

SPIRIT 2: EMPIRE

Music by Kevin Larsson
Lyrics by Major Malcolm Westwood
Book by Karl Larsson

 TRACK 1 ROME

PROLOGUE / SCENE 1 : STORM

THUNDER CRACKS and LIGHTENING. The curtain opens to men rowing a ship through a violent storm.

CAPTAIN
Faster! The Northeaster is upon us.

The sailors row in unison, chanting weakly.

SAILORS
Rome. Rome. Rome. Rome.

More THUNDER, more LIGHTENING. The chanting stops. Everyone is afraid.

JULIUS, a Roman Centurion arrives on deck, SOLDIERS in tow.

JULIUS
Report Captain.

CAPTAIN
We need to abandon ship. Take our chances on the lifeboats.

A loud CRACK sends people scurrying for cover.

CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Pray to Jupiter he leave us alone.

JULIUS
I will fetch the prisoners.

Julius exits with his soldiers.

CAPTAIN
Prepare the lifeboats!

The sailors stop rowing, start preparing to abandon ship.

Julius returns with an old, but calm looking PAUL. With him, his loyal companion LUKE.

JULIUS
It appears you were right Paul. The ship has been damaged. We should have wintered in Fair Havens.

PAUL
You would have been spared this damage and loss.

Paul turns to include all the soldiers and sailors.

PAUL (CONT'D)
But I urge you to keep your
courage. Not one of you will be
lost.

He ushers the sailors back to their oars.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Row my friends. Row.

The sailors start rowing again.

SAILORS
Rome. Rome. Rome. Rome.

They increase in confidence.

SONG - ROME

CAPTAIN
But what should we do now? The ship
will not last the night.

PAUL
We must run aground on some island.

LOOKOUT
LAND AHOY!!!

PAUL
(smiling)
It will happen just as God told me.

CAPTAIN
Prepare for landing!

The ship beaches. Everyone scrambles to the safety of land,
exiting up stage.

 TRACK 2 SCENE CHANGE - MALTA STORM

PROLOGUE / SCENE 2 : MALTA

A warm, welcoming fire glows. The ISLANDERS beckon the
soldiers and sailors ashore, offering them food and shelter.

ISLANDER 1
Welcome to Malta!

JULIUS
Most kind. Who is the proconsul
here?

ISLANDER 1
Publius. We have sent word of your
arrival. He will be here--

PUBLIUS (O.S.)
--I'm here!

ISLANDER 1
He's here!

PUBLIUS, the friendly looking chief official for Malta rushes
on stage, with a small group of companions.

PUBLIUS
Welcome friends. I'm the governor
of the island. Publius.

JULIUS
Julius. Centurion of the Augustan
Cohort. At your service.

Publius looks to Paul and Luke.

PUBLIUS
And who might these be?

JULIUS
Prisoners, headed for trial under
Caesar.

Publius is confused.

PUBLIUS
No restraints? You must be a very
persuasive guard.

JULIUS
No need. This is Paul, a Jew from
the Christian sect. His God has
told him he must go to Rome and
face Caesar, and this God of his
seems to have got most things right
so far. We owe Paul our lives.

Publius shake Paul's hand, surprising him.

JULIUS (CONT'D)
And this is Luke, a Greek. He's a
doctor by trade, but has been
writing about their travels.

PUBLIUS
A doctor you say?

LUKE
Yes sir.

Publius beckons on old man forward. The man is coughing and
wheezing.

PUBLIUS
This is my father. He has a
terrible fever. I fear his time is
short.

Luke looks to Paul. Paul nods.

LUKE
With your permission, I would like
to ask Paul to pray for your
father.

PUBLIUS
Have you no medicine?

JULIUS
Our journey has been rich with
wonders Publius. I would let the
man pray.

Publius relents.

 TRACK 3 SIGNS AND WONDERS

PUBLIUS
Go ahead. Please.

Paul places his hands on the father's head, and prays.

SONG - SIGNS AND WONDERS

 TRACK 4 SCENE CHANGE - MALTA TO ROMAN DOCKS

PROLOGUE / SCENE 3 : ROMAN DOCKS

AQUILA, PRISCILLA and various Roman Christians wait anxiously. A BELL rings.

PRISCILLA
Is that them?

AQUILA
It may well be.

PRISCILLA
Paul in Rome. A day I had dared not dream of.

AQUILA
He will have his day in court.
Caesar will have to listen.

PRISCILLA
It appears word of his arrival has spread.

Centurions enter, keeping an angry mob of Jewish leaders at bay.

Julius leads a handcuffed Paul onto the stage, followed by Luke. The mob goes wild.

AQUILA
Paul!

Paul spots the Christians.

PAUL
Aquila! Priscilla!

The Jewish leaders heckle them.

PAUL (CONT'D)
My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. The Jews objected, so I was compelled to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not intend to bring any charge against my own people.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)
It is because of the hope of Israel
that I am bound with this chain.
God's salvation has been sent to
the Gentiles, and they will listen!

Mention of the Gentiles provokes the crowd once more.

JULIUS
Let's get you out of here! Come on!
Come on!

 TRACK 5 SCENE CHANGE - ROMAN DOCKS

Julius escorts the Christians off stage.

PROLOGUE / SCENE 4 : HOUSE ARREST

Aquila's home. The Christians enter.

LUKE
Twenty four hours a day?

JULIUS
I'm afraid so. House arrest, till
Caesar is ready.

LUKE
So he can't leave?

JULIUS
No. We'll have guards posted
outside, partly for your own
protection as well.

PAUL
Can I have visitors?

JULIUS
Of course.

PAUL
And do you have any idea how long
before Caesar is ready?

JULIUS
It could be days, it could be
years.

LUKE
Years!?

JULIUS
Nero has certain eccentricities.
He's not our most predictable
Caesar.

(MORE)

JULIUS (CONT'D)
I'll let you settle in though, but
if you don't mind, I'd like to
bring some of my friends to hear
some of your stories later.

PAUL
Of course. We would be honored.

Julius exits, leaving two guards on watch down stage.

Paul examines his surroundings. Luke prepares some parchment
paper.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Aquila, Priscilla, if I'd known
this might take years, I would
never have accepted your most
generous offer to let me stay at
your home. My humblest apologies.

AQUILA
It is no hardship.

PRISCILLA
It is our privilege.

LUKE
It appears though that you have no
choice now but to write even longer
letters.

Paul laughs.

PAUL
I was delivered from the lion's
mouth before.

LUKE
And will be again my brother.

Paul loses himself in his own thoughts.

LUKE (CONT'D)
(Reading his notes)
"For the time will come when people
will not put up with sound
doctrine. Instead, to suit their
own desires, they will gather
around them a great number of
teachers to say what their itching
ears want to hear."

People make themselves comfortable.

PAUL
Ah yes. Timothy. What their itching ears want to hear... They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

The music for the transition begins. The light slowly fade.

 TRACK 6 SCENE CHANGE - HOUSE ARREST

PAUL (CONT'D)
For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

MUSIC - TRANSITION

ACT 1 / SCENE 1 : RIOT IN DAMASCUS

SUPER: "23 years earlier."

The music is replaced by the sound of rioting.

ANANIAS

Paul! Paul! This way! Quick!

A much younger Paul runs over and joins him.

PAUL

Brother Ananias. It appears I am no longer welcome in Damascus.

ANANIAS

You preach too well my friend.

PAUL

We're fighting the good fight! We will keep the faith and finish this race!

RUFUS enters, in a panic.

RUFUS

They're coming!

ANANIAS

There is much left to do here, but we need you alive. Here.

He motions to the basket. Paul climbs in

PAUL

I hope we see each other again soon, brother.

RUFUS

They're here!

Ananias lowers the basket through the stage floor. Rufus helps.

ANANIAS

God willing. God willing.

As Paul disappears, a mob rushes in, grabbing Ananias and Rufus and pushing them offstage angrily.

ACT 1 / SCENE 2 : BARNABAS

Jerusalem. Outside a synagogue. Barnabas talks to a group of young disciples as they prepare to preach to the crowds.

BARNABAS

You have nothing to fear cousin.

JOHN MARK

But the words won't come to me. I get confused.

 **TRACK 7 SONG OF ENCOURAGEMENT**

BARNABAS

You have the Holy Spirit in you John Mark. You all do. Trust the Lord. What's the worst that could happen?

DANIEL

They could stone us.

BARNABAS

I'm not so sure. You kids can run faster than me.

SONG - SONG OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Paul enters, taking in the scene.

DANIEL

Look.

JOHN MARK

Saul of Tarsus.

EZRA

Who's that?

BARNABAS

The worst that could happen.

DANIEL

He's alone. No men with him.

JOHN MARK

Must be a trap.

Paul approaches them.

PAUL

Are you men followers of the
Christ?

BARNABAS

Are you Saul of Tarsus, persecutor
and tormentor of said followers of
the Christ?

PAUL

I was. I go by 'Paul' now. I am a
new man, born of the Spirit.

BARNABAS

Glad to hear it. I'm Barnabas. What
brings you to Jerusalem?

PAUL

I want to meet the Apostles.

JOHN MARK

It's a trap!

Barnabas stares at Paul intently for a few moments.

BARNABAS

This way.

Barnabas walks off.

JOHN MARK

What are you doing?

BARNABAS
He's telling the truth.

 TRACK 8 SCENE CHANGE - BARNABAS

ACT 1 / SCENE 3 : PETER AND PAUL

A group of worshippers gather in a small home.

JAMES
It is with great personal sadness,
yet unbounded joy - joy for those
who will cross their paths - that I
announce Peter and Perpetua's time
with us is at an end.

The worshippers mutter amongst themselves, upset at this development.

PETER
Fret not James, friends. The Lord's
hand is upon us. It is time to move
on. Judea, Galilee, Samaria. We
have a world to conquer.

Barnabas, Paul and the young disciples enter. People mutter, panic spreading, as recognition grows. A standoff. Barnabas grabs Paul's hand, leads him to James.

JAMES
Shalom aleichem.

PAUL
Aleichem shalom.

PETER
Saul of Tarsus.

BARNABAS
Paul of Tarsus. He has quite the
tale to tell.

JOHN MARK
A tale of persecution! Of death!

JAMES
John Mark! Quiet!

PAUL
No. He's right.

 TRACK 9 SAUL'S JOURNEY

SONG - SAUL'S JOURNEY

PAUL (CONT'D)
Praise be, the ending of my story
is still to be written.

PETER
Welcome brother. Stay a while. Let
James and the elders instruct you.
Be patient, and the Lord will use
you, and use you well.

Peter takes Perpetua's hand.

 TRACK 10 KNOWING JESUS

PETER (CONT'D)
Friends, our time has come. We need
to make Lydda by nightfall.

PAUL
Please. Before you go... Tell me
about him. My life changed after
one encounter on a dirt laden road,
yet you were with him as he lived
as a man amongst us. Such stories
you must have!

Peter pauses. Puts his arm around Paul.

SONG - KNOWING JESUS

 TRACK 11 SCENE CHANGE - PETER AND PAUL

ACT 1 / SCENE 4 : SET APART FOR MISSION

The outskirts of town. Two roads head off in different directions. The disciples are gathered.

JAMES

Peter. Perpetua. Paul, Barnabas and John. You are ready. The Lord has set you apart. Go to the uttermost parts of the world with the message of Jesus. Judea, Galilee, Samaria and beyond. Let them all fall to Christ. Let us pray!

 TRACK 12 SET APART

SONG - SET APART

 TRACK 13 SCENE CHANGE - SET APRT TO ELYMAS

Paul, Barnabas and John Mark say their good-byes, and exit.

ACT 2 / SCENE 1 : ELYMAS THE FORTUNE TELLER

A market place. Paul, Barnabas and John enter.

JOHN MARK
I need to rest. We've been walking
all morning.

PAUL
You've been complaining all
morning.

BARNABAS
Don't worry, we're almost there. I
think this is Paphos.

ELYMAS
Gather round, gather round!

People surround Elymas. Paul walks over followed by Barnabas
and John.

ELYMAS (CONT'D)
Only two Denarii, and your fortune
will be revealed. I speak on the
Lord's authority. Who's next?

No one steps forward. Elymas looks to Paul.

ELYMAS (CONT'D)
You sir.

He steps toward Paul.

PAUL
Get back you crook.

Ignoring him, Elymas dramatically places his hands on Paul's
head.

ELYMAS
Interesting. Very interesting.

He pauses, milking the moment.

ELYMAS (CONT'D)
I see great, great riches, for you.
You and your friends. The Lord
Jesus Christ will provide bounty
beyond imagination if you just
follow his commands.

Elymas fakes deep concentration.

ELYMAS (CONT'D)
It's not clear just yet... let me concentrate... Yes! Yes, I see it now. I see what you must do! I... I... I will need two more Denarii to reveal this information to you. That is the Lord's first commandment to you.

BARNABAS
The Lord drives a hard bargain.

PAUL
"Take heed no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." So said our Lord Jesus Christ. You are a sorcerer, a charlatan!

ELYMAS
I am a prophet. I speak on Yahweh's authority.

PAUL
Admit your wrong doing.

ELYMAS
No. Under whose authority do you speak?

PAUL
The authority of the Christ Jesus.

This angers the crowd. SERGIUS, the Roman proconsul intervenes.

SERGIUS
What is going on here? Elymas. Who are these people?

ELYMAS
Troublemakers. Christians!

 TRACK 14 PSALM 2

PAUL
We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

SONG - PSALM 2

As the song ends, Paul is praying over a converted Sergius

ELYMAS

Master, do not be fooled by words.
These men are tricksters. This
Jesus of theirs is an imposter.

PAUL

You are a child of the devil and an
enemy of everything that is right!
You are full of all kinds of deceit
and trickery. Will you never stop
perverting the right ways of the
Lord? The hand of the Lord is
against you.

Darkness falls, Elymas collapses, clutching his eyes.

PAUL (CONT'D)

You will be blind for a time, not
even able to see the light of the
sun.

CYPRIOT 1

The gods have come down to us in
human form!

SLAVE GIRL

These men are servants of the Most
High God, who are telling you the
way to be saved!

A woman places a wreath at the disciples' feet.

CYPRIOT 2

Lord! Praise be. You walk among us.

BARNABAS

Friends, why are you doing this? We
too are only human, like you. John,
tell them.

JOHN MARK

I... I....

PAUL

-- We are bringing you good news

John Mark is upset at the interruption.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Telling you to turn from these
worthless things to the living God,
who made the heavens and the earth
and the sea and everything in them.
Please, gather around. Sit down...

The lights fade on the group center stage as Paul preaches. A
group of three men appear at the front of the stage.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1
What do you suggest? These men...
these 'Christians' are having much
success. The people believe them
gods.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 2
It is blasphemy. Our law is quite
clear.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1
Could we just talk to them again?

RELIGIOUS LEADER 3
That time has passed.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1
Very well.

The lights fade to black

ACT 2 / SCENE 2 : JOHN MARK LEAVES

Night. Paul, Barnabas and John sit around a fire. There are a
few moments of tense silence.

JOHN MARK
I'm going home.

BARNABAS
Come on John. I know the last few
days have been tough, but you're
doing really well.

PAUL
Let him go. I need warriors, not
worriers.

BARNABAS
Go easy on the kid Paul.

PAUL

Like a thief in the night, the day of the Lord will be upon us. There are no half measures. Jesus himself said "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God."

JOHN MARK

You believe I am not giving everything?

No answer from Paul. John stands angrily, grabs his possessions.

JOHN MARK (CONT'D)

Barnabas. Paul. Shalom.

He walks off.

BARNABAS

Hold up. Let me walk with you a way.

Barnabas and John Mark exit. Paul sits alone in his thoughts. From the back of the stage, various men creep up, grab him violently.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1

Christian, it is written: "he who blasphemes the name of Yahweh shall surely be put to death."

The men grab stones from the floor.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 2

"All the congregation shall certainly stone him."

PAUL

The prophets said "Look, you scoffers, wonder and perish, for I am going to do something in your days that you would never believe, even if someone told you." My friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 3

Stone him!

The men throw their rocks at Paul, who collapses under the assault. They exit. After a moment, Barnabas returns.

BARNABAS
Paul! We need to talk. I have the
greatest respect for you. You know
that. But that was wrong.

Paul doesn't move.

BARNABAS (CONT'D)
Paul! Wake up!

Barnabas panics, as realization dawns. He collapses next to
Paul, cradling him. Paul stirs. Groans.

BARNABAS (CONT'D)
Praise be! You're alive.

PAUL
Suffering for the gospel, by the
power of God. This is no cause for
shame Barnabas.

 TRACK 15 SCENE CHANGE - JOHN TO ANTIOCH

ACT 2 / SCENE 3 : ANTIOCH

A packed house of new disciples. Paul addresses them.

PAUL
These are troubled times. Caligula
continues his madness.

DISCIPLE 1
He's demanding they place a statue
of him in the Temple of Jerusalem!

DISCIPLE 2
It's a desecration, but King
Agrippa wants to allow it. Wants to
appease him!

PAUL
Revolution is in the air, but the
truth will be heard. The Church
here is strong.

BARNABAS
Suzanna. Apollos. Elias. Please
step forward.

PAUL
These are your elders, anointed by
God.

BARNABAS
Through prayer and fasting, we have
committed them to the Lord.

 TRACK 16 GOD'S CHURCH

PAUL
We can do all things through Christ
that strengthens us. God shall
supply your needs according to his
riches in glory.

SONG - GOD'S CHURCH

Some Judean members of the congregation do not participate in the song.

SUZANNA

Will you not join us brothers?

JUDEAN 1

We don't mind the Gentiles hearing the Gospel, but the law is clear.

JUDEAN 2

They are unclean. Unless they follow the law's dictates, they cannot be saved.

PAUL

Nonsense!

He points to various disciples in the room.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Is this man unsaved? Will this man not enter heaven? They have heard the Word and accepted Christ. Nothing else remains!

JUDEAN 1

We cannot accept that.

The three elders confer.

APOLLOS

Paul, Barnabas. Would you return to Jerusalem?

ELIAS

Question the Apostles and the elders. Settle this question.

Paul and Barnabas are in agreement.

PAUL

We will.

ACT 2 / SCENE 4 : THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

 TRACK 17 INCLUDED

SONG - INCLUDED

The Council at Jerusalem. Peter, Paul and Barnabas are in the center. The council members, led by James, sit in a circle around them. Peter finishes his song.

JAMES

Do you concur with this Paul?
Barnabas?

PAUL

We do.

BARNABAS

We have climbed the Taurus
mountains and crossed the Western
Sea, yet not once did the Lord
hinder our way to the Gentiles.

PAUL

They have received the Gospel.

BARNABAS

Been baptized in the Spirit.

PAUL

Signs and wonders at every turn.

Everyone turns to James.

JAMES

It is written: "After this I will
return and rebuild David's fallen
tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and
I will restore it, that the rest of
mankind may seek the Lord. Even all
the Gentiles who bear my name, says
the Lord, who does these things -
things known from long ago." It is
my judgment, therefore, that we
should not make it difficult for
the Gentiles who are turning to
God.

The members shout in agreement.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Paul. Barnabas. Take Silas and
Barsabbas with you to Antioch. Let
them know of our decision. Let them
know God has no favorites! Council
dismissed.

The group breaks up, greeting each other, pleased with their work. Barnabas beckons John Mark over. Paul stiffens when he sees him.

PAUL

Hello John.

JOHN MARK

Great work, both of you. A very powerful testimony. It seems you have been busy.

PAUL

Yes. We were.

BARNABAS

John is keen to rejoin us.

JOHN MARK

I've matured over these last years. I'm ready.

PAUL

I'm sorry. No.

BARNABAS

Come on. Give the kid another chance. I've heard him preach. Really impressive.

PAUL

I said no. I'm sure the Lord will find use for his new found gifts, but we have no time to babysit.

BARNABAS

Please. Trust me on this.

PAUL

I'm sorry. Truly I am, but no.

BARNABAS

Then I'm afraid we must part ways.

JOHN MARK

There's no need for that. It's okay.

PAUL

No, Barnabas is right. This is the right time. I will take Silas and leave tomorrow.

Paul walks over to SILAS. Peter approaches Barnabas.

PETER

Come, let us eat! Let's celebrate!

Everyone leaves excitedly, except Barnabas, lost in his own thoughts.

 TRACK 18 I'LL CHOOSE YOU

SONG - I'LL CHOOSE YOU, JESUS

-- **INTERMISSION** --During the intermission, a backdrop animation of Rome slowly begins to burn.

 **TRACK 19 THE BURNING OF ROME**

ACT 3 / SCENE 1: ROME BURNS

A makeshift hospital. Paul, Luke and the Christians attend to the injured. Aquila enters, helping a burn victim.

AQUILA
The wind's changed direction.

PAUL
How long have we got?

AQUILA
Difficult to tell. The whole city's ablaze.

LUKE
We should move these people to safer ground.

PAUL
Agreed.

PRISCILLA
People are saying Caesar lit the fires on purpose.

AQUILA
Nonsense.

PRISCILLA
Word is he plays his lyre and sings while the city burns.

LUKE
I wouldn't put it past him. He's a madman.

PAUL
Not that insane. He acquitted me of all charges, released me from house arrest.

LUKE
After two years!

PAUL
Think of what we achieved in those two years!

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)
The Church now has strong roots at
the very heart of Rome.

LUKE
And thanks to your release, strong
roots in Spain and the west.

PAUL
Rome is the heart of the empire.
That's why we are back. Conquer
Rome for Christ and the world will
follow.

AQUILA
If these fires continue, there will
be a large pile of ash at the
empire's heart come morning.

CENTURIONS rush in, grabbing the Christians.

CENTURION 1
You are under arrest!

PAUL
For?

CENTURION 2
Burning Rome.

LUKE
What?

CENTURION 3
We have orders to round up all
Christians.

ACT 3 / SCENE 2: NERO

The Christians all huddled up in a corner of their prison cell, surrounded by centurions.

CENTURION 1

Ave, Caesar!

Everyone snaps to attention. NERO enters.

He walks up the Christians, looking them up and down. He spots Paul.

NERO

You. Step forward.

Paul complies.

NERO (CONT'D)

I know you.

PAUL

Paul of Tarsus.

NERO

Yes, I remember. Two or three years ago. Some gimcrackery with your fellow Jews. I freed you.

PAUL

Yes.

NERO

And you repay me by burning my beloved Rome?

PAUL

We did no such thing.

Gasps from the onlookers.

NERO

I shall be the judge of that, and believe me Christian, you won't be waiting two years for my answer this time.

Nero and the centurions exit.

PAUL

Seems we may not have as much time to write as expected.

LUKE

Well, we better get moving then!

He opens a scroll, and reads to Paul.

LUKE (CONT'D)

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis.

PAUL

Wait, Troas? Was that not where we first met?

LUKE

So it was. Amazing! Seems so long ago.

PAUL

You dropped everything but that quill to join me.

LUKE

Best decision I ever made.

PAUL

We met Lydia and Timothy soon after. Exciting times.

ACT 4 / SCENE 1 : LYDIA

Luke continues reading as the scene transitions back in time.

LUKE (O.S.)

Yes. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

SUPER: "15 years earlier."

 TRACK 20 LYDIA

DANCE - LYDIA

LUKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

A small group of religious and Roman leaders have observed the dance.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1

These men and women have caused trouble all over the world.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 2

They have now come here.

ROMAN LEADER 1

They seem harmless enough.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 3

They are defying Caesar's decrees.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1

Saying there is another king, one called Jesus.

ROMAN LEADER 2

I've heard of this Jesus. Was causing all kinds of trouble over in Judea. Pilate put him to death some years ago.

ROMAN LEADER 1

How can they claim him King then?

RELIGIOUS LEADER 3

They say his death was but a mere inconvenience.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1

That he walks among us.

The group exchange concerned looks.

ACT 4 / SCENE 2 : WOMAN SLAVE GIRL

Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke enter, followed closely by the slave girl. Paul stops.

SLAVE GIRL
These men are servants of the Most
High God, who are telling you the
way to be saved!

The crowd laughs. Paul's group walks quickly to the other side of the stage. The slave girl follows.

SLAVE GIRL (CONT'D)
These men are servants of the Most
High God, who are telling you the
way to be saved!

They try to shake her off again.

SLAVE GIRL (CONT'D)
These men are servants of the Most
High God, who are telling you the
way to be saved!

TIMOTHY
Paul, this lady's been following us
for days!

LUKE
I have a headache.

SLAVE GIRL
These men are servants of the Most
High God, who are telling you the
way to be saved!

They try unsuccessfully to lose her again.

SLAVE GIRL (CONT'D)
These men are servants of the Most--

PAUL
In the name of Jesus Christ I
command you to come out of her!

The slave girl stops suddenly. She looks like she is waking from a dream.

SLAVE GIRL
Thank you. Thank you master! I'm
free! Free at last.

SILAS
You're not the only one.

The girl's SLAVE OWNER strides on stage, angry.

 TRACK 21 FOR SUCH AS ME

SLAVE OWNER
There you are! These fortunes
aren't going to read themselves.
Come on!

SLAVE GIRL
No.

SLAVE OWNER
Excuse me?

SLAVE GIRL
I'm sorry, but no. These men have
freed me.

SONG: FOR SUCH AS ME

SLAVE OWNER
You weren't theirs to free. This is
going to cost me money.

PAUL
Wherever the Spirit of the Lord is,
there is freedom.

The Owner turns to the crowd.

SLAVE OWNER
These men are Jews, and are
throwing our city into an uproar.
They advocate strange customs,
unlawful for us Romans to accept or
practice. They should be flogged!

He incites the crowd.

 TRACK 22 SCENE CHANGE -SLAVE GIRL

SLAVE OWNER (CONT'D)
Flog them! Flog them! Flog them!

SILAS
Uh oh.

The crowd turn on the Christians. Some defend them.

ACT 4 / SCENE 3: PRISON

Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke are in prison. They have been
flogged. The jailer approaches.

JAILER
Looks like they've quelled the
worst of it. That was quite the
riot you boys caused there.

PAUL
We'll let the magistrates decide
who was the cause.

Silas tends to his wounds.

SILAS
They've decided already, it seems.

JAILER
You should rest. That flogging
would have killed lesser men. Here,
make sure you keep the wounds
clean....

The jailer throws a cloth to Silas.

SILAS

Thank you.

JAILER

Get some rest!

The jailer turns the lights low and exits. Silas walks up the bars, and starts beating a rhythm. Another disciple joins in, using his chair as percussion.

The prison doors fly open, everyone's chains come loose.
Silas and the other disciples prepare to escape.

SILAS
Come on! Let's go!

PAUL
No. We stay.

Silas isn't convinced, but stays. The jailer enters and sees the door open.

 TRACK 23 WHAT HOPE IS THERE

JAILER
No! No no no!

He draws his sword, and falls to his knees.

PAUL
Don't harm yourself! We're still here.

The jailer stands, approaches the cell. He can't believe they're still there.

JAILER
Sirs, what must I do to be like you. To be saved?

SONG - WHAT HOPE IS THERE?

 TRACK 24 SCENE CHANGE - PRISON TO SONS

ACT 4 / SCENE 4 : SONS OF SCEVA

An elderly mother tends to her demon possessed adult son, who writhes on the ground.

ELDERLY MOTHER
Please, masters, help my son... a demon has taken him.

SCEVA SON 1
It's been a long day.

SCEVA SON 2
Keeping demons at bay.

SCEVA SON 3
Our powers need rest.

SCEVA SON 4
Unlike the possessed.

SCEVA SON 5
But come find us tonight.

SCEVA SON 6
And that devil we'll fight.

SCEVA SON 7
Your son's in such angst--
The brother's struggle to find a rhyme.

ELDERLY MOTHER
Please! I'm begging you. I've seen
you heal people.

The brothers huddle, talking amongst themselves.

SCEVA SON 1
But we're liars and fakes.

SCEVA SON 2
We've made too many mistakes.

SCEVA SON 3
But perhaps we could try.

SCEVA SON 4
And force a demon to comply?

SCEVA SON 5
Paul's shown they're enticed.

SCEVA SON 6
By the name "Jesus Christ."

SCEVA SON 7
Maybe finally we can promise--

Again, the brother's struggle to find a rhyme.

DEMETRIUS
Well, you boys gonna help the
lady's son?

He holds up a statue of Artermis

DEMETRIUS (CONT'D)
Here.. Use the power of the goddess
Artermis... Atermis! Artermis!

He encourages the watching crowd join in.

DEMETRIUS (CONT'D)
Six Denarii. Get your idols here.
Six Denarri. Price goes up after a
miracle, so don't delay.

 TRACK 25 SONS OF SCEVA

Excited shoppers surge forward.

SONG - SONS OF SCEVA

NEW CONVERT 1
Jesus. He's real!

NEW CONVERT 2
Paul of Tarsus was telling the
truth.

The market vendor sees an opportunity.

MARKET VENDOR 1
Ten Denarii! Get your Jesus idol
here. Jesus the Nazarene. Only ten
Denarii!

MARKET VENDOR 2
Nine Denarii! Special one day sale.

The crowd aren't interested, pushing the sellers away.
AQUILA, PRISCILLA and Timothy watch.

Paul, Silas, and Luke enter.

TIMOTHY
Paul! Over here.

Timothy and Paul embrace.

TIMOTHY (CONT'D)
This is Aquila and his wife,
Priscilla. Fine, fine people. Early
converts in Rome, but had to leave
when Claudius expelled the Jews.

Sellers try to sell their wares to the group, but are
ignored.

PAUL
Rome will be ours soon friends.
Tell me, what news do you bring
from Thessalonica?

TIMOTHY
The Church is healthy for one so
young, so persecuted. They have
remained strong. Not without issues
though.

PAUL
We are spread so thin. We need a
thousand Timothies!

LUKE
Why not write them a letter?

Paul likes the idea.

 TRACK 26 WORDS

SONG - WORDS

Demetrius has been unable to sell any idols. He spots Paul.

DEMETRIUS

You know, my friends, we receive a good income from this business. And now you see how this Paul has convinced and led astray these people. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself will be robbed of her divine majesty.

MARKET VENDOR 1

Great is Artemis!

MARKET VENDOR 2

God of the Ephesians!

DEMETRIUS

Good! Good! And what about Paul and those Christians?

MARKET VENDOR 1

Kill the Christians!

MARKET VENDOR 2

Kill Paul! Kill Paul!

Some of the crowd join in the chanting. Tensions rise.

NEW CONVERT 1

Repent in the name of Jesus!

MARKET VENDOR 1

Artemis is our goddess!

NEW CONVERT 2

Christ is our savior!

The conflict grows, escalating into a full scale riot.

PAUL

I must talk with them.

AQUILA

No!

PRISCILLA

It's too dangerous.

TIMOTHY
Let the city clerk handle it.

AQUILA
Here he comes!

The CITY CLERK runs in, calms the crowd.

CITY CLERK
The Christians have neither robbed
temples nor blasphemed our goddess.
If Demetrius and his fellow
craftsmen have a grievance against
anybody, the courts are open and
there are proconsuls.

DEMETRIUS
But what about our earnings?

CITY CLERK
Press charges. Settle it in a legal
assembly. As it is, all we are in
danger of is being charged with
rioting.

The crowd grumble, but accept the logic. They begin to
disperse.

CITY CLERK (CONT'D)
Go home!

 TRACK 27 SCENE CHANGE - SONS OF SCEVA

ACT 4 / SCENE 5 : EUTYCHUS FALLS OUT OF THE WINDOW

Paul preaches to a crowded room, who have just enjoyed a
large dinner. Two TEENAGERS sit at the back.

GEHAZI
Who is this guy?

Eutyclus is asleep.

GEHAZI (CONT'D)
Eutyclus!

No response. He nudges him.

EUTYCHUS
Eh? What?

GEHAZI
Who is this guy?

EUTYCHUS
Paul. One of those Christian types.
He's a talker.

GEHAZI
Talking a lot of sense. What's his
story?

Eutyclus doesn't respond. He's fallen asleep again. Gehazi
shakes his head, turns back towards Paul. Eutyclus, fast
asleep now, falls backwards and off the stage.

GEHAZI (CONT'D)
Help! Somebody help! Eutyclus has
fallen!

The crowd panic. Luke carries Eutyclus's dead body back on
stage.

LUKE
Please, give me some space. I'm a
doctor.

The crowd stand back. Luke examines the body. Shake his head,
confirming the worst.

DISTRAUGHT WOMAN
He's dead!

GEHAZI
No! Eutyclus!

Luke looks to Paul. Paul places his hands on Eutyclus.

PAUL
Do not be alarmed. He is alive.

Eutyclus coughs, and wakes. The crowd are amazed.

EUTYCHUS
Where am I? Has he finished yet?

People laugh at the faux pas.

SONG - FAREWELL TO THE EPHESIANS

 TRACK 28 FAREWELL TO EPHESUS

Dialogue continues during song.

PAUL
Friends. Our time here is at end.
Our journey must continue.

LUKE
Where to?

PAUL
Jerusalem!

AGABUS, a prophet, steps forward. His hands are tied together.

AGABUS
But the Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind Paul and hand him over to the Gentiles.'

The crowd murmur, visibly upset.

PAUL
Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus. The Lord's will be done!

TIMOTHY
Paul, the Lord is telling me to stay here in Ephesus. There is a ministry for me here.

SILAS
And I feel led to Corinth. Aquila and Priscilla will be returning to Rome soon. I don't want their good work to go to waste.

Paul is a little upset at this news, but soon adjusts.

PAUL
My friends... To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven. Who am I to stand in the Lord's way. Compelled by the Spirit, I must go to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there.

Paul, Silas and Timothy embrace.

PAUL (CONT'D)

The Holy Spirit warns me that
prison and hardships are facing me.
However, I consider my life worth
nothing to me, if only I may
finish the race and complete the
task that the Lord Jesus has given
me - the task of testifying to the
grace of God.

Now I know that none of you among
whom I have gone about preaching
the kingdom will ever see me again.

Keep watch over yourselves and all
the flock over which the
Holy Spirit has made you overseers.
Be shepherds of the church
of God, which he bought with his
own blood.

He kneels to pray. Everyone follow his lead.

PAUL (CONT'D)

May the grace of our Lord Jesus and
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with you all.

Paul and Luke exit.

ACT 5 / SCENE 1 : PAUL'S SISTER AND NEPHEW

CARMELLA and NATAN enter, heading across the stage. They look nervous.

NATAN
When was the last time you saw
Uncle Saul mother?

CARMELLA
Not since he joined that sect. I
wanted nothing to do with him. If
people knew he was family, you
would have been in danger.

NATAN
I guess things are different now.

CARMELLA
Enough to risk seeing him again,
but do not tell anyone.

ACT 5 / SCENE 2 : RETURN TO JERUSALEM

The worshippers are excited, waiting expectantly for Paul's arrival. A messenger runs in.

MESSENGER
They're here!

JAMES
Paul has performed untold miracles
for the Lord since his last visit.
We have much to discuss.

ELDER 1
Including our proposal?

JAMES
Perhaps.

Paul and Luke enter, greeted warmly by the worshippers. James and Paul embrace.

PAUL
James, allow me to introduce Luke.

James and Luke shake hands.

JAMES
I have been impressed with your
writings. They are a blessing.

LUKE

Thank you.

PAUL

Silas has remained with the
Corinthians.

JAMES

And this Timothy I have heard so
much about?

PAUL

He stayed with the Ephesians. He
will be well used there.

JAMES

Of that there is no doubt. It seems
God is indeed using you to reach
the Gentiles.

PAUL

Praise God! Let no incertitude
remain that the Gentiles are part
of His plan.

LUKE

Amen!

PAUL

And how goes the work here?

JAMES

Thousands have believed.

ELDER 1

All zealous of the law.

James is annoyed at the interruption.

JAMES

That is a discussion for later.

ELDER 2

But they believe you teach the Jews
to turn away from Moses.

JAMES

Not now!

PAUL

It's okay. This misunderstanding
has dogged me enough.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)
Not even the Council of Jerusalem
laid it to rest. It needs
resolving. You have a suggestion?

James hesitates.

ELDER 1
(to James)
Tell him. He's asking.

James beckons 4 men forward.

JAMES
These men have taken a vow. Join
in their purification rites. Become
ceremonially clean after your
travels abroad.

Paul gathers his thoughts.

PAUL
By dying to what once bound us, we
have been released from the law so
that we serve in the new way of the
Spirit, and not in the old way of
the written code.

The Elders are unhappy. Luke makes a note in his journal.

Carmella and Natan enter. Paul rushes across, and hugs them.

CARMELLA
Oh Saul, how we've missed you!

PAUL
Is this Natan? You're a man now!

Natan looks proud.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Luke, this is my sister, Carmella.
My nephew, Natan.

LUKE
Ou'lete!

Luke's response surprises Carmella.

CARMELLA
You mix with Gentiles now, brother?

PAUL
I do.

CARMELLA
Come on Natan. We need to go.
You're not safe here.

PAUL
Carmella, please. I have so much to
tell you.

Carmella and Natan exit. Luke consoles Paul.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Is the law sinful? Certainly not!
The law is spiritual; but I am
unspiritual, sold as a slave to
sin.

Paul takes his time.

 TRACK 29 IN HARMONY AS ONE

PAUL (CONT'D)
I'll do it. I will become
ceremonially clean...

JAMES
Bless you Paul. This will make a
big difference. Come, let's
celebrate! Bring the food!

James leaves Paul and Luke alone, busy with preparations for
the meal.

LUKE
I know it's difficult. It's an
honorable thing to do.

Paul smiles.

SONG - IN HARMONY AS ONE.

ACT 5 / SCENE 3 : PAUL ARRESTED

Luke greets Paul outside the crowded temple.

LUKE

So are you purified now?

PAUL

Yes, my friend. Let's hope it
reassures my Jewish brothers and
sisters.

The religious leaders see Paul. They incite the crowd. Natan
is there, trying to hide from his uncle.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1

Fellow Israelites, help us! This is
the man who teaches against our
people, our law. He teaches against
this temple. He teaches everyone,
everywhere!

RELIGIOUS LEADER 2

He has brought Greeks into the
temple, and defied this holy place!

The crowd turns into a mob quickly, grabbing Paul. Roman
troops intervene, saving him.

PAUL

(to Troop Commander)

Please, let me speak to the people.

TROOP COMMANDER

It's your funeral.

Paul jumps up onto a table. The mob heckle him.

PAUL

Brothers and sisters, listen now to
my defense. I am a Jew. I studied
under Gamaliel, thoroughly trained
in the law of our ancestors. I was
just as zealous for God as any of
you are today. I persecuted the
followers of Christ to their death.
When the blood of the martyr
Stephen was shed, I stood there
giving my approval, guarding the
clothes of those who killed him...

The crowd settle.

PAUL (CONT'D)
As I came near Damascus, a bright light from heaven flashed around me. I fell to the ground and a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'. 'Who are you, Lord?' I asked. 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting.'

The crowd listen intently.

PAUL (CONT'D)
I was baptized. My sins washed away, in His name. Then the Lord said, 'Go! Leave Jerusalem, because the people here will not accept your testimony. I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'

The crowd react at the mention of Gentiles.

CHORUS
Gentiles! Rid the earth of him!
He's not fit to live! Flog him!

TROOP COMMANDER
(to his centurions)
Flog him! Get the truth!

The centurions grab Paul, stretch him out on the floor.

PAUL
Wait! Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?

TROOP COMMANDER
You're a Roman citizen?

PAUL
Yes Sir. Born a citizen.

The Commander motions to his troops. They lift Paul to his feet.

PAUL (CONT'D)
(to the crowd)
My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1
Strike him on the mouth!

PAUL
God will strike you, you
whitewashed wall! You sit there to
judge me according to the law, yet
you yourself violate the law by
commanding that I be struck!

RELIGIOUS LEADER 2
How dare you insult God's high
priest!

Paul realizes his error.

PAUL
Brothers, I did not realize that he
was the high priest; for it is
written: 'Do not speak evil about
the ruler of your people.' I am a
Pharisee, descended from Pharisees.
I stand on trial because of the
hope of the resurrection of the
dead.

PHARISEE 1
We find nothing wrong with this
man. What if a spirit or an angel
has spoken to him? We Pharisees
cannot condemn him for that.

The crowd splits into two camps, Sadducee and Pharisee.

SADDUCEE 1
Nonsense! There are no angels or
spirits. There is no afterlife.

PHARISEE 2
A learned man takes precedence
over an ignorant High Priest!

The two groups begin to tussle, Paul trapped in the middle.

TROOP COMMANDER
Grab him!

The troops take Paul and Luke to the barracks, upstage, as
the riot escalates.

The Sadducees chase off the Pharisees, then huddle center
stage with the religious leaders. Natan is among them.

SADDUCEE 1
It is my solemn oath to forsake
food or drink till Paul is killed.
Who is with me?

The men shout in agreement.

RELIGIOUS LEADER 1

But how?

SADDUCEE 1

Petition the commander to bring him before you. Tell him you need to ask more questions. We will make sure he never reaches you alive.

He looks each man in the eye.

SADDUCEE 1 (CONT'D)

Breath no word of this to any other. Understood?

They exit in different directions, leaving Natan alone.

He looks back at Paul. Starts to exit, but guilt overwhelms him. He walks upstage to the barracks. Paul and Luke are asleep.

NATAN

Uncle Saul? Wake up! Uncle Saul!

Paul stirs.

PAUL

Natan? What are you doing here?
It's dangerous.

The commander and two centurions enter.

TROOP COMMANDER

Stop bothering the prisoner boy.

NATAN

They're going to kill him! They've taken an oath not to eat or drink till he's dead.

TROOP COMMANDER

Who has?

PAUL

Don't worry. I'm safe in these barracks.

NATAN

They will ask for you at the Sanhedrin tomorrow, then ambush you on the way.

TROOP COMMANDER

Not on my watch.

(to his centurions)

Get ready a detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen and two hundred spearmen to go to Caesarea at nine tonight. Provide horses for Paul and Luke so that they may be taken safely to Governor Felix.

PAUL

Thank you Natan. You are a brave young man. I hope one day your mother and I make peace.

 TRACK 30 SCENE CHANGE - PAUL ARRESTED

ACT 5 / SCENE 4 : THE TRIAL

The courtroom is packed with high-ranking military officers and prominent citizens. Governor FESTUS sits on a large throne. A FANFARE.

COURTROOM OFFICIAL

Please rise for Herod Agrippa, King of the Jews.

The room rises. Agrippa and BERNICE enter, full of pomp. They approach Festus.

AGRIPPA

Governor Festus. We pay our respects. Hail Caesar.

FESTUS

Please, sit down.

They sit next to Festus.

FESTUS (CONT'D)

You've joined me on a most interesting day. It involves your people. One of the newer sects, the Nazarenes.

AGRIPPA

(sighing)

Ah yes, the Nazarenes. Declare his guilt now and save yourself some time Governor.

Festus laughs. Motions to the guards to fetch Paul.

FESTUS
My predecessor, Felix, left him a
prisoner here for two years.
Between you and I, I think he was
hoping that Paul would offer him a
bribe.

AGRIPPA
Paul?

FESTUS
Yes. Paul of Tarsus. Formerly Saul.

AGRIPPA
Sounds familiar.

FESTUS
I wanted to hold the trial in
Jerusalem, before his people, but
he refused.

BERNICE
But how could he?

FESTUS
He's a Roman.

AGRIPPA
Unusual.

FESTUS
Indeed.

AGRIPPA
What of the charges? Any merit?

FESTUS
Points of religious dispute, and
something about a dead man named
Jesus whom he claimed was alive.
Nothing deserving of death.

BERNICE
So why not release him?

FESTUS
He appealed to Caesar!

The guards bring Paul in. His hands are chained. Festus
stands.

FESTUS (CONT'D)
King Agrippa, and all who are
present with us, you see this man!
(MORE)

FESTUS (CONT'D)
The whole Jewish community has
petitioned me about him in
Jerusalem and here in Caesarea,
shouting that he ought not to live
any longer.

People mutter their agreement.

FESTUS (CONT'D)
I found he had done nothing
deserving of death, but because he
made his appeal to the Emperor I
decided to send him to Rome. But I
have nothing definite to write to
His Majesty about him. Therefore I
have brought him before all of you,
and especially before you, King
Agrippa, so that as a result of
this investigation I may have
something to write. For I think it
is unreasonable to send a prisoner
on to Rome without specifying the
charges against him.

Festus beckons Paul forward.

FESTUS (CONT'D)
You have permission to speak.

 TRACK 31 WHO ARE YOU, LORD?

SONG - WHO ARE YOU, LORD?

PAUL

So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds.

Agrippa and the courtroom listen intently.

PAUL (CONT'D)

God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen - that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles.

FESTUS

You're out of your mind Paul. Your great learning is driving you insane!

PAUL

I am not insane, most excellent Festus. What I am saying is true and reasonable. The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do.

AGRIPPA

Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?

PAUL

Short time or long - I pray to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains.

BERNICE

This man is not doing anything that
deserves death or imprisonment.

AGRIPPA

This man could have been set free
if he had not appealed to Caesar.

FESTUS

I fear for you Paul. Nero is
following Caligula's path. Your
freedom is not guaranteed. Rome may
yet be the death of you.

PAUL

But to Rome I must go.

 TRACK 32 SCENE CHANGE - TRIAL TO PERSECUTION

ACT 5/ SCENE 5: PERSECUTION

The embers of Rome. A dark room, full of nervous Christian prisoners. Nero addresses them from a safe place.

NERO

Your Christus died during the reign
of Tiberius, yet the most
mischievous superstition took hold.
Christus was alive. Christus walked
amongst us. Christus is the truth
and the light. Judaea was the first
to embrace this foolishness, yet it
spread through the empire. It is a
rot at the heart of my kingdom, and
will end tonight. Christians! You
burnt Rome, and now you must
suffer. Let the games begin!

A FANFARE, as Nero exits.

 TRACK 33 CONQUERORS

A gate upstage lifts up, revealing a coliseum. Lions ROAR,
frightening the prisoners.

Paul clammers onto a high point.

PAUL

Friends. Fear not. If God is for
us, who can be against us? Who will
bring charges against those whom
God has chosen? It is God who
justifies. Who is the one who
condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who
died – more than that, who was
raised to life – is interceding for
us.

SONG - CONQUERORS

As the songs ends, Centurions enter, herding the Christians out of the gate upstage. They walk out proud, as CHEERS and JEERS are heard.

Paul and Luke pray with as many as they can.

Eventually Paul and Luke are the only ones left. The gate closes.

A PRISON GUARD approaches.

PRISON GUARD
Nero wanted you left till last.

Something else is on his mind.

PRISON GUARD (CONT'D)
I've never seen anything like this.
Your people seem at peace.

PAUL
We are.

PRISON GUARD
People were singing out there, even
as the lions stalked them.

LUKE
We will soon be with our heavenly
father.

PAUL
And with every abomination, Nero
brings his own fall closer and
strengthens our hold on Rome.

The centurion struggles to say the next sentence.

PRISON GUARD
... can I, a Roman... a prison
guard, throwing your people to the
lions... Can I become a Christian?

PAUL
Of course. Christ Jesus died for
all our sins.

He looks around, to see if anyone else is listening.

PRISON GUARD
I want to learn more.

PAUL
We are many. Find Aquila and
Priscilla. They are here in Rome,
hidden somewhere.

Paul nods to Luke. Luke hands the centurion his scrolls. He
can't let go at first, but then relents.

LUKE
Take these. Guard them with your
life. Please.

The centurion nods.

PRISON GUARD
I'm sorry... For what is about to
happen.

PAUL
Don't be. Neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons, neither
the present nor the future, nor any
powers, neither height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from
the love of God that is in Christ
Jesus our Lord.

The guard leaves. The coliseum crowd chants for more.

LUKE
Well friend, it appears our time is
at an end.

Paul struggles to hold his emotions in check.

LUKE (CONT'D)
It's been an honor.

They embrace.

PAUL
Likewise. For I am already being
poured out like a drink offering,
and the time for my departure is
near.

The gate opens, Paul and Luke walk towards the light.

PAUL (CONT'D)	LUKE
I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.	...fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

The gate closes, the stage goes dark. Words appear on the screen, read by a narrator:

NARRATOR

Nero's seeming triumph over the Christians was short-lived.

Just three years later, the Roman Senate declared Nero a public enemy. To the sound of approaching horsemen, he took his own life.

Though still a secret, persecuted religion, Christianity continued to grow.

It took 245 more years, but in A.D. 313, Emperor Constantine - a Christian convert - issued the Edict of Milan, legalizing Christianity.

35 years later, Emperor Theodosius recognized Christianity as the official religion of the Empire.

Rome had fallen to Christ!

EPILOGUE

John Mark and Timothy walk on to the stage. John Mark carries a scroll.

TIMOTHY

Keep reading.

JOHN MARK

... I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day- and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

He pauses.

TIMOTHY

Keep going.

JOHN MARK

Do your best to come to me quickly,
for Demas, because he loved this
world, has deserted me and has gone
to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone
to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.
Only Luke is with me. Get John Mark

--

John Mark looks to Timothy, surprised. Timothy squeezes his
shoulders in encouragement.

JOHN MARK (CONT'D)

Get John Mark and bring him with
you, because he is helpful to me in
my ministry.

John Mark beams.

Barnabas and Titus walk on. Titus carries a scroll.

TITUS

He wrote it to the Corinthians.

BARNABAS

They needed it.

TITUS

Here it is. Am I not free? Am I not
an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus
our Lord? Are you not the result of
my work in the Lord? Even though I
may not be an apostle to others,
surely I am to you! For you are the
seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

Barnabas takes over.

BARNABAS

This is my defense to those who sit
in judgment on me. Don't we have
the right to food and drink? Don't
we have the right to take a
believing wife along with us, as do
the other apostles and the Lord's
brothers and Cephas. Or is it only
I and Barnabas who lack the right
to not work for a living?

A church elder reads a scroll to a small group, including
Aquila and Priscilla.

ROMAN CHURCH ELDER

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cencreae. I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them. Greet also the church that meets at their house.

A young woman walks on, carrying a Bible.

BIBLE CARRYING WOMAN

Love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice in wrong doing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes in all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

More and more people walk on, with increasingly modern dress, quoting Paul. The quotes begin to overlap.

QUOTE 1

Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me from the law of sin and death. (Romans 8:1-2)

QUOTE 2

Those who are led by the Spirit are the sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. (Romans 8:14-15)

QUOTE 3

If God is for us, who can be against us?

(MORE)

QUOTE 3 (CONT'D)

He who did not spare his own Son,
but gave him up for us all - how
will he not also, along with him,
graciously give us all things?
(Romans 8:31-32)

QUOTE 4

We do not preach ourselves, but
Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves
as your servants for Jesus' sake.
(2 Corinthians 4:5)

QUOTE 5

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new
creation; the old has gone, the new
has come! (2 Corinthians 5:17)

QUOTE 6

But the Lord said to me: 'My grace
is sufficient for you, for my power
is made perfect in weakness.'
Therefore I will boast all the more
gladly about my weaknesses, so that
Christ's power may rest on me...
For when I am weak, then I am
strong. (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

QUOTE 7

Praise be to the God and Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ, who has
blessed us in the heavenly realms
with every spiritual blessing in
Christ. (Ephesians 1:3)

QUOTE 8

Now to him who is able to do
immeasurably more than all we ask
or imagine, according to his power
that is at work within us, to him
be glory in the church and in
Christ Jesus throughout all
generations, for ever and ever!
Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

 TRACK 34 FINALE

QUOTE 9

I want to know Christ and the power
of his resurrection and the
fellowship of sharing in his
sufferings, becoming like him in
his death, and so, somehow, to
attain to the resurrection from the
dead (Philippians 3:10-11)

QUOTE 10

Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 3:13-14)

QUOTE 11

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ... The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything ... present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:4-7)

QUOTE 12

More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

QUOTE 13

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

QUOTE 14

Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

This builds to a cacophony of noise. Then... in unison:

ALL

Who shall separate us from the love
of Christ? Shall trouble or
hardship or persecution or famine
or nakedness or danger or sword?
No, in all these things we are more
than conquerors through him who
loved us. For I am convinced that
neither death nor life, neither
angels nor demons, neither the
present nor the future, nor any
powers, neither height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation,
will be able to separate us from
the love of God that is in Christ
Jesus our Lord.

SONG - FINALE