

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**