

HAVE YOU SEEN MY SON?

by Jon McCauley Smith



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***Have You Seen My Son?**

A play for Holy Week

by JON McCAULEY SMITH

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CHARACTERS

(1 man; 6 women)

SIMEON

ANNA

MOTHER OF JESUS

MOTHER OF JUDAS

MOTHER OF JAMES AND JOHN

MOTHER OF JOHN MARK

MOTHER OF BARABBAS

PRODUCTION NOTES

If using the church sanctuary, remove the pulpit and as much of the church furniture as possible. Put the Lord's Supper Table, altar, or other table on the audience level with SIMEON and ANNA seated on stools behind it. SIMEON and ANNA should be costumed in period clothes with a soft pink spot on them. The table should be set with a chalice, a loaf of bread, and a Bible. If the Lord's Supper is to be served to the congregation during the service, the chalice can be filled with juice and a piece of bread can be pulled off by the people and dipped into the cup. A seven branch candelabrum should be placed behind ANNA and SIMEON, or seven candles could be set on the table in front of them. A candle snuffer will also be needed. The five other characters should enter and stand or sit on stools scattered around the stage area with their backs to the audience. If possible, preset spots should be focused on each of them and lit when they speak. They should be dressed in period costumes or else in black robes or caftans.

1 **SIMEON:** (*Reading from Bible*) "Now there was a man in
 2 Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout.
 3 He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy
 4 Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the
 5 Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the
 6 Lord's Christ. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the
 7 temple courts. When the parents brought in the child
 8 Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required,
 9 Simeon took him up in his arms and praised God saying:
 10 '... For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you
 11 have prepared in the sight of all people, a light of
 12 revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people
 13 Israel.' " [Luke 2:25-32] (*Closing Bible. Perhaps taking off*
 14 *glasses.*) I am that man. I am Simeon. And I have seen the
 15 Son of God.

16 **ANNA:** (*Reading from Bible*) "There was also a prophetess, Anna,
 17 the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was
 18 very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after
 19 her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-
 20 four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and
 21 day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very
 22 moment [when Mary and Joseph brought the child Jesus
 23 to the temple and when Simeon proclaimed his blessing],
 24 she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all
 25 who were looking forward to the redemption of
 26 Jerusalem." [Luke 2:36-38] (*Puts down Bible.*) I am that
 27 woman. I am Anna. And I have seen the Son of God.

28 **SIMEON:** We are old, and we have seen much. I have watched
 29 and can tell you what has happened.

30 **ANNA:** We are old, and we have felt much. I have visions and
 31 can tell you what will happen.

32 **SIMEON:** Tonight we have come to share with you the last
 33 days of Jesus' life.

34 **ANNA:** We were not there in the crowds on the day he entered
 35 the city in triumph, but we watched the wonder spread

1 through the crowds as the story of it spread to the temple.
 2 **SIMEON:** We did not go into the Upper Room or the Garden
 3 of Gethsemane or the courtyards of the High Priest's
 4 house or the place called Golgotha, but we watched the
 5 people as they passed by the Temple, and we heard the
 6 stories, and we prayed.

7 **ANNA:** I remember most the mothers . . . the mothers of sons
 8 who were in trouble . . . the mothers who were clutching
 9 at their throats, running by the Temple, fearing for their
 10 sons. Like Rachel weeping for her children, the mothers
 11 swept past the Temple as they reached for their hearts.

12 **SIMEON:** There was one — a young mother with several
 13 children trailing alongside her. She was the one we had
 14 seen so many years before. She was the mother of our
 15 savior. She was searching for her son who was arguing
 16 with Pharisees and being pressed by crowds that
 17 demanded signs and wonders to entertain and astound
 18 them. He was tired. He had many enemies. And his mother
 19 searched.

20 **MOTHER OF JESUS:** *(Turning around)* Have you seen my son?
 21 Have you seen Jesus? I've looked everywhere. My
 22 children too . . . they've helped me look. He's in trouble —
 23 horrible trouble. My heart knows. Oh, what will they do
 24 to my son? I need to tell him what I know. I have to find
 25 him and warn him to save himself. Oh, dear God, save
 26 my son. Help my son. All those people he hangs around
 27 with are pushing him to the edge. I have to warn him. I
 28 know. I know he's in trouble. I have to bring him
 29 home . . . home where he'll be safe. All those people —
 30 crowding out his life. They aren't even letting him eat.
 31 He's making people angry — the wrong people too. The
 32 kind who will do something about it . . . something awful.
 33 Have you seen my son? Have you seen him? *(Turns around.)*

34 **ANNA:** It is written: *(Reading from Bible)* "Then Jesus' mother
 35 and brothers arrived. Standing outside [of the synagogue

1 where he was teaching], they sent someone in to call him.
 2 A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, 'Your
 3 mother and brothers are outside looking for you.' 'Who
 4 are my mother and my brothers?' he asked. Then he
 5 looked at those seated in a circle around him and said,
 6 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does
 7 God's will is my brother and sister and mother.' " [Mark
 8 3:31-35] (*Closing Bible. Lift up candle snuffer on first part of*
 9 *next line and hold it above head.*) And thus a mother lost
 10 claim to her son . . . and he became the Light of the world.
 11 (*Extinguishes first candle.*)

12 **SIMEON:** It was two days before the Passover Celebration.
 13 All of the Temple was in preparation, but the attendance
 14 was not good. The people were out searching for this
 15 Jesus. The chief priests and the scribes felt threatened
 16 by this charismatic prophet, and they were jealous of the
 17 love the crowds had for him. They were seeking a way
 18 to arrest him secretly and kill him. But they feared the
 19 crowds. They needed to get him alone somewhere — away
 20 from the people who so adored him — away from the
 21 people who would protect him. If only they could silence
 22 this Jesus, the people would soon forget . . . the people
 23 would soon love the priests and scribes again.

24 Jesus and his disciples were staying the nights in
 25 Bethany in the house of friends. A woman from the streets
 26 came into the house and broke her own flask of expensive
 27 ointment and anointed Jesus to show her love of this
 28 man who had shown her the Light of life. Judas, the
 29 treasurer of the disciples, was indignant. "Why was this
 30 ointment wasted? It could have been sold and the money
 31 given to the poor. You have stupidly wasted what God
 32 has given you." But Jesus stood up for her and chastised
 33 Judas instead. And he ran out of there in anger. His pride
 34 had been hurt. He felt betrayed. And his mother searched
 35 for him in Jerusalem where he had run to.

MOTHER OF JUDAS: Have you seen my son? My son, Judas Iscariot. Oh, he is here in Jerusalem somewhere, I know that much. One of those friends of his told me he got in a row with Jesus. Oh, he gave up everything to follow that man. He gave up a life of riches to be the treasurer of a tiny band of beggars. And for this he is humiliated in front of a serving girl. Oh, could anything good come out of Nazareth? That's what I told him three years ago when he told me goodbye. "Who is this man you're leaving home for?" I asked him. "What are you following him for?" And he tells me — wide-eyed as a teenager with a new lover: "He will be the King, mother. He will be the King who will lead us against Rome. We will be free, mother. We will be free." That's all he said when he left me. And my heart began aching for him that moment — and it hasn't let up since. But this morning it overflowed with fears. He's in trouble — a mother knows. His temper will get him in trouble. If this Jesus doesn't become the King that my son wants him to be, Judas will feel betrayed . . . Judas might do something rash — out of pain, out of rage, out of disillusionment. Oh, I must warn him. I must warn him to stop trying to make this man into something he is not. There will be trouble. Oh, where is my son? Have you seen my son? (*Turns around.*)

ANNA: (*Reading from Bible*) "Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him [thirty pieces of silver]. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over." [Mark 14:10-11] (*Close Bible. Lift up candle snuffer.*) And thus a mother lost her son . . . and he became a betrayer of the Light. (*Extinguishes second candle.*)

SIMEON: After that, Jesus and his disciples came into Jerusalem with a flourish — he riding on a white donkey; the people waving palm branches and shouting "Hosanna"

1 like he was a conquering king. On the way to the city,
 2 Jesus told them he was going to Jerusalem to be delivered
 3 up to the chief priests and the scribes and be condemned
 4 to death. And then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came
 5 up to him and knelt down before him and asked him to
 6 make a promise. Jesus asked her what she wanted, but he
 7 did not promise to grant it. And she told him to promise
 8 that her two sons would have the places of honor next to
 9 him in his Kingdom. She had listened more to Judas than
 10 to Jesus. She hadn't heard him just say he was going into
 11 the city to die.

12 **MOTHER OF JAMES AND JOHN:** *(Turning around)* Have you
 13 seen my sons? James and John, my sons. They've run away
 14 from me. They've gotten lost in the crowd. But I have to
 15 find them. I walked with them into the city today. There,
 16 I asked Jesus to give my sons their rightful places in heaven.
 17 I mean, all I asked for was the throne on his right side — and
 18 the one on his left side. After all, they *did* leave their fishing
 19 boats to follow him. A mother only wants what's best for her
 20 children. What's wrong with that? But everyone got so angry
 21 all of a sudden. What's their problem? They're just jealous
 22 their mothers didn't do the same for them. You've got to keep
 23 pushing if you want to get anywhere in this world. I mean,
 24 I didn't know it would hurt them so much to have a mother
 25 put in a good word. Suddenly, everyone was arguing about
 26 who was the greatest among them. And my sons just looked
 27 at me — with that look, you know what I mean? They were
 28 accusing me of starting a fight with their friends. All I did
 29 was try to get a little bit more for them in this life. Isn't that
 30 what a mother is supposed to do? But I need to find them
 31 now. I mean, look around you. There's so much anger in the
 32 town tonight. Rumors are that they're going to attack that
 33 one who won't be king. And that'll put my sons right in the
 34 middle of it all. I've got to protect them. Have you seen my
 35 sons? *(Turns around.)*

1 **ANNA:** (*Reading from Bible*) "... 'You don't know what you
 2 are asking,' Jesus said to [the mother of the sons of
 3 Zebedee]. 'Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?'
 4 'We can,' [the disciples James and John] answered. Jesus
 5 said to them, 'You will indeed drink from my cup, but to
 6 sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places
 7 belong to those for whom they have been prepared by
 8 my Father.' When the [other disciples] heard about this,
 9 they were indignant with the two brothers.
 10 Jesus ... said, '... whoever wants to be great among you
 11 must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must
 12 be your slave — just as the Son of Man did not come to
 13 be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom
 14 for many.' " [Matthew 20:20-28] (*Close Bible. Lift up candle*
 15 *snuffer.*) And thus a mother lost her sons ... and her sons
 16 learned the full cost of discipleship to that Light.
 17 (*Extinguishes third candle.*)

18 **SIMEON:** When the first day of Unleavened Bread was upon
 19 them, Jesus sent two of his disciples into the city with
 20 instructions to look for a man carrying a jar of water and
 21 follow him to the house where they were to have their
 22 Passover meal. At that meal, Jesus gave his followers a
 23 new commandment, that they love one another. He
 24 passed the loaf and told them that from that night on
 25 bread should remind them that though broken from God
 26 because of their sin, people are made one with God once
 27 more because of his sacrifice for them. And he lifted his
 28 cup and told them that whenever they drink they should
 29 be reminded that the new promise of salvation has been
 30 poured out for all through his lifeblood that would be
 31 shed for them. After the meal, they sang a hymn and went
 32 out to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. Judas saw his
 33 chance, and ran to the chief priests and said he could take
 34 them to Jesus where he would be away from the crowds.
 35 A little boy by the name of John Mark from the household

1 where they had their Last Supper slipped out of bed to
 2 follow Jesus to the Garden. He watched from the bushes
 3 as Jesus asked three of his disciples to come to pray with
 4 him alone. He watched as those three fell asleep. Three
 5 times he heard Jesus pray, and three times when Jesus
 6 stopped praying he saw that they were sleeping. The little
 7 boy watched as a mob with weapons came near to him
 8 to find Jesus.

9 **MOTHER OF JOHN MARK:** Have you seen my son? Oh he's
 10 just a little boy. I went to tuck him in and he wasn't there.
 11 It's a mother's nightmare! He couldn't have run away,
 12 not my boy. Maybe he was kidnapped. He must have been
 13 taken. But why? I haven't got anything worth a boy's
 14 ransom. Have you seen a little boy out here anywhere?
 15 Oh, it's such a chilly night. He only has on a linen nightshirt
 16 to protect him from the cold. *(Weeping)* Oh, I hate to think
 17 of him wandering out there, lost . . . alone . . . scared. He
 18 needs his mother. I need him. Oh where has he gone?
 19 *(Praying)* Dear God, help a mother find her son! *(Calling)*
 20 John Mark! Come home, please. John Mark! I heard the
 21 soldiers out earlier. They were marching down the street
 22 with the people from the Temple. There must be some
 23 trouble brewing. And my little son out there all alone.
 24 *(Calling)* John Mark! Have you seen my son? He's just a
 25 little boy really. *(Turns around.)*

26 **ANNA:** *(Reading from Bible)* "... Judas, one of the Twelve,
 27 appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and
 28 clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law,
 29 and the elders. Now the betrayer had arranged a signal
 30 with them: 'The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead
 31 him away under guard.' Going at once to Jesus, Judas
 32 said, 'Rabbi!' and kissed him. The men seized
 33 Jesus . . . Then [all of his disciples] deserted him and fled.
 34 A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was
 35 following Jesus. When they seized him, he fled naked,

1 leaving his garment behind.” [Mark 14:43-52] (*Close Bible.*
 2 *Lift up candle snuffer.*) Thus a mother lost her son . . . for
 3 this son that followed Jesus grew up to spread the Light
 4 in places far from home. (*Extinguishes fourth candle.*)

5 **SIMEON:** That night Jesus was put through trial after trial.
 6 He was mocked and beaten. Finally, the priests had their
 7 way. They had bribed and incensed the crowds against
 8 this Jesus — and using the power of mob hysteria, they
 9 received the death sentence for this would-be king. This
 10 same crowd that had shouted their halleluias now
 11 shouted, “Crucify him!” And it was done. Just before the
 12 time of the crucifixion, Pilate, the governor of the area,
 13 tried to save Jesus. He could see no guilt in him. It was
 14 the custom at the Passover season to release one prisoner
 15 of the people’s choosing. So Pilate offered the crowd a
 16 choice. Did they want to free a man called Barabbas who
 17 was a rebel — a robber — a murderer — one who had
 18 tricked and schemed to get people to trust him and who
 19 then betrayed them with his lies . . . or did they want
 20 to free this man called Jesus who some called the King
 21 of the Jews?

22 **MOTHER OF BARABBAS:** (*Turning around*) Have you seen
 23 my son? His name is Jesus Barabbas . . . they call him a
 24 murderer, a liar. They say my son has been caught —
 25 arrested — and they say he is going to be killed today.
 26 Hung on a cross — the most horrible death reserved for
 27 the most horrible crimes. But he’s innocent. I know he’s
 28 innocent. He couldn’t do such awful things. I have to find
 29 him. I have to talk to him. There must be some way I can
 30 convince them. He’s not a thief. It wasn’t him. It isn’t so.
 31 Not my son. Not Barabbas. It must have been those other
 32 ones — the ones that came into town this week with all
 33 the palm branches waving. They were the trouble makers.
 34 They wanted to take over the city — not my son. He didn’t
 35 want to make any trouble. He’s a good boy. Oh, they just

1 can't take my son away from me. God wouldn't allow that.
 2 God wouldn't let them hurt my son. Oh, where are they
 3 keeping him. Do you know? Please don't hurt my son. He's
 4 a good boy. He's a good boy. He's my son. I have to talk
 5 to him one more time — just one more time . . . tomorrow.
 6 Oh, please. Have you seen my son? *(Turns around.)*

7 ANNA: *(Reading from Bible)* “[Pilate] knowing it was out of
 8 envy that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him
 9 [to be crucified]. But the chief priests stirred up the
 10 crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead. ‘What
 11 shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the
 12 Jews?’ Pilate asked them. ‘Crucify him!’ they shouted.
 13 ‘Why? What crime has he committed?’ asked Pilate. But
 14 they shouted all the louder, ‘Crucify him!’ ” [Mark 15:10-14]

15 “When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but
 16 that instead an uproar was started, he took water and
 17 washed his hands in front of the crowd. ‘I am innocent
 18 of this man's blood,’ he said. ‘It is your responsibility!’ . . .
 19 Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus
 20 flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.” [Matthew
 21 27:24-26] *(Close Bible. Lift up candle snuffer.)* Thus a mother
 22 gained her son . . . and the world lost the Light.
 23 *(Extinguishes fifth candle.)*

24 SIMEON: But Judas had not meant that Jesus be killed.
 25 Judas only wanted to force Jesus to save himself and
 26 then the people would make him be a king. Judas hadn't
 27 meant it to go this far. He had been humiliated. He had
 28 been angry. He wanted to get back at Jesus, but he never
 29 intended it to end this way. Suddenly, Judas knew that
 30 he had been the betrayer that the prophets had said
 31 would come from the man of sorrow's followers. Judas
 32 looked at that thirty pieces of silver. Maybe if he returned
 33 it. Maybe he could still save his Lord.

34 MOTHER OF JUDAS: *(Turning around)* Have you seen my son
 35 . . . my Judas? He ran through the streets tonight like a

1 wild man. I couldn't catch up. My son was crying and
 2 screaming. Oh what pain was tormenting him? What
 3 could be hurting my son so much? I have to find him. I
 4 followed him to the Temple, but then I lost him again. I
 5 think I saw him run out again, but I'm not sure. Oh, he's
 6 in trouble. My son — my little boy — he's hurting. He
 7 needs his mother. Help me find him, please. My son. Have
 8 you seen my son? (*Turns around.*)

9 ANNA: (*Reading from Bible*) "When Judas, who had betrayed
 10 him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with
 11 remorse and returned the thirty silver coins to the chief
 12 priests and the elders. 'I have sinned,' he said, 'for I have
 13 betrayed innocent blood.' 'What is that to us?' they
 14 replied. 'That's your responsibility.' So Judas threw the
 15 money into the temple and left. Then he went away and
 16 hanged himself." [Matthew 27:3-5] (*Close Bible. Lift up*
 17 *candle snuffer.*) Thus a mother lost her son... for the
 18 repentant betrayer did not know that the Light gives
 19 forgiveness. (*Extinguishes sixth candle.*)

20 SIMEON: They took Jesus, bearing his own Cross, to the
 21 place called Golgotha. There they crucified him between
 22 two thieves. Above his head nailed on the Cross was a
 23 sign that Pilate placed there reading: "Jesus of Nazareth,
 24 the King of the Jews." The soldiers took Jesus' robe and
 25 cast lots to see whose it should be. And standing by the
 26 Cross of Jesus was his mother, his aunt, Mary Magdalene,
 27 and the disciple whom he loved.

28 MOTHER OF JESUS: (*Turns around. Begins calmly.*) Have you
 29 seen my son? He's hanging there on that rugged Cross.
 30 A carpenter's son should have a smoother Cross — a more
 31 polished Cross. But there he is. I knew who he was. I
 32 always knew. I kept it inside me, but I always knew. But
 33 that doesn't make this moment any easier. (*Breaking down*)
 34 Oh, my son... my son. For thirty years you were my
 35 comfort... my joy... my pride... my love. You were my



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