

A LENTEN JOURNEY

by Linda Allen



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.

A Lenten Journey

A collection of short scripts for Lent

by Linda Allen

INTRODUCTION

In this series of six scenes for Lenten worship, we follow our path to the cross beginning with “The Curtain Tore” — the curtain separating worshipers from God. “The Seekers” parallels our own search for truth and meaning. In “Cleanup Day at the Temple” we recognize our need for cleansing. “Loving Father” shows the extravagant love of a parent for his children, whether they are self-righteous or rebellious (we’re all sometimes one or the other!). “Jesus on Trial” is a chilling picture of judgment, yet every day we must decide: Does he matter? And finally, for Palm Sunday, the crowd watches as “Jesus Enters the City.” These six readers scripts are all short in length, enhancing your Lenten worship when service time is limited.

Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION ©. NIV©. Copyright ® 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

*This perusal script is for reading purposes only.
No performance or photocopy rights are conveyed.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Curtain Tore

The Seekers

Cleanup Day at the Temple

The Loving Father

Jesus on Trial

Jesus Enters the City

The Curtain Tore

First Sunday of Lent

Scripture: Based on Exodus 36:35-38, Exodus 40:33, Leviticus 21:16-23, Psalm 24:3, Isaiah 6:5, Matthew 27:50-54, Romans 8:35, 38, 39

Cast: READERS 1-5 (Optional number)

(READERS assemble on the stage or throughout the congregation.)

READER 1: For the tabernacle of the Lord ...

READER 2: They made the curtain of blue, purple, and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim worked into it by a skilled craftsman.

READER 3: They made four posts of acacia wood for it and overlaid them with gold. They made gold hooks for them and cast their four silver bases.

READER 4: For the entrance to the tent they made a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen — the work of an embroiderer, and they made five posts with hooks for them.

READER 5: They overlaid the tops of the posts and their bands with gold and made their five bases of bronze.

READER 1: Then Moses set up the courtyard around the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard.

READER 2: (*Strong voice — “laying down the law”*) For the generations to come, none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God.

READER 3: No man who has any defect may come near; no man who is blind or lame,

READER 4: Disfigured or deformed;

READER 5: No man with a crippled foot or hand, or who is hunchbacked or dwarfed,

READER 1: Or who has any eye defect, or who has festering

1 or running sores. No descendant of Aaron the priest
2 who has any defect is to come near to present the
3 offerings made to the Lord by fire.

4 **READER 2:** He has a defect; he must not come near to offer
5 the food of his God ...

6 **READER 3:** Because of his defect, he must not go near the
7 curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my
8 sanctuary. I am the Lord, who makes them holy.

9

10 *(The following lines are read in despair. The realization hits*
11 *each reader that he/she is defective. Who can possibly*
12 *approach the most holy God?)*

13

14 **READER 4:** Oh Lord, *I* am disfigured in your sight!

15 **READER 5:** *I* am crippled.

16 **READER 1:** *I* am blind.

17 **READER 2:** Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may
18 stand in his holy place?

19 **READER 3:** Woe to me! I am ruined! For I am a man of
20 unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips,
21 and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.

22 **ALL:** *(Together)* Woe to me!

23 **READER 4:** Who may ascend the hill of the Lord? Who may
24 stand in his holy place?

25 **ALL:** Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?

26 **READER 5:** Who? *(The tone changes here — everything changed*
27 *with the cross!)*

28 **READER 1:** *(Announcing good news!)* And when Jesus had
29 cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.
30 And that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in
31 two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks
32 split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy
33 people who had died were raised to life. They came out
34 of the tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection, they went
35 into the holy city and appeared to many people.

1 **READER 2:** *(With wonder)* The curtain in the temple was
2 torn.

3 **READER 3:** *(Awed)* Torn from top to bottom!

4 **ALL:** *(Together, ecstatic)* Torn!

5 **READER 4:** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

6 **READER 5:** Neither death nor life,

7 **READER 1:** Neither angels nor demons,

8 **READER 2:** Neither height nor depth,

9 **READER 3:** Nor anything else in all creation

10 **READER 4:** Will be able to separate us from the love of God
11 that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

12 **READER 5:** Jesus gave up his spirit, and the curtain tore
13 from top to bottom.

14 **ALL:** *(Together)* And nothing separates us from the love of
15 Christ!

16

17

18 *The Seekers*

19 Second Sunday of Lent

20

21 *Scripture: John 12:20-22*

22 *Cast:* GREEK HUSBAND and WIFE in simple biblical costumes

23

24 *(MAN and WOMAN enter. They stop to catch their breaths.)*

25 **HE:** Are you all right?

26 **SHE:** A little shaken. Ah, but the excitement was worth a bit
27 of ruffling about.

28 **HE:** These Jews! What can you expect? Greek civility? How
29 far are they really from trailing after their herds in the
30 desert?

31 **SHE:** Don't sound so arrogant, my dear. Hubris is
32 unbecoming. And you forget their David and his poetry.
33 And Solomon his temple.

34 **HE:** I give them their temple and its religion. Their feasts
35 and bloody sacrifices. Their robes and rules and rites.

- 1 I'm not impressed.
- 2 SHE: Yet you dragged me here to see it. And the
3 accommodations in Jerusalem are abysmal.
- 4 HE: Now whose arrogance is showing? I was curious.
5 Hopeful even. Who knows what truth might lie within
6 a feast? What prophecy might flow from their gory
7 altar?
- 8 SHE: Still looking for a word from a god? Silly man — even
9 spending the night in the temple of Zeus last year! As
10 if the god himself would speak to you in a dream,
11 perhaps. Or in a smoky vision.
- 12 HE: And *you* doubt the gods care.
- 13 SHE: I doubt the gods! I've seen them carved, their stone
14 chippings lying about. Is Zeus in the marble?
- 15 HE: The Jews' god is nameless and faceless. Their temple is
16 built ... to the air, I guess ... or to the wind. I wonder
17 if their god dwells in a spirit?
- 18 SHE: Or in a *man*?
- 19 HE: *Now* you speak of Jesus.
- 20 SHE: I'm intrigued by him. I admit he has my interest now,
21 after that scene in the temple. (*Thoughtful pause*) He
22 took my breath away.
- 23 HE: And I thought you were frightened.
- 24 SHE: I was ... and yet ...
- 25 HE: After he grabbed up that whip and began driving out
26 those miserable moneychangers and cheating sellers of
27 doves —
- 28 SHE: He began to heal those in the courtyard.
- 29 HE: And there are whispers he's raised the dead.
- 30 SHE: Did you see his eyes?
- 31 HE: I'll never forget them.
- 32 SHE: (*Looking at him intently*) Husband, what are you
33 thinking?
- 34 HE: That I want to meet this man. There is something about
35 him ... something real ... something true.

1 SHE: And what is truth? Can you measure it? Hold it in
 2 your hand? Taste it?
 3 HE: Indeed, I would die to know the flavor of it.
 4 SHE: We're Greeks — would he talk with us?
 5 HE: (*Gestures Off-stage.*) His disciple there ... Philip ...
 6 SHE: A Greek name.
 7 HE: (*To "Philip"*) Sir! (*Pause as if "Philip" has turned toward*
 8 *him*) We would like to meet Jesus.

9

10

Cleanup Day at the Temple

12 Third Sunday of Lent

13

14 *Scripture: Based on Jesus cleansing the temple, found in Matthew*
 15 *21:12-14; Mark 11:12-17; John 2:12-17*

16 *Cast: MONEYCHANGER, his WIFE, and WOMEN 1-3*

17 *Setting: Outside the temple, five minutes after Jesus holds*
 18 *cleanup day*

19 *Props: WOMAN 3 needs a few coins*

20

21 (*MONEYCHANGER and WIFE enter. MONEYCHANGER*
 22 *limps.*)

23 WIFE: Husband, are you all right?

24 MONEYCHANGER: What do you think? He beat me with a
 25 whip.

26 WIFE: He didn't beat you with a whip. He wove some cords
 27 together and smacked you a couple of times. I've done
 28 worse to you.

29 MONEYCHANGER: Well, anyway, it hurt a little. And when
 30 he turned over my table, it fell on my foot ... and maybe
 31 it's broken.

32 WIFE: You didn't break your foot. You're walking on it!

33 MONEYCHANGER: Not my foot — the table. He broke my
 34 table! Who's going to pay for that?

35 WIFE: Well, he's a carpenter. Maybe he'll fix it.

- 1 MONEYCHANGER: He heals people — not furniture.
 2 WIFE: I can't say you and the rest didn't deserve it. You
 3 were cheating those raggedy-looking pilgrims who
 4 came all the way from Egypt for Passover.
 5 MONEYCHANGER: It's not my rule that the temple doesn't
 6 take Egyptian money.
 7 WIFE: You were price-gouging.
 8 MONEYCHANGER: The law of supply and demand.
 9 WIFE: I heard the women at the market whispering about
 10 us. They called it dirty money.
 11 MONEYCHANGER: But *you* didn't mind spending my dirty
 12 money on that new Passover outfit ... and the
 13 seamstress didn't hesitate to take it!
 14 WIFE: But watching him ... hearing him ... *I* felt dirty. (*She*
 15 *has an epiphany.*) *Like I was the temple!* And I needed to
 16 be cleansed, too.
 17 MONEYCHANGER: That's crazy talk, woman. (*Slow the*
 18 *following line down and punch out each word.*) He's a
 19 power-hungry, itinerant rabbi from *nowhere*. I don't
 20 know *who* he thinks he is. (*They exit. WOMEN 1, 2, and*
 21 *3 enter.*)
 22 WOMAN 1: Well! That was a sight for sore eyes!
 23 WOMAN 2: I never thought I'd live long enough to see those
 24 toadies get what's coming to them!
 25 WOMAN 1: Did you see them scramble after their precious
 26 money when he turned over their tables?
 27 WOMAN 3: I did a little scrambling, too. See? (*Holds up*
 28 *coins.*) I picked up a couple of coins for myself.
 29 WOMAN 1: I can't believe you'd do that. They're not yours.
 30 WOMAN 3: Who says? Maybe it is. I bought a perfectly good
 31 dove outside the temple for five shekels.
 32 WOMAN 2: That's a fair price.
 33 WOMAN 3: But when I got inside, the temple inspector
 34 found a (*Heavy sarcasm here*) blemish.
 35 WOMAN 1: Oh, yeah, they usually do. So you had to buy

1 one of theirs in the temple.
 2 WOMAN 3: For seventy-five shekels! I figure they still owe
 3 me another sixty!
 4 WOMAN 2: What bothers me the most is I look forward to
 5 Passover all year. All year! Then we come to worship,
 6 and ... and this! The noise and bargaining ...
 7 WOMAN 1: The cheating ... and lying! How can anybody
 8 pray?
 9 WOMAN 2: Ah! Then Jesus came and cleaned their plows.
 10 WOMAN 3: Did you hear him say, "How dare you turn my
 11 father's house into a market?"
 12 WOMAN 1: Everybody heard him. *(Pause for a beat)* He gave
 13 me cold chills.
 14 WOMAN 2: And he said, "My house will be called a house
 15 of prayer for all nations ... "
 16 WOMAN 3: " ... But you have made it a den of robbers." He
 17 quoted the prophets — Isaiah and Jeremiah.
 18 WOMAN 1: He spoke of the temple as "my house."
 19 WOMAN 2: Jesus. *(Big thoughtful pause)* Who is he? *(WOMEN*
 20 *exit.)*

23 *The Loving Father*

24 Fourth Sunday of Lent

26 *Scripture: The Prodigal Son parable from Luke 15*

27 *Cast: FATHER*

29 *(FATHER enters.)*

30 FATHER: *(Gestures over heads of congregation.)* You can see
 31 my boy there — the young man supervising the harvest.
 32 Loyal and faithful. A diligent worker — I give him that.
 33 Yet I have to admit there's a hard streak in him. Dots
 34 every i — crosses every t. Maybe he gets that from his
 35 mother's side of the family!

1 You may remember I have two sons. You won't see
2 the younger in the fields. He's off ... somewhere. And I
3 must tell you, he's broken my heart. He came to me
4 some months back defiant and mouthy. Demanding of
5 me — not requesting, mind you — *demanding* his share
6 of my estate. What to do?

7 It is written: "If a man has a stubborn and rebellious
8 son who does not obey his father and mother and will
9 not listen to them when they discipline him, his father
10 and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the
11 elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the
12 elders, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He
13 will not obey us. He is a profligate and a drunkard.'
14 Then all the men of his town shall stone him to death.
15 You must purge the evil from among you."

16 Stone my son to death? It's not in me. I love him. So
17 I gave him his third of my estate, and off he went!

18 My older son couldn't believe it. He's turned bitter.
19 Angry. When he looks at me, I see disdain in his eyes.
20 Yet he labors on. Perhaps his sense of right — or *self-*
21 right — hard as stone — won't let him stop. Or maybe
22 his sweat and duty bring their own reward.

23 Two sons. I long for each of them. The one here. The
24 one in a far-off country. The one stiff-necked in his
25 rightness. The other stiff-necked in his rebellion. My
26 heart aches with love for them both.

Jesus on Trial

Fifth Sunday of Lent

*Scripture: Based on Jesus' trial account in Matthew 26:57-67 and
Mark 14:53-65*

Cast: READERS 1-7

*(READERS are scattered around the room so their voices
come from "everywhere.")*

READER 1: Darkness hoods Jerusalem.

READER 2: Darkness for dark deeds.

READER 3: A good night for betrayal.

READER 4: A lovely night for evil.

**READER 5: They bring Jesus to the home of Caiaphas, the
high priest.**

**READER 7: They gather there — teachers of the law and
elders.**

READER 1: The whole Sanhedrin set against him.

READER 2: Their hearts bent on death.

READER 3: What a shame.

READER 4: What a sham.

READER 6: Find witnesses who can lie.

READER 5: Bring us false witnesses!

READER 1: We need liars to speak lies.

ALL: (Together) Listen now.

READER 4: He said he'd destroy the temple.

READER 1: We heard him.

READER 2: Or did we?

READER 3: It doesn't matter.

ALL: (Together) Guilty!

**READER 5: Ah! We lack two witnesses with the same
testimony.**

READER 2: How can we incriminate?

READER 6: It doesn't matter.

READER 7: But the law says —



CHRISTIAN PUBLISHERS

Thank you for reading this free excerpt from:

LENTEN JOURNEY

by Linda S. Allen.

*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