention in a loud whisper*) Pssst!
- 6 **John!** (*They lean in together in front of JUDAS.*) Ask him who
- 7 it is!
- 8 **JOHN:** (*Sitting up*) Master, . . . who will it be?
- 9 **JESUS:** He who dips his hand in the dish with me, will betray
- 10 me. (*JESUS picks up celery stick, DISCIPLES and AUDIENCE*
- 11 *do same.*)
- 12 Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, Ruler of the
- 13 Universe, who made us holy with his commandments,
- 14 and commanded us concerning the eating of bitter
- 15 herbs. ²¹
- 16 (*The DISCIPLES, except PETER and JOHN, and*
- 17 *AUDIENCE dip their celery and eat. As JUDAS dips, JESUS*
- 18 *dips with him. Their hands remain in the bowl, JUDAS looks*
- 19 *up at JESUS, and they stare at each other for a moment. Then*
- 20 *they withdraw their hands and eat their celery. PETER and*
- 21 *JOHN then dip their celery and eat.*)
- 22 (*After a moment*) **Judas?**
- 23 **JUDAS:** Yes?
- 24 **JESUS:** What you are going to do . . . do it quickly. (*After a*
- 25 *short pause, JUDAS suddenly leaves the table. All eyes stare*
- 26 *after him. After a moment, JESUS speaks.*)
- 27 (*Softly*) **John?** (*Touching his shoulder*)
- 28 **JOHN:** (*Staring after JUDAS*) Yes, Lord?
- 29 **JESUS:** Let's continue. (*JOHN continues to stare after JUDAS.*)
- 30 **John?**
- 31 **JOHN:** Hm? (*Turning to JESUS*) Oh . . . of course. (*He stands.*)
- 32 Um . . . (*Struggling*) On all other nights we eat meat that's
- 33 been roasted, stewed, or boiled. Why, on this night, do
- 34 we eat only *roasted* meat? (*He sits.*)
- 35 **JESUS:** We do it to remind us that the Lord our God passed

1 over the Israelite homes in Egypt, as it is written, "You
 2 shall say, *It is the Passover offering to the Lord, because*
 3 *he passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt when*
 4 *he smote the first-born of the Egyptians."*²² (JESUS lifts
 5 the small piece of roasted meat.)

6 Blessed art Thou, Eternal our God, Ruler of the
 7 Universe, who made us holy with his commandments,
 8 and commanded us concerning the eating of the
 9 Passover. (EVERYONE eats their roasted meat. JESUS sits
 10 down.)
 11

12 SCENE IV

13
 14 (At this time, the meal begins. Once everyone is served, give
 15 people a few minutes to enjoy their meal, then JESUS stands.)

16 JESUS: Dear friends, there's something I need to tell you.
 17 I'm afraid I'm not going to be with you much longer. You
 18 will look for me, but, as I've said before, you cannot go
 19 where I am going.

20 THADDAEUS: (To SIMON) What's he talking about? Where's
 21 he going?

22 SIMON: Don't ask *me*! Peter? (Nods towards JESUS.)

23 PETER: Master?

24 JESUS: Yes, Peter?

25 PETER: Um . . . just where is it that you're going?

26 JOHN: And why can't we follow you there?

27 JESUS: Where I'm going, you cannot follow now. But
 28 afterwards, . . . afterwards you *will* follow.

29 JAMES A: I don't understand!

30 MATTHEW: He's talking in riddles again!

31 PETER: But Lord, . . . why can't I follow you now? You know
 32 I'd go *anywhere* with you! Didn't I step out of the boat
 33 and walk with you on the Sea of Galilee? Of course, I did!
 34 I'd risk my *life* for you!

35 SIMON: So would I!

- 1 **JAMES:** Me, too!
- 2 **OTHERS:** Of course! Me, too! So would I! (*Etc.*)
- 3 **JESUS:** (*Looking around at them*) Would you? Would you really
- 4 risk your lives for me? (*Shakes his head, turning to PETER.*
- 5 *Sadly*) Peter . . . dear Peter . . . this very night, before the
- 6 cock crows tomorrow morning, you will deny you even
- 7 know me. Not just once, but three times.
- 8 **PETER:** Lord! . . . No! (*DISCIPLES stare at PETER.*)
- 9 **JESUS:** (*Looking around at them*) And the rest of you, don't be
- 10 so hard on Peter. The truth is, . . . you will *all* abandon
- 11 me tonight.
- 12 **ALL:** (*Alarmed*) What? No! It can't be! I don't believe it! (*Etc.*)
- 13 **JESUS:** Gentlemen! It's all right! (*They quiet down.*) Don't
- 14 worry. Everything's going to be fine. Believe me. Trust
- 15 God. There's a lot of room in my Father's house,
- 16 and . . . I'm going to prepare a place for you. Then, when
- 17 everything's all ready, I'll come back for you, and we can
- 18 be together again. Besides, you know the way.
- 19 **THOMAS:** Lord, we don't even know where you're going!
- 20 How could we *possibly* know the way?
- 21 **JESUS:** (*Pause*) I . . . am the way. And the truth. And the life.
- 22 The only way to the Father is through me. Know me, and
- 23 you know my Father as well.
- 24 **PHILLIP:** Then Lord, *show* us the Father. *Show* us that it's
- 25 going to be as you say!
- 26 **JESUS:** Phillip. After all this time, you still don't know who
- 27 I am? How can you say, "Show us the Father?" If you've
- 28 seen me, you've *seen* the Father. I speak my Father's
- 29 words; I do my Father's works, and everyone who
- 30 believes in me will do the same! In fact, they will do even
- 31 *greater* things than I have done, because I am going to
- 32 the Father.
- 33 I realize this may be hard to understand right now,
- 34 but . . . please believe me, I'm not going to abandon you;
- 35 I *will* be with you again. In a little while, the world won't

1 see me anymore. But *you* will see me again, because, if
2 you love me and do as I've told you, then I will show
3 myself to you.

4 **THADDAEUS:** But Lord, how can you show yourself to us
5 and not to the rest of the world?

6 **JESUS:** Don't you see, Thaddaeus? If you really love me, if
7 you live by all that I've told you, then both I *and my*
8 *Father* will be living with you, because what I've told you
9 has come from my Father.

10 **JAMES A:** But Master, when did you tell us?

11 **ANDREW:** *What* did you tell us?

12 **JESUS:** I have told you everything the Father has told me.
13 That's why I don't treat you like servants, but rather, my
14 friends. A servant doesn't know what his master is
15 planning; he just follows orders. But you . . . you have
16 seen. You have heard. You *know* how the plan is to be
17 carried out. So, you are my friends, . . . *if* you do as I have
18 told you.

19 **PETER:** And what is that, Lord?

20 **JESUS:** Have you forgotten already? Or have we come this
21 far together, to this very hour, and you still haven't
22 learned? Don't you know *why* I cured the sick, and healed
23 the lame and the blind, *why* I cast out demons and raised
24 the dead, *why* I turned the water into wine at Cana, and
25 multiplied the loaves and the fish so the people could
26 eat? Oh, my children . . . my dear, dear children, if you
27 remember nothing else of all our time together, if you
28 can remember only *one* thing . . . please, . . . *please*
29 remember this . . . *this* is what I have told you, in every
30 word, in every deed: . . . love one another. (*Looking around*
31 *at DISCIPLES*) All of you, love one another.

32 **PETER:** (*After a pause*) But Lord, we *do* love each other! I
33 mean, sure we disagree and make fun now and then, but
34 deep down inside, I know we really love each other.

35 **ALL:** (*Except JESUS and PETER*) We do! That's right! (*Etc.*)

1 **JESUS:** (*Smiling*) As it should be. Now, listen once more. After
 2 I'm gone, the Father will send you *another* counselor, the
 3 Holy Spirit, to *remind* you of all that I've taught you, and
 4 teach you everything else you will need to know.

5 I wanted to tell you all of this ahead of time, so that
 6 when it happens, you will remember and believe. The
 7 ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me,
 8 but I am doing what the Father wants me to do, so that
 9 everyone can see how much I love the Father.

10 **JOHN:** Lord, does it *have* to be this way? I mean, do you
 11 really *have* to go?

12 **JESUS:** I'm afraid so, John.

13 **JAMES:** Just like that! After these three years together, after
 14 our sacrifices and labors, suddenly, just like that you
 15 have to leave?

16 **JESUS:** (*Pause*) I know this is painful, for all of you, but please
 17 believe me: there's nothing for you to worry about or be
 18 afraid of. In fact, you should be happy for me, since I'm
 19 going to join the Father! So be at peace, and know that
 20 I'm leaving you in peace. My blessing I give to you all.
 21 (*He sits.*)

22 **JAMES:** (*Dejectedly*) Thank you, I guess.
 23 (*Continue the festival meal.*)

24 **END OF SCENE IV**

25
 26
 27
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 35

SCENE V

(When it looks as though everyone has finished eating, JESUS motions for everyone to stand.)

JESUS: And now, dear friends, let us give thanks.

11 DISCIPLES: *(Together)* May the Lord be praised, now and forever.

JESUS: Let us praise our God, whose food we have eaten.

11 DISCIPLES: *(Together)* Praised be our God, of whose bounty we have partaken and by whose goodness we live.

JESUS: Let us praise him for his excellent goodness.

11 DISCIPLES: *(Together)* Praised be He and praised be His name.²³

JESUS: We thank you, O Lord our God, for the good land which you have given us, for the covenant and the Law, for life and sustenance, as it is written, "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall praise the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you."²⁴ Praised are you, O Lord, for the land and for sustenance. May we be satisfied with what we have eaten. May we be content with what we have drunk. May the Lord grant his people strength. May the Lord bless his people with peace.
(JESUS motions for everyone to be seated.)

(Taking the remaining piece of cracker and looking at it a moment.) Usually, this last piece of bread is eaten in silence. With it, we consume the last of the bread of affliction, and rise in the morning to the bread of freedom. But tonight, this bread takes on a new meaning. This bread of affliction, broken earlier, is to become the bread of life, as it is written, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed."²⁵ *(Pause)* I . . . am the bread of life. This bread is my body, broken for you. Take it, and eat. *(Everyone eats the second half of their cracker.)*



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