

ROCK STAR JESUS

by

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EXT. LOS ANGELES STREET - DAY

With a nylon gig bag containing an electric guitar strapped across his back, 33-year-old JESUS CHRIST walks along the sidewalk to a point opposite the YHWH café and music venue on the other side of the street.

He has long, hippie-like hair, a beard, and wears (always) a biblical robe and sandals.

He surveys the club signage, then takes a step off the curb onto the street, jaywalking into the path of an approaching taxicab.

The cab swerves to avoid him, braking hard and screeching to a halt.

TAXI DRIVER

Watch where you're goin', ya dumb hippie!

As the cab drives away, the driver sticks a middle finger out of the window.

Jesus holds up his open hand after the vehicle, unperturbed.

JESUS

Go in peace.

He crosses the street, up to the front doors of the café, reading a sign in the window:

"Open Stage Tonight!"

INT. YHWH CAFE

Jesus enters through the front doors, and walks past the bar and a few tables into the

BACK ROOM

Several dozen mostly Jewish young musicians, including the long-haired PETER (late-20s) sit at tables with their drinks and food, in the packed room.

A mic stand, drum kit, and keyboard (on a stand) are already set up on the low stage, for whoever wants to use them.

In the far corner, off stage right, are a line of guitars in their cases/bags, in single file.

Off stage-left, LORI (mid-20s) adjusts the knobs on the rack-mounted mixer feeding into the house PA system.

Jesus walks up to her.

JESUS
Where do I sign up?

BACK ROOM - LATER

An orthodox Jewish singer (CHAIM) and his band perform, all in Hasidic garb, singing with stereotypical accent.

CHAIM
(singing)
Jehovah made our spinning planet
Six hundred thirteen commandments
Mitzvah and the Torah please us
We love God, but we don't love
Jesus

Jesus sits by himself in the otherwise packed room, as the band continues playing.

JESUS
(gazing heavenward)
Father, forgive them, for they know
not what they do.

A waitress (DIANE) walks over to Jesus.

DIANE
Can I get you anything?

JESUS
Just a glass of red wine. And some
crackers.

Diane exits.

The band plays the final chorus of their song:

CHAIM & BAND
(singing)
We love God, but we don't love
Jesus
We love God, but we don't love
Jesus
We love God, we love God
Yeah, we love God
But we don't love Jesus

Jesus finally loses his temper.

JESUS
(to the band)
Blasphemers! Spawn of Satan! You'll
burn in hell!

The room collectively turns to look at him, aghast.

JESUS
Sorry, but it's true.

DISSOLVE TO:

BACK ROOM - LATER

It is around midnight, and only half a dozen patrons
(including Peter) remain at their tables.

A scantily-clad girl band, dressed in purple and scarlet,
perform a spoken-word piece, with MARGOT acting out the words
of Revelation 17 over musical backing.

MARGOT
And upon her forehead was a name
written: Mystery
Babylon the Great
The Mother of Harlots and
Abominations of the Earth

Mother of Harlots and
Abominations of the Earth!

The girls leave the stage to sparse applause, and Lori steps
up to the microphone, as the emcee.

LORI
Let's hear it for The Whores of
Babylon.

The audience claps politely.

LORI
We've got one more act tonight.
(she looks at her
handwritten signup list)
Jesus Christ?

Jesus finishes the last of his red wine, and rises from his
chair.

He walks to the corner of the room, unzips his gig bag...

LORI
You really look the part.

...and pulls his electric guitar out: A blood-red Stratocaster.

JESUS
I am the part.

He steps onto the stage as Lori steps off.

He straps the guitar over his shoulder, and plugs a 1/4-inch cord into the instrument.

JESUS
Could I get a 120 millisecond predelay into the reverb?

LORI
Uh, sure.

She adjusts the knobs on the PA.

JESUS
Bless you.

He plucks a test note, then steps up to the mic, and waits for the room to fall silent.

JESUS
This is a song about salvation.

He proceeds to riff a Hendrix-worthy instrumental version of the first verse of "Amazing Grace."

Around the room, jaws drop to the floor.

He continues playing for the second verse, now singing along:

JESUS
Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me

From his table (without a mic), Peter joins in:

JESUS & PETER
(singing)
I once was lost, but now am found
Was blind, but now I see

The rest of the audience joins in, still sitting raptly at their tables, for the third verse:

ALL
(singing)
'Twas grace that taught my heart to
fear
(MORE)

ALL (CONT'D)

And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

JESUS

(singing)

The hour I first believed

He finishes the song with Hendrix-worthy, screeching feedback.

Then he bows his head and closes his eyes, in prayer.

JESUS

(softly)

Thank you, Father.

He unplugs his guitar, and steps off the stage.

Too stunned to clap, Lori bursts into tears, covering her mouth with her hands.

The blown-away audience composes themselves and rises to their feet, shouting their approval while giving Jesus a standing ovation.

As Jesus puts his guitar back into its gig bag in the corner, Peter strides over to him, awestruck, extending his hand, to shake.

Jesus reciprocates, smiling peacefully.

PETER

Dude, that was righteous. I've never heard anyone play like that. You're a ... a ... guitar god!

JESUS

I'm the Son of God.

He zips up the gig bag.

PETER

(nervously)

We should jam together ... sometime. If you think I'm good enough. Where do you live?

JESUS

The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.

PETER
You don't have a place to stay? You
can crash with me, man! Anytime!

JESUS
Peter.
(smiles)
On thee I shall build my rock band.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Peter opens the front door from outside, and enters with
Jesus--both of them carrying their guitars.

PETER
You can sleep in my bed, if you
want.

JESUS
No! God hates fags!

They walk into the

LIVING ROOM

PETER
I meant, I'll take the couch.
Savior.

JESUS
Oh. That's different. No, I'm fine
here. It reminds me of my manger. I
sleep better when I'm not too
comfortable. And with cattle
lowing.

PETER
I could put on "Pet Sounds."

JESUS
(smiles)
Wouldn't that be nice.

EXT. PETER'S HOUSE - MORNING

An unseen rooster crows, at the crack of dawn.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/KITCHEN

At the breakfast table, Peter pours two cups of coffee, with toast and jam already on the table.

Jesus wanders in from the living room in his robe, bleary-eyed and yawning.

JESUS

I haven't been up this early since
I rose from the grave.

He slumps down in a chair at the table, taking a sip of coffee.

PETER

I need to get some stuff from my
dad's place before he goes off to
work. For the band.

He sits down across from Jesus.

JESUS

My Father's in heaven.

(beat)

I'll probably pick up some
groceries later. You like loaves
and fishes?

PETER

Sure.

JESUS

And there's a record store I want
to check out. It should be open in
four or five
(he glances at the kitchen
clock)
hours.

EXT. REVELATIONS RECORD STORE - DAY

The morning sun rises in the smoggy Los Angeles sky.

A city bus stops near the Revelations Record Store, and Jesus gets off.

He walks up to the record store entrance.

In the window is a large poster advertising the latest U2 album: "Lamps of Fire."

JESUS
(derisively)
Bono.

He pauses, glancing at an adjacent flyer in the window:

"World's Second-Greatest Bass Player Wants to Join Band.
Inquire Within."

Jesus enters the shop.

INT. REVELATIONS RECORD STORE

From the open door of the back office come the sounds of a virtuosic fretless bass solo.

Behind the sales counter, the teenaged clerk, KEITH, hands a bag with a vinyl record to an equally young customer (MELISSA).

KEITH
Enjoy your Theta Band.

MELISSA
I will.

She exits, as Jesus surveys the mix of vinyl and CDs, listening to the bass solo from the office.

JESUS
(to Keith)
Is that Jaco? Pastorius?

The solo hits a bum note. A voice comes from the office:

JOHN (O.S.)
Shoot!

KEITH
He thinks he is, yeah.

The virtuosic solo resumes.

Intrigued, Jesus walks toward the

BACK OFFICE

JOHN (late-30s), the store's broad-shouldered, long-haired owner, plays a fretless electric bass, plugged into a small Fender amp.

He wears dark sunglasses (always), jeans and sandals, and continues playing as they converse.

JESUS
Where did you learn to play like
that?

JOHN
From Jaco.

JESUS
You met him?

John slips into playing simple eighth notes, providing a solid rhythm track for their conversation.

JOHN
(shakes his head)
Picking notes off vinyl. Three
seconds into his first song, I knew
he was the best bass player in the
world. I figured maybe I could be
second-best.

He adds a fill, in the solo.

JESUS
I'm Jesus. The Christ.

John nods, and continues playing simple eighth notes.

JOHN
John. The Bassist.

JESUS
I'm getting a band together. Jesus
& the Apostles.

JOHN
(nods)
Solid.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/DINING ROOM - DAY

Peter (now wearing a robe and sandals, always) puts a bottle of wine on the dinner table, with places for two already set.

The TV shows a basketball game between the UCLA Bruins and Stanford Cardinal teams.

Jesus and John (carrying his bass in a hard-shell case) enter from the front door.

JESUS

(to Peter)

Better set another place. I found our bassist.

(to John)

I'll show you our gear. In the basement.

PETER

Uh, I didn't actually cook. I figured we'd grab some take-out?

JESUS

Good idea. You guys start jamming, I'll hit up Neptune's for filet-o-fish. Back in a jiff.

INT. NEPTUNE'S FISH-O-RAMA - DAY

The long-haired, teenaged ANDREW (with nametag) stands behind the order counter, conversing animatedly with his friend and co-worker SIMON.

Both of them wear polyester uniforms, and are focused on each other to the exclusion of any customers.

ANDREW

Phil Collins? In your top five? His songs were all just synth pads and drum machines.

SIMON

No way, man. Before he went all poppy, Collins could play.

Jesus enters the near-empty fast-food restaurant from outside, and walks up to the counter to order.

SIMON

(to Andrew)

I better get back to the fryer.

He vocalizes the classic tom fill from Phil Collins' "In the Air Tonight," air-drumming along to it with his hands as he exits to the kitchen.

Andrew recites his canned opening, without yet looking at the new customer:

ANDREW

Welcome to Neptune's. Can I take your ... order?

His jaw drops, at the sight of Jesus.

JESUS
I'll have three filet-o-fish with
cole slaw, a Coke, two Sprites....

A crowd of boisterous university-age KIDS bursts in through
the front doors, wearing UCLA Bruins' colors, and chanting:

CROWD
We're number one! Stanford sucks!
We're number one! Stanford sucks!

ANDREW
Crap, game must have just got out.
Keanu didn't see this coming?
(over his shoulder)
Simon: How much food do we have
left?

SIMON
(checking the freezer and
shelves)
After this order, just two
fishsticks ... and five sesame seed
buns.

JESUS
I can help. Give me an apron.

ANDREW
How can you help?

JESUS
Trust me. Get Simon to help you
take orders.

ANDREW
Okay, you got it, dude. Let's rock!

INT. NEPTUNE'S FISH-O-RAMA - LATER

Orders fly out of the kitchen, being delivered to the endless
lines of customers in record time.

SIMON
Where is all this food coming from?

Andrew glances back at Jesus in the kitchen.

ANDREW
God only knows.

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/BASEMENT

Surrounded by amps, plus an unattended synth and a small drum kit, Peter and John jam on a killer rock riff, backed by a drum machine, all turned up loud.

INT. NEPTUNE'S FISH-O-RAMA - LATER

Andrew and Simon deliver orders to the last of the customers.

ANDREW
Have a Fish-O-Rama day.

SIMON
Hari Fish-O-Rama.

He collapses against Andrew and the back counters, exhausted.

ANDREW
How many filet-o-fish did we serve?

SIMON
Thousands, man. We are filet-o-fishermen.

Jesus emerges from the kitchen, carrying three filled takeout bags.

JESUS
You guys want to jam tonight?

SIMON
Yeah!

ANDREW
We'd love to!

JESUS
Follow me, and I will make you
filet-o-fishers of men.

Simon and Andrew jump up, energized.

JESUS
Could you grab me a Coke and two
Sprites?

INT. PETER'S HOUSE/BASEMENT - NIGHT

Peter and John rock on.

Jesus comes down the stairs with his three takeout bags, followed by Andrew and Simon carrying the drinks.

Peter stops playing; John briefly continues playing simple eighth notes.

PETER
Jesus, man, how long were you gone?

He and John put down their guitars.

JESUS
(checking with Andrew and
Simon)
Three hours?
(to Peter and John)
You guys still hungry?

Peter and John roar and lunge at the bags, as Jesus holds them behind his back, laughing.

JESUS
Who's your Savior?

PETER
You are.

JESUS
Who's the Good Shepherd?

PETER, JOHN, SIMON & ANDREW
You are!

Jesus hands Peter and John their bags.

JESUS
Good sheep.

He tousles their hair.

EXT. MONEYLENDERS BANK - DAY

Customers enter and exit through the front doors.

Jesus follows an unrelated woman in.

INT. MONEYLENDERS BANK/LOAN OFFICE

The room has a half-height bookcase, two comfy chairs, and a couple of dwarf tree-like houseplants.

Behind the desk sits the loan officer, in his mid-thirties, with a nameplate on his desk: JUDAS I. SCARIOT.

Jesus enters as the British Judas (in a suit) rises to meet him, and shake hands.

JUDAS

Good afternoon, Mr. Christ. Or may I call you Jesus?

JESUS

Jesus, is fine.

They both sit down.

JUDAS

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be"--that's not in the Bible, is it?

JESUS

No. It's Shakespeare.

JUDAS

Ah, good. Though I suppose if it was in the Bible, you could just take the money and then forgive me, and yourself. No harm, no foul, if the Ref doesn't see it, right? So, what can Moneylenders Bank do for you today?

JESUS

I need a loan to buy a van, and shoot a music video.

JUDAS

I see. And what do you have for collateral?

JESUS

God is my collateral.

JUDAS

Er, right. Anything more ... tangible? Say, a home, or a car?

JESUS

No.

JUDAS

But you do have a job.

JUDAS

I'm the Savior of Mankind. And a musician. The van is for touring.

JUDAS

A musician.

JESUS

Do you play?

JUDAS

Me? No. I used to manage a band, back in college. Matthew and the Taxmen? They were pretty big in Liverpool. What are your annual earnings, approximately?

JESUS

I don't have any, yet. But as soon as we have a hit song....

JUDAS

I see. I'm sorry, Jesus, but I can't approve this loan.

JESUS

But it's for a good cause. We just want to save as many souls as we can before the end of the world.

JUDAS

I know, and it breaks my heart to think of all the children who'll burn in hell, just because I couldn't shake loose thirty or forty pieces of silver. But rules are rules. If you were a minority, I might be able to sneak it through. But since you're white--

JESUS

I'm Jewish.

JUDAS

Well, that's as good as white, isn't it? Sometimes better.

Jesus rises from his chair, fuming.

JESUS

What is it with you ... moneylenders? If a guy already has enough, you'll trip over yourselves to give him more.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

But when someone really needs it,
you're ... tighter than a thirteen-
year-old girl in Catholic school!

JUDAS

Please, Jesus. There's no call for
that sort of--

JESUS

Verily, I say unto you: My house
shall be called the house of
prayer...

JUDAS

This isn't your--

JESUS

...but ye have made it a den of
thieves!

JUDAS

I have to ask you to leave, before
I call the--

Jesus snarls, and tips over the bookcase.

He growls, and topples one of the plants.

JUDAS

Jesus, please! That's no way for
the Son of God to--

Jesus roars, grabs the edge of Judas's desk and tries
mightily to overturn it, but it won't budge.

He puts his hand on his strained lower back, in pain.

JESUS

Mother of God that desk is solid.

JUDAS

Do you require a physician?

JESUS

(straightening up
awkwardly)
No, I'll heal myself.

JUDAS

Maybe there's a way to make this
work.

INT. L.A. CLUB/STAGE - NIGHT

The band does their sound check, at a small club in L.A.

All of them now wear robes and sandals (always), as the band uniform.

PETER

You know where I've always wanted to visit? The Genesis Museum, in Utah. To see all the stuff you created.

JESUS

Like what?

PETER

You know, the Earth, and the firmament.

JESUS

I didn't create that. My Father did. Four thousand years before I was born.

PETER

Oh. How about the dinosaurs?

JESUS

That was Him too.

PETER

Eve from Adam's rib?

JESUS

Nope. The Lord God made them all.

PETER

But all things were made through you.

JESUS

In my divine nature. Not in the flesh. Anyway, God could have done it all without me. Sometimes I think he just wanted to have someone to blame if things went wrong.

PETER

Oh. You died for our sins, though.

JESUS
Somebody had to. It's not like I
volunteered.

Judas enters (now likewise wearing a robe and sandals),
talking on his cell phone.

JUDAS
(into the phone)
Okay, we'll be there.

He hangs up the phone.

JUDAS
I've got you booked for December
23rd at the The Other Cheek in San
Francisco, and Christmas Day in
Seattle, at The Frankincense &
Myrrh.

JESUS
I hate it when I have to work on my
birthday.

JUDAS
There'll be A&R blokes there.

JESUS
Who?

JUDAS
A fellow who used to work at Sub
Pop, before he found Je--before he
found you. He's looking for a
"Christian Nirvana." The band, not
the heathen ... mental place.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A second-hand van follows the highway into San Francisco.

INT. VAN (MOVING)

Peter drives, with Jesus in the passenger seat.

PETER
So what does your Father think
about you being a musician?

Jesus takes a deep breath.

JESUS
He created the universe in six
days. I've never even--

PETER
Had a real job?

JESUS
In two lives.

PETER
My dad's a Wall Street lawyer. He
sent me to Harvard, made me a
junior partner, wanted to groom me
to take over the firm. All I had to
do was sell my soul ... to the
highest bidder.

JESUS
Soul for hire.

PETER
(nods, getting the musical
reference)
Elvis Costello. There's more wisdom
in music than anywhere.

JESUS
Except the Bible.

PETER
(nods)
You're the Savior of Mankind. Any
father would be thrilled beyond
belief to have a Son like you. But
if you still need to prove yourself
to Him, it's easy.

JESUS
How?

PETER
By putting on the biggest show
ever. Bigger than Madonna. Bigger
than the Stones' "retirement" tour.
Bigger than Bono.

JESUS
(beat)
Easy for you to say.

They drive onto the Golden Gate Bridge.

JESUS

San Francisco. How could a city named for Saint Francis of Assisi become such a mecca for godless perverts, drug addicts, and women of loose morals? Harvey Milk. Jerry Garcia. And Nancy Pelosi.

He shudders.

EXT. THE OTHER CHEEK/REAR - DAY

The van pulls into the alleyway behind the music venue, and stops.

Jesus and the apostles get out, and begin unloading their equipment from the rear of the van.

JESUS

Can you guys handle sound-check without me? I've got a few souls to save.

JUDAS

Shouldn't you focus on the gig? We've got a lot of money riding on--

PETER

(to Jesus)
Do it, man. We'll be okay.

They bump fists.

Jesus turns and walks away--a man on a mission.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

Jesus walks up the steep sidewalk outside the legendary Victorian house at 710 Ashbury Street in San Francisco--the residence of the Grateful Dead in the '60s.

JESUS

There it is: The house of the Grateful Dead. The epicenter of the decline in American family values.

He clasps his hands and bows his head, in prayer.

JESUS

Heavenly Father, cleanse this den of immorality. Expel its heathen hippie demons, for Thy glory. Amen.

A late-teenaged, retro hippie boy and girl (THOMAS and CRYSTAL) drift out of the house's front door, their arms around each other.

They step unsteadily down the first-storey stairs to the street, staring in wonder at the swirling world around them, tripping on acid.

CRYSTAL

The stairs are melting, Tommy.

THOMAS

I know. This is so groovy. Like surfing on butterscotch ripples.

They open the gate at the foot of the stairs, and walk up to Jesus, mouths agape.

THOMAS

(to Crystal)

I told you this was prime acid. I'm having a vision of Jesus right now.

CRYSTAL

Me too.

THOMAS

Far out! What should we ask him?

CRYSTAL

Let's tell him we love him.

THOMAS & CRYSTAL

We love you, Jesus!

CRYSTAL

(touching Jesus, with wonder)

Love! Hippie Jesus!

THOMAS

You're a great moral teacher, dude. We love what you say about--

JESUS

(violently)

Drugs are evil! Marijuana is the Sweet Leaf of Satan! LSD is the gateway to hell!

THOMAS

Whoa, dude! Back up. Think about it. If it wasn't for drugs, we wouldn't be seeing you.

CRYSTAL
(confused beat; to Jesus)
Yeah.

JESUS
Yes you would. I'm as real as you
are! It's only because you're on
drugs that you think I'm not real!

Thomas and Crystal look at each other.

Thomas steps forward and pokes his fingers into Jesus's side,
surprised to find him solid.

THOMAS
Dude, that is deep.

CRYSTAL
Like Tommy was saying, you're a
great--

Jesus grabs her by the shoulders, pushing her backward.

JESUS
Moral teacher? I died for your
sins! In agony! I begged my Father
to rescue me, but he just left me
hanging there! All so you might not
perish, but have everlasting life!

CRYSTAL
(to Thomas, fearful)
I don't want to perish.

She clings to him, tightly.

THOMAS
Me neither.
(to Jesus)
Alright, dude: You win.

JESUS
Come to my show tonight, at The
Other Cheek. I've got a miracle or
two planned.

He turns to walk away.

THOMAS
Uh, Jesus?

Jesus stops and turns back to face them.

THOMAS

Me and Crystal only came down here 'cause we thought you were Hippie Jesus. But you're not. You're, like, Pat-Robertson Jesus. You scared us straight, man.

JESUS

Pat's a good friend of mine. I talk with him every day.

Thomas and Crystal nod, in understanding.

THOMAS

Far out.

INT. THE OTHER CHEEK/AUDIENCE - NIGHT

A packed house, including Thomas and Crystal, waits expectantly.

Thomas holds a videocamera, preparing to record the show.

A group of ten obviously gay young men and women (incl. RICKY and LANCE) near the stage talk amongst themselves, behind a front-row of adoring, excited teenage girls.

LANCE

How's the Big Apple treating you, Ricky?

RICKY

Writing ad copy sucks.

Jesus walks onstage, followed by the rest of the band, all in their long hair, robes, and sandals.

RICKY

Omigod. This is fabulous. Thirty A.D. retro. Ha-ha!

LANCE

The drummer's cute.

The band settles at their instruments, as Jesus takes the center mic.

JESUS

Good evening, San Francisco. Or as my Father in heaven calls it, Sodom and Gomorrah.

The crowd laughs and cheers, taking it all as a put-on.

JESUS
This song is called, "God Hates
Fags."

The band launches into a '70s Bowie-esque number, as the audience dances along.

JESUS
(singing)
I'm the leper Messiah
Believe it, for sure
I can heal your disease
I can give you the cure

How long will you be
Such fecal man-whores?
Not using your holes
For what God made them for

God hates fags
Hates the little fags
Hates the little fags

If a man loves a man
Like Jaggar loved Bowie
He shall be killed
All the stones you can throw

If a man sleeps around
Like Bowie and Jag, man
He better be straight
Otherwise he's a fag, and

God hates fags
Hates the little fags
Hates the little fags

God hates faggots
And God hates faggots
God hates the little faggots

The smiles fade from the faces of the gay group.

JESUS
(singing)
Better to die
From mutilation
Than to commit an
Abomination

Don't want to suffer
Eternal damnation
Cut off thy hand
Do an amputation
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

God hates fags
Hates the little fags
Hates the little fags

RICKY

(to Lance)
I don't think they're being ironic.

JESUS

(singing)
God hates fags
Hates the little fags
Hates the little fags

Ricky leads the group of gays in an angry rush toward the stage, pushing aside the girls in front of them, and climbing up onto the stage as the band continues playing.

JESUS

(singing)
God hates faggots
And God hates faggots
God hates the little faggots

As each gay person climbs up, Jesus lays his opened palm on the person's forehead, and the assailant staggers backward, as if healed by a televangelist.

JESUS

Thou art healed! Thou art healed!

He launches into a guitar solo.

Each healed person gets up off the floor, looks with repulsion at the clothes he's wearing, and discards the "gayest" of their jackets, hats, and jewelry.

The former gays start flirting with, and touching, the opposite-sex patrons around them, behaving with stereotypical macho/femininity.

INT. THE OTHER CHEEK/DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Judas stands by the open door, as the band (incl. Thomas and Crystal) wolfs down sandwiches after the show.

JESUS

(to Peter)
I don't hate fags: God does. He's the One who makes the rules. I came here not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it.

RICKY (O.S.)

Let me in! I have to thank him!

Ricky pushes his way past Judas into the dressing room, and strides up to Jesus.

RICKY

I'm Ricky. One of the gays you healed.

He gets down on his knees, with his head bowed.

JESUS

Were not all ten cleansed of their disease? Where are the other nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this....

RICKY

Copywriter. For Rolling Stone.

JESUS

Rise, and, um ... magazine? The Rolling Stone?

Ricky gets back up onto his feet.

RICKY

I'm gonna tell everyone at the office about you. And your music! Thank you, Messiah!

He gives Jesus an awkward "man hug."

RICKY

I can't wait to see what it's like to have sex with chicks.

Crystal walks by.

RICKY

(macho)

Hey.

(to Jesus)

Oh, is she with you?

THOMAS

Dude, she's my wife!

JUDAS

(to All)

Alright, let's get going, chaps. Time is money.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

Jesus and the apostles (with Judas driving) cross the I-5 Interstate Bridge into Seattle.

INT. VAN (MOVING)

Jesus surveys the passing cityscape, from the passenger seat.

JESUS
Seattle. How could a city named
after an eloquent, ecologically
conscious Indian chief have become
so ... grungy.

Peter leans forward, from the middle seat.

PETER
Jesus, we all chipped in and got
you something, for your birthday.
And Christmas.

He hands Jesus a small, gift-wrapped package.

JESUS
It is more blessed to give than to
receive. Except at Christmas.

Jesus opens the small box, and lifts out a gold cross on a chain.

JESUS
A crucifix. To remind me of my ...
death, on the Cross. When my Father
forsaked....

PETER
It's 24-karat gold.

THOMAS
Put it on, man.

Jesus reluctantly puts the jewelry on, showing a brave
"present face."

JESUS
It's very ... nice.

INT. ROLLING STONE HEADQUARTERS/NICK'S OFFICE - DAY

Rock journalist NICK MARSHALL (30s) sits at his desk, drinking scotch and reading Christopher Hitchens's book, "god is Not Great."

Ricky pokes his head into the office.

RICKY

I'm not gay anymore! Jesus healed me! From now on, call me "Rick."
(he sees Nick's book)
You'll burn in hell for reading that. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Nick raises an eyebrow.

Ricky walks down the hallway, shouting out to other co-workers.

RICKY (O.S.)

I'm not gay! Jesus healed me!

INT. THE FRANKINCENSE & MYRRH/STAGE - NIGHT

Onstage, Jesus and the band strike the last chords from a rock arrangement of "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho."

The cheers from the audience die down, as Jesus and the band prepare for the next song in their set.

The audience includes an A&R man, DAVID CHAPMAN (mid-20s).

JESUS

This next song is about the War On Christmas.

The band starts playing a grunge-influenced tune.

JESUS

(singing)

The snow is crisp and even
Full of tinkling
Silver bells
But you can't say
"Merry Christmas"
It might offend the
Infidels

War on Christmas
Yeah, war is hell

I'm the reason for the season
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

It's not for reindeer
Or Santa Claus
You take the Christ
Out of Christmas
You're left with Hanukkah
Or Kwanzaa

War on Christmas
Is war against God

He launches into a blistering lead-guitar solo.

David watches the show with excitement in his eyes, knowing he's just discovered the Next Big Thing.

INT. THE FRANKINCENSE & MYRRH/BACKSTAGE

The band packs up their gear after the show.

Thomas checks an Internet page on his cell phone.

THOMAS

Ten million views on YouTube, for
"God Hates Fags." Awesome.

Judas and David enter.

JUDAS

(to David)
Right this way.
(to Jesus)
I'd like you to meet David Chapman,
from Three Magi Records.

David hands Jesus a business card with the Star-of-the-East-based 3Magi logo and contact info.

DAVID

Blown away by your show, Jesus.
Just enraptured. Heavenly love and
forgiveness, combined with a
paralyzing fear of eternal
damnation. It makes all that teen
angst and alienation from the '90s
look like chicken feed.

JESUS

It's great to meet someone who
really gets my message.

DAVID

I'll cut straight to the chase: We want Jesus & the Apostles signed to 3Magi. And we'd like to get you into a studio ASAP. Do you have any thoughts on an album title, or theme?

JESUS

Hmm.

He strokes his beard, then his hand starts absentmindedly playing with the crucifix hanging around his neck.

He grips the jewelry more tightly, as the thought comes to him.

He looks David straight in the eye:

JESUS

The Cross.

(beat)

The Messiah returns to Earth, for his Second Coming. Only this time, instead of a carpenter, he's a rock star. Bigger than Bono. At his final show, with the whole world watching, all True Believers are raptured into heaven, and the heathens are left behind, to be ruled by the Antichrist. It's like "Jesus Christ Superstar" meets--

DAVID

The Osbournes?

JESUS

I was going to say "The Wall." With some early Sabbath thrown in.

DAVID

It doesn't get more evil than that.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - DAY

Jesus & the Apostles (i.e., Peter, John, Simon, and Andrew) play together live on the studio floor, recording the guide tracks for "Just a Nail in the Cross."

JESUS

(singing)

A rugged cross stood on a hill
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

The place where the Messiah had
been
Persecuted, mutilated, killed

They placed a crown of thorns upon
His bloodied, sacred head
Treat him like a criminal
And cursed the ground
Where he bled

Then they pounded
One more nail in the Cross
All in all they were
All just nails in the Cross

They let the final notes ring out.

JESUS

Let's hear how that sounds.

He leads the band into the

CONTROL ROOM

The recording engineer, SCOTT (late-20s), sits at the
console, adjusting knobs to dial in EQ, compression, and
reverb on the tracks.

Jesus and the band gather around him.

Scott starts the playback of the recorded song.

Hearing the rough mix, the band members nod at each other
with satisfaction.

JESUS

Praise God.

The discrete echoes of the "Cross" (sung in the last line)
fade.

Judas enters from the hallway.

JUDAS

When will the CDs be ready? I want
to schedule the press conference.

INT. HOTEL/PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Jesus, Peter, John, and Judas sit at a table with mics.

Simon and Andrew hang around the front of the room, in their robes and sandals, with David.

A few local journalists (SEAN, CAM, PATTI, and a couple of OTHERS) sit in folding chairs, facing the front.

JUDAS

On behalf of David Chapman, 3Magi Records, and myself, I'd like to welcome you to the "The Cross."

(he holds up a copy of the CD)

The first album by Jesus & the Apostles. The nationwide Second Coming tour kicks off tomorrow, and it all ends on May 21st, at the New Jerusalem Stadium in New York City. We'll now take questions from the press.

JESUS

(hushed, away from his mic, to Peter and John)

Let's give 'em something to write about.

He winks at them.

SEAN

Messiah: After two thousand years of moral decay following your crucifixion, how did you find America?

JESUS

Turn left at Israel.

The press audience laughs.

CAM

What do you think of the criticism that you're not very good?

JESUS

There is none good, but God.

The audience chuckles.

PATTI

Which of you is really bald?

PETER

We're all bald. And I'm deaf, dumb, and blind.

The audience laughs.

JESUS
He was, before I healed him. Now
he's just bald.

The audience laughs.

PATTI
Does all the adulation from teenage
girls affect you?

PETER
We're saving ourselves for
marriage.

The audience laughs.

CAM
Who in the world would the Apostles
like to meet more than anyone else?

JOHN
The Pope.

The audience laughs.

SEAN
Do you plan to record any anti-
atheism songs?

JESUS
All our songs are anti-atheism.

The audience laughs.

CAM
What about this campaign by the New
Atheists to stamp out religion?

JESUS
We're starting a campaign to stamp
out New Atheists.

The audience laughs.

PATTI
Christianity has conquered five
continents. What do you want to do
next?

Jesus and Peter glance at each other.

JESUS & PETER
Conquer six.

The audience laughs.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

David walks Jesus and the apostles to their van.

DAVID
That was a good start. But you've
got a long ... winding road ahead
of you.

They stop at the van.

PETER
I already miss my parents.

JESUS
He who loves father or mother more
than Me is not worthy of Me.

PETER
I had never taken that--

JESUS
Literally? Why not? What did you
think it meant?

They get into the van.

EXT. PORTLAND STREET - DAY

Thomas and Crystal pull over to the curb and get out of their
rented compact car.

Doing on-the-ground marketing, they tape up posters on
lampposts, advertising the band's next gig at the Portland
Cement Room.

A teenaged kid (KURT) walks up to read the poster.

KURT
Jesus & the Apostles? Who're they?

THOMAS
The next Beatles, dude. Out of L.A.

CRYSTAL

We used to be Deadheads, 'til we
saw Jesus on an acid trip. Now
we're Eternal Lifeheads.

INT. PORTLAND CEMENT ROOM - NIGHT

Jesus & the Apostles play the last chorus of "Sheep Will
Follow."

JESUS

(singing)

Where I lead, where I lead
Where I lead, where I lead
Sheep will follow

Where I lead, where I lead
Where I lead, where I lead
You sheep will follow

You, too, will follow
You, too, will follow

The packed audience cheers as the song ends.

Judas shouts above the noise to the thirty-something artist-
patron (DAN) beside him.

JUDAS

It's great to think of all the
souls we're saving. And the gold
records.

Dan nods.

JESUS

(into the onstage mic)

We'd like to close with the first
single from our new album, "The
Cross." It's called, "The Bible
Says It."

The band begins playing an Eagles-like rhythm (i.e., "Take It
Easy," sans banjo, meets Boston's "Peace of Mind"), with
Peter strumming an acoustic guitar to Jesus's electric.

JESUS

(singing)

Deep down in the Bible Belt
Where it gets so hot
That your brain can melt

They believe what the Bible tells
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

If you don't believe
Then you'll burn in hell

They believe the Red Sea part
They believe in Noah
They believe in the Ark

They believe the Bible tales
They believe in Jonah
They believe in the whale

Just because

JESUS, PETER & JOHN

(singing)

The Bible says it
They believe it
And that settles it

JESUS

(singing)

In the heart of Houston, Texas
They believe six Biblical things
Before breakfast

They believe the sun stood still
They believe George Bush
Was doin' God's will

They believe that snakes can talk
And the blind can see
And the lame can walk

They believe in heav'n above
They believe in God
And that God is love

And if you ask them why
They'll look you in the eye

Sayin'

JESUS, PETER & JOHN

(singing)

The Bible says it
I believe it
And that settles it

The song's musical key modulates, for the bridge:

JESUS

(singing)

We need the Bible
Like sheep need wool
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

It's divinely inspired
And infallible

We need the Bible
Like sheep need rain
To wash their wool
'Til they're clean again

Jesus performs a guitar solo over the backing music in the middle eight bars, leading the song into the third verse.

JESUS

(singing)

On the Plains of Abraham
They can't wait 'til the lion
Lays down with the lamb

They believe it's the End of Days
They believe we can't
Understand God's ways

They believe in the Promised Land
They believe our lives
Are divinely planned

An' God sees every sparrow fall
And he hears your prayers
Every time you call

And if you ask them why
They'll look you in the eye

And say

JESUS, PETER & JOHN

(singing)

God says it
I believe it
And that settles it

JESUS, PETER, JOHN & ANDREW

(singing)

The Bible says it
I believe it
And that settles it

JESUS, PETER, JOHN, ANDREW & SIMON

(singing)

The Bible says it
I believe it
And that settles it

The song ends in a flurry of guitars and drums, as the audience goes wild.

INT. PORTLAND CEMENT ROOM/REAR LOT - NIGHT

The band loads their gear into the van.

JESUS

That was a good groove. I felt like
the Eagles up there.

(singing, to the cadence
and tune of "Take It
Eaaaaasssy")

The Bible saaaaayys it....

Judas leads Dan from the rear stage door over to Jesus.

JUDAS

Jesus, this is Dan. He owns the
Yokono gallery.

JESUS

What's that? Bleeding-edge art?

DAN

We try to be.

JESUS

I don't go much for avant-garde.
It's all so anti-this, anti-that.
Anti-God. Demonic.

DAN

We're just setting up an exhibit
for an exciting new Christian
artist: Mary Magdalene. She was a
prostitute before she found you. It
doesn't open 'til Wednesday, but I
could get you in tomorrow, for a
sneak preview.

INT. YOKONO ART GALLERY - DAY

The space is filled with an exhibition of religion-themed
modern art.

The artist, MARY MAGDALENE, walks around wearing a nun's
habit, rearranging the pieces:

1. A bottle of perfume on a pedestal, with the caption
"Eternal Teen Spirit - by Chanel";
2. A poster stating, "PEACE IS OVER!" in large letters, and
in smaller print, "Prepare for Armageddon!";

3. A version of the American flag with text stating the percentage of Christians in each state; and
4. A bowl of candies, with each wrapper bearing a verse from the Bible (cf. Tangy Tarts Religious Scripture Candy).

Jesus peruses the artwork, wandering in Mary's direction.

He picks one of the candies out of the bowl, and reads it:

JESUS
Thou shalt have no other gods
before me.

He puts the candy back in the bowl.

Dan walks over to Jesus and Mary.

DAN
Mary, this is Jesus Christ. The
rock star. And Messiah.
(to Jesus)
Bono dropped by last week, but he's
just a rock star. So far.

Mary silently hands Jesus a little card that says simply:
"Pray."

Jesus bows his head, closes his eyes, and clasps his hands together.

JESUS
Heavenly Father, thank you for this
art gallery, and for bringing us
together here today, to fellowship
in Your name. Amen.

He opens his eyes, and turns his head to see a white, wooden stepladder leading up to a horizontal canvas suspended from the ceiling, with a magnifying glass hanging from the ceiling on the end of a chain.

JESUS
The stairway to heaven?

He climbs the ladder, and looks through the magnifying glass, reading a single word printed in tiny letters on the canvas:
"Rapture."

He descends the ladder, impressed.

In the center of the room is a medium-sized wooden cross, with a hammer and a bag of nails on a riser beside it, all titled "Cross, Hammer and Nails," and priced at \$1000.

Jesus walks over to that central work of art.

JESUS
That's what I call bleeding-edge.

Mary follows to beside him.

JESUS
Can I hammer one of the nails in?

MARY
No.

Dan hastens over to them, pulling Mary aside.

DAN
(hushed)
Mary, that's no way to treat the
Son of God. Besides, he might buy
the piece. Or autograph it!

Mary turns back toward Jesus.

MARY
Okay, you can hammer a nail in for
five dollars.

JESUS
Well, I'll give you an imaginary
five dollars and hammer an
imaginary nail in. The imaginary
ones don't hurt so much. I begged
my Father to let that cup pass from
me....

He winces at the memory.

MARY
I feel your pain, Savior.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Peter, John, Simon, Andrew, Judas, Thomas, and Crystal kneel
around the bed--leaving a wide space for Jesus--with their
elbows on the bedspread and their hands clasped, as if
children.

Jesus leads Mary into the room.

JESUS
My mother's name was Mary, too. She
was a virgin. I guess you're ...
not.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)
(indicating the disciples)
We always pray together, before
bedtime.

He and Mary kneel beside the other disciples.

They all bow their heads and close their eyes.

JESUS & OTHERS
Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord....

From the hallway outside their room comes the sound of a heavy rumbling, moving rapidly from one end of the corridor to the other.

Just past their hotel room the rumbling explodes into the collision of a hard plastic sphere with a group of maple-wood pins.

CINDY (O.S.)
Strike! Set 'em back up!

A slower rumbling goes the opposite way down the hall.

JESUS
I pray the Lord...

JESUS & OTHERS
...my soul to keep
If I should die before I wake
I pray the Lord my soul to....

The heavy rumbling comes down the hall again, colliding with the same set of pins.

CINDY (O.S.)
Seven-ten split!

They all open their eyes.

JESUS
(to John)
Could you check on that?

John rises from his knees, walks to the door, and opens it.

He pokes his head out into the

HALLWAY

Four young, slim women in negligees (the blond CINDY, brunette MINDY, plus LINDY and WENDY) drink beer out of aluminum cans, bowling in the hallway.

Cindy walks past the door, toward the pins.

CINDY
Seven-ten split.

She winks and takes a swig of her beer, wiggling her butt as she walks toward the end of the hall.

John almost-closes the door, turning back into the

HOTEL ROOM

JESUS
Well?

JOHN
Looks like a women's bowling team.

JESUS
A bowling team? For women?

JOHN
In negligees.

Jesus rises from his knees, and pokes his head out the door.

Mindy, carrying a pink bowling ball, walks up to him, and looks him straight in the eye.

MINDY
If you're really Jesus, turn this ball into a loaf of bread.

Jesus closes the door and retreats back to the bed, kneeling again beside Mary.

ANDREW
Should we go back to our rooms?

JESUS
No, it's not safe--Satan is tempting us.

SIMON
Are you sure?

JESUS
He once offered me all the kingdoms
of the world. This is small
potatoes. A women's bowling team?
(he shouts toward the
door)
You can do better than that, Dark
Lord!

PETER
What should we do, Messiah?

JESUS
We'll just have to stay here ...
until they've finished their game.

Beat.

PETER
We could sing, to pass the time.

JESUS
Good idea.

He starts singing the hymn, "Yield Not to Temptation":

JESUS
Yield not to temptation

The others join him, as a soul-felt gospel choir.

ALL
(singing)
For yielding is sin
Each vic'try will help you
Some other to wind

Fight manfully onward
Dark passions subdue
Look ever to

JESUS / OTHERS
(singing)
Meeee / Jesus
I / He

ALL
(singing)
will carry you through

JESUS
(singing)
I will carry you

They finish with a standard gospel flourish, eyes closed, heads upturned:

ALL
(singing)
throu--oooo-oo-ough

They open their eyes.

PETER
Where's John?

Their heads all turn toward the door, where John is on the verge of sneaking out.

JOHN
I was just going to, uh, get some ice.

EXT. HIGHWAY

The band's van travels along a Utah highway, past a billboard advertising their "The Cross" CD.

INT. VAN (MOVING)

Jesus is driving, with Peter in the passenger seat, and the rest of the band (John, Simon, Andrew, Judas, and Mary) in the rear seats, fighting for space with their instruments and amps.

JOHN
(to Jesus)
I really would have liked that piece of ice.

JESUS
Pray that you will not fall into temptation.

Looking in his driver's-door mirror, Jesus sees (POV) a red convertible approaching them quickly from behind.

JESUS
Speak of the Devil. It's Satan's bowling team. Avert your eyes!

The convertible pulls up beside them, with the top down.

Cindy is driving, with Mindy in the passenger seat, plus Lindy and Wendy in the back seat.

The girls all wave and flirt with the uncomfortable Jesus, a la Christie Brinkley in the classic scene from National Lampoon's Vacation.

JESUS
Get thee behind us, Satan!

The convertible accelerates past them.

JESUS
Or in front of us. Either way.

Beat.

JOHN
Is anyone else hungry?

INT. DINER - DAY

The band sits at two tables pushed together in a greasy-spoon highway diner.

A middle-aged waitress (LINDA) delivers plates of food for Jesus and John.

John takes the salt shaker and covers his plate with copious amounts of salt.

JESUS
That's a lot of salt.

JOHN
My ex-wife never let me have any. I think she was worried I'd die of high-blood pressure before she could nag me to death. I used to pray God would turn her into a pillar of salt, just to shut her up.

Linda returns with plates for Peter and Judas, giving John a good looking-over.

LINDA
You're that bass player my kids keep talking about: John ... Entwistle!

JESUS
(to Peter)
You still want to see the Genesis Museum?

EXT. GENESIS MUSEUM - DAY

The van pulls up to the entrance to the museum, and stops in the parking lot.

Jesus (wearing designer sunglasses) and the apostles get out of the van. Andrew carries a handheld videocamera.

PETER

All I'm saying is, if we're the next Beatles, why are we packed like sardines in a crappy, second-hand van? Sleeping in cheap motels...

JOHN

...and eating at places where the people don't even recognize us?

JUDAS

They're a small record label. They can't afford a big advance. We'll upgrade when the first royalty checks come in.

They walk toward the museum's front doors.

INT. GENESIS MUSEUM/FOYER

Jesus leads his disciples into the foyer...

JESUS

This is the world as God made it, before Satan ruined it all.

They walk forward into an

EXHIBITION ROOM

The room contains a life-size diorama of the Garden of Eden, featuring figures of Adam and Eve, a tree with a snake in its lower boughs, plus a T. Rex dinosaur, a triceratops, and a unicorn.

Farther into the room is a scene of animals boarding Noah's Ark.

Andrew records the surroundings with the videocamera.

A female security guard, MEG, stands off to the side.

JESUS

There's the Garden of Eden, where
God walked with Adam and Eve,
beside the dinosaurs.

MARY

Which of those did you create?

Jesus gives a heavy sigh. Beat.

THOMAS

Whoa. Dudes. Doesn't evolution say
dinosaurs died out millions of
years before man?

JESUS

Pfft! That's just a theory. What
has Darwinism ever given us? War,
famine, natural disasters.
Abortion. And Hitler.

THOMAS

And they say birds came from
dinosaurs.

JESUS

They have it all backwards. Genesis
says birds were created before the
land animals. Their godless science
can't even get that much right!

(to Meg)

Can we get a picture of me on the
unicorn?

MEG

That's not normally allowed. How
about on the triceratops?

JESUS

I'd prefer the unicorn. We know
they existed.

PETER

They did?

He takes out his cell phone, preparing to take a still photo
of the unicorn.

JESUS

Job, chapter thirty-nine.

Meg eyes the videocamera.

MEG

Maybe if you don't--

JESUS

Like a personal photograph, we can
keep this
(he indicates Andrew's
videocamera)
away.

Andrew stops recording.

MEG

Alright.

Jesus gets up onto the unicorn's back, as Andrew
surreptitiously resumes recording the event, from behind
Meg's back.

JUDAS

(to Jesus)

If we could monetize our shows like
they've monetized the Garden of
Eden....

MARY

We could make our own merchandise.
Fans don't mind paying for things
their heroes have touched. Like the
Crown of Thorns at Notre Dame--

JESUS

(on the unicorn)

And the Holy Prepuce, which
ascended to become the rings of
Saturn.

The disciples look at him quizzically.

JESUS

True story.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The Apostles work diligently in a cheap motel room with two
single beds, creating handmade merchandise for sale at their
gigs.

On top of the room's small desk is a jar full of magic
markers.

Seated on one bed (with the bedspread still in place), Mary holds a foot-high wooden crucifix in one hand, and a pocketknife in the other.

With the knife, she breaks off another piece of the cross, and puts it into a zip-loc bag, with the handwritten price sticker already attached: \$500.

Thomas and Crystal sit on the other side of the same bed, with balls of yarn and short wooden (e.g., popsicle) sticks, weaving "God's eye" (Ojo de Dios) craft-objects.

John sits on the edge of the other bed (with the bedspread removed) in his underwear, rubbing diluted gray acrylic paint on his chest, arms, and face.

Simon and Andrew kneel on the other side of that second bed, using the mattress as a "desk," writing Bible verses on scrolls of paper with magic markers.

Jesus enters from the hallway, with an armful of scrolls.

JESUS
I got more scrolls.

SIMON
From where?

JESUS
The synagogue down the road.

He sits down at the desk, unrolls a scroll, and begins writing on it with a bright red magic marker.

John lays face-down on his exposed sheet, and rolls from side-to-side.

JESUS
What are you doing?

JOHN
Making a "Bedsheet of Turin."

JESUS
Good idea!
(to Mary)
How are the pieces of the true
cross coming?

MARY
We could charge more if there was
blood on them.

JESUS
When's your next period of
uncleanliness?

MARY
Not for two weeks.

A scream of pain comes from Peter (O.S.) in the bathroom.

He staggers out of the bathroom, his robe dishevelled,
holding a knife and a small piece of skin, with blood on his
hands.

PETER
A piece of your holy foreskin, for
sale, my Lord.

He faints, falling to the floor with a thud.

Mary rushes toward Peter with the wooden crucifix.

JESUS
(to Mary)
Ask, and ye shall receive.

Mary kneels down beside Peter on the floor, and rubs the
cross against his bloody hands.

THOMAS
Jesus, dude: should we really be
selling this stuff as holy relics?
Isn't that--

JESUS
Lies told for God and Me don't
count as sins.
(quoting Romans 3:7)
"For if the truth of God hath more
abounded through my lie unto his
glory; why yet am I also judged as
a sinner?" Besides, it's not a lie
if you believe it.

A gleam comes into Jesus's eye.

JESUS
With all this ink, and blood, it
seems a shame to leave this place
as unholy as we found it.

JOHN
What do you mean, Lord?

JESUS
(mischievously)
Let's leave our mark on this room.
For God.

He rises with his magic marker, selects a choice part of the wall, and begins writing on it.

The other disciples grin, eagerly grab markers from the desk, and head for the walls.

They each commence writing down a favorite Bible verse, reciting it out loud as they inscribe the graffiti.

THOMAS
Exodus 32:27. The Lord God said,
Each man strap a sword to his side.
Go back and forth through the camp,
each killing his brother and friend
and neighbor.

JOHN
(writing in pink)
If a man lies with a man as one
lies with a woman, both of them
have committed an abomination. They
must be put to death.

He adds a big pink exclamation mark at the end.

SIMON
(writing in black)
Let the person who has insight
calculate the number of the beast,
for it is the number of a man. That
number is 666.

He traces several times over the "666," to bold-font it.

Jesus writes with his red marker:

JESUS
Those enemies of mine who did not
want me to be king over them--bring
them here and kill them in front of
me. Luke 19, verse 27.

EXT. MOTEL/PARKING LOT - MORNING

The tired band members put their homemade merchandise into the rear hatch of the van.

Peter limps awkwardly toward them, with his small contribution in a bloody zip-loc bag.

PETER
I still say John-the-Baptist
headless bobble-head dolls was a
better idea.

He hands his bag to Jesus, who stows it securely in a gym bag.

JESUS
That's why you're not the Messiah.
(beat)
Do you still miss your parents?

PETER
Uh ... no?

JESUS
Good.

He closes the rear hatch, and then heads for the passenger door.

INT. MOTEL/HALLWAY

A matronly Hispanic maid (MARIA, 45) pushes her cart toward Jesus's former room.

She opens the door, steps inside, and gasps at the blood on the rug.

She lifts her eyes, and sees every square inch of the walls covered with biblical graffiti.

Jesus's blood-red verse leaps out into her focus.

She screams.

MARIA
El Diablo!

She stumbles out of the room, crossing herself.

INT. THE TABERNACLE (MUSIC VENUE)/STAGE - NIGHT

The band performs onstage, in the middle of a show in a Utah music hall.

JESUS
(into the mic)
This is a song about blood. And
sacrifice.

He glances at Peter, seeing him fidgeting uncomfortably.

JESUS
It's called, "Nothing But the
Blood."

They begin playing: speed-metal meets Alanis Morissette.

JESUS
(singing)
What can wash away your sins?
Nothing but the blood
What can make you whole again?
Nothing but the blood

JESUS, PETER & JOHN
(singing)
O precious is the flow
That makes you white as snow

JESUS
(singing)
No other fount, you know

JESUS, PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Nothing but the blood
Nothing but the blood

JESUS
(singing)
Nothing can for sin atone
Nothing but the blood
Naught of good that you have done
Nothing but the blood

JESUS, PETER & JOHN
(singing)
O precious is the flow
That makes you white as snow

JESUS
(singing)
No other fount, you know

JESUS, PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Nothing but the blood
Nothing but the blood

INT. THE TABERNACLE/FOYER

As the band plays, Mary and Judas sit behind a merchandise table.

Several fans, including JOSEPH (30s), wearing a many-colored coat, look over the goods.

JOSEPH

What's the thread-count on the
Bedsheet of Turin?

MARY

Uh, I believe it's around ...
twelve hundred.

JOSEPH

Good. I can't sleep on less than
six hundred.

INT. THE TABERNACLE/BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Jesus walks toward the closed door to the dressing room, with Peter (still limping awkwardly) and the rest of the band following, as the cheers die down after the show.

JESUS

Well, what do maternity hospitals
do with 'em?

PETER

Probably just incinerate them.

JESUS

That's like throwing money in the
garbage. I need to have Judas make
some calls.

Judas approaches, counting a wad of bills, with an unlit cigar in his mouth.

JUDAS

Gentlemen, we've hit the Holy
Virgin Mother-lode. No more second-
hand van.

He slaps Peter from behind, on the buttocks.

Peter winces.

PETER

Don't do that.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

The band's new tour bus travels down the Interstate.

In the destination sign of the vehicle are the words:
"Mystical Magi Tour".

INT. BUS (MOVING)

A new long-haired disciple (PHILIP, 27) drives, wearing the usual robe and sandals.

At the rear of the bus, Jesus, Thomas, John, and Judas play "Biblical Pursuit."

Jesus rolls a die and moves his playing piece, landing on a blue space at the end of a spoke on the board.

JESUS

The category is: Marriage.

Thomas draws a card from the box.

THOMAS

(reading)

How many wives did Abraham have,
and what were their names?

JESUS

Three: Sarah, Hagar, and Keturah.

THOMAS

Right-on.

Jesus adds a blue wedge to his playing piece.

JESUS

King Solomon had seven hundred
wives, and three hundred
concubines.

THOMAS

Far out. So polygamy's not immoral?

JESUS

It's illegal.

THOMAS

Didn't Mormons used to be
polygamous?

JESUS

Yes.

THOMAS

So if Mormons had their own country, like say if Utah seceded, they could vote to make it legal. And if a Christian lived there, God wouldn't mind if--

JESUS

Thomas.

Jesus looks out the window, and sees the red top-down convertible approaching them again from behind.

JESUS

Oh-oh.

(praying)

Virgin Mary, Mother of Me, pray for these wretched sinners who have lost their way. Lead them back to Thy virgin....

The car pulls up beside them. But instead of the bowling-team girls, it contains three older, bearded white men, and one woman: ROBERT (driving), EARL, RICHARD, and DOROTHY.

The scholars smile and wave at Jesus, and then accelerate quickly past the bus.

JOHN

Who was that?

JESUS

I don't know.

He rolls the die again and moves his piece, landing on a brown space.

THOMAS

Category: Incest.

He takes another card, and reads from it.

THOMAS

What were the names of the daughters of Lot, who got him drunk so they could preserve his seed?

JESUS

The Bible doesn't say.

THOMAS

Right-on.

(beat)

(MORE)

THOMAS (CONT'D)

So, wait. Incest isn't immoral either?

JESUS

Thomas!

JUDAS

Didn't Abraham and Sarah have the same father?

JESUS

Yes.

He rolls the die again, and moves his playing piece.

JUDAS

So they were brother and sister?

JESUS

Half-sister. The category is, War.

Thomas draws another card, and reads it.

THOMAS

When Deuteronomy says, "If men get into a fight with one another, and the wife of one reaches out and seizes his opponent's secrets," what does "secrets" refer to?

Beat.

JESUS

I'm not playing this anymore.

He rises, and walks to the front of the bus.

JUDAS

(to Thomas)

What does it mean?

THOMAS

(reading)

Testicles.

He shrugs.

EXT. HOTEL/FRONT - NIGHT

The band's bus pulls up outside the entrance to an upscale hotel.

INT. BUS

The band members look out the windows, excited.

JESUS
(to Judas)
Did you make reservations?

Judas pulls out a wad of bills.

JUDAS
There's always room at the inn, for
Benjamin Franklin.

INT. HOTEL/FRONT DESK

The front-desk clerk (JESS, 19) hands a businessman guest
(GORDON, 38) a room passcard.

JESS
Enjoy your stay.

Gordon exits with his luggage.

Judas walks up to the front desk, as Jesus and the apostles
trail in a group, behind.

THOMAS
What about Genesis 1:29? Didn't God
give us every herb bearing seed,
for food? It says herb, man.

JESUS
It's referring to plants. Not
marijuana.

THOMAS
So we're supposed to be
vegetarians? Groovy.

JESUS
No. You can eat meat and plants.
You're just not supposed to smoke
the plants.

THOMAS
Can we eat bud?

JESUS
What?

THOMAS

Like, in brownies, or sprinkle it
on cornflakes.

JESUS

No, uh, I don't ... know.

To the right of Judas, an unrelated male guest (SAM, 47)
checks in.

Beside Sam on the counter is a sign saying "Welcome, Jesus"
with the lower half of the sign obscured by a suitcase placed
horizontally on the counter.

Peter notices the sign, and points it out to Jesus.

Jesus smiles.

JESUS

Blessed are the hotel owners. For
to them shall be given....

Sam finishes signing in, gets his room passcard, and takes
his suitcase off the counter, revealing the rest of the sign:

"Welcome,
Jesus
Mythicists"

JESUS

Mythicists?

Led by Robert, half a dozen older, white men with beards
(incl. Earl, Richard, and WILSON)--and one woman (Dorothy)--
walk from an inner hallway into the reception area.

ROBERT

Paul never mentioned a flesh-and-
blood Jesus. For him, Jesus's death
and resurrection took place in a
supernatural realm. The idea of a
physical Jesus began with Mark, who
modeled his Gospel on the Homeric
epics. Jesus never existed, not
even as an illiterate, apocalyptic
preacher.

DOROTHY

Then what about the claim that
Christ must be a "Liar, Lunatic, or
Lord"?

They walk on toward the front doors.

Jesus's jaw drops.

JESUS
(sputtering)
I'm not a liar! I'm not a lunatic!
And if I was illiterate, I couldn't
have read that sign! What do you
say to that?!

He takes a step toward the neck-beards, as they exit
oblivious to him; Peter restrains him.

PETER
Easy there, Savior. They'll be left
behind soon enough.

Jesus settles down.

JESUS
(ruffled)
Yeah. They'll be the first ones I
leave behind.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Peter sleeps, in a nice room with two beds.

In the bathroom (O.S.), Jesus brushes his teeth, humming the
melody for the band's album-closing song, "Left Behind." He
segues into singing:

JESUS (O.S.)
Left behind
You won't think living on Earth is
nice

BATHROOM

Jesus brushes finishes brushing his teeth.

JESUS
(singing)
Left behind
When you're a slave to the
Antichrist

He spits into the sink, and puts his toothbrush away.

BEDROOM

Jesus comes out of the bathroom and turns off the room light, leaving only a bedside light on.

He kneels down beside his bed, and prays.

JESUS

Heavenly Father, thank you for guiding me through this day. Smite these men who deny My existence. Smite those who deny Thee. Smite those who would smite Thee and Me! Smite them all! Let me find favor in Thy all-knowing, all-powerful, all-loving sight. Amen.

He crawls under the covers, soothed and tranquil, gazing at the ceiling.

JESUS

I love you ... Dad. Goodnight.

He turns off the bedside light.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

On the dais at the front of the room, behind a couple of folding tables, sit a handful of scholars--Earl, Wilson, Richard, and Dorothy, with Robert standing in the center.

The tables have plastic cups already filled with water, and a glass pitcher of ice water in front of Wilson.

At the side of the room, near the stage, is a table with a coffee dispenser, paper cups, and breakfast foods, watched over by two WAITERS.

On the wall behind the dais is a screen showing a PowerPoint presentation, led by Robert holding the remote control.

The current slide is titled "Rank-Raglan Hero Archetype" and contains a table showing the scores of various mythological heroes, on the scale:

"Oedipus: 22
Theseus: 20
Romulus: 17
Hercules: 17
Perseus: 16
Zeus: 15
Jason: 15
Robin Hood: 13

Apollo: 11"

Jesus, Peter, and Thomas watch from the back of the room, behind the rest of the audience.

ROBERT

The Rank-Raglan Hero Archetype scale outlines twenty-two points by which we can distinguish between real historical figures, and mythological heroes who never existed. Only mythical heroes score higher than eleven. Hercules scores seventeen; Zeus, fifteen; Robin Hood, thirteen. Our friend Jesus, scores a mighty....

He presses a button on the remote control, showing a slide with a table documenting Jesus's green-checkmark-or-red-X score on each of the twenty-two criteria.

ROBERT

...nineteen.

Jesus breaks from his group and paces up the side of the room toward the stage.

ROBERT

Jesus never walked the Earth in flesh and blood. He's just a combination of pagan myths, from Inanna to Horus to Romulus to Isis to Osiris.

He clicks to the next slide, showing a graphic of the five aforementioned gods, and arrows pointing toward an image of Jesus.

Our physical Jesus fights his way past the Waiters at the breakfast table.

ROBERT

Many of the supposed sayings of Jesus can be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in esoteric Jewish writings that have nothing to do with Christianity. Later scribes put that wisdom into the mouth of a Jesus who never even existed.

Jesus storms up the side-stairs onto the platform, behind the tables.

The audience gasps.

JESUS

If I didn't exist, could I do this?

He grabs the pitcher of ice water, and dumps it over Wilson's head.

Wilson sputters in surprise, as Jesus throws the pitcher to the floor.

The front rows recoil.

JESUS

If I hadn't risen from the grave
after my crucifixion, could I do
this?

He flips over one of the tables from behind, landing it toward the audience, splashing them with water from the cups.

The panel members rise from their chairs, scattering away from the holy madman.

WILSON

(to the Waiters)
Call Security!

INT. JAIL - DAY

Jesus grasps the bars of the holding cell, looking out meditatively, disconsolately humming the hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

JESUS

(singing)
All our sins and grief to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer

The bailiff (JAMES, 24) walks over and unlocks the steel door.

JAMES

The judge is ready for your
arraignment.

Jesus walks out of the cell.

JAMES

Some of your friends are here too,
if you need to meet bail.

They walk together down the hall.

JESUS

If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up. Ecclesiastes.

JAMES

To everything there is a season. Savior.

They pause, in the hall; James bows his head in reverence.

Jesus smiles warmly at his newfound disciple.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Jesus sits behind a table with the public defender, LAWRENCE (mid-30s).

The prosecuting attorney, KARLA (early-30s), sits behind a separate table.

James stands off to the side of the room.

Peter, Thomas, and Judas sit on benches in the gallery.

The Mel Brooks-like judge (PONTIAC PILATÉ, 60s) enters from his chambers, reluctantly touching the courtroom doorknob, and then wiping his hands with a moist towelette.

JAMES

All rise. Court for the District of Nazareth is now in session. The Honorable Judge Pontius Pilate presiding.

PONTIAC

That's Pontiac Pilaté.

(to Jesus)

My dad loved classic cars, and my mother was a yoga teacher.

(to Karla)

So, what seems to be the problem?

KARLA

I have a copy of the charges, Your Honor.

She approaches the bench with a sheaf of papers.

PONTIAC

Is that clean?

KARLA

Yes, Your Honor. I'm the only one
who's touched it.

PONTIAC

Did you wash your hands before you
touched it?

KARLA

I, uh....

PONTIAC

Alright, put it on my desk.

Karla lifts the papers up toward Pontiac, dropping the sheaf
in front of him.

Pontiac recoils.

PONTIAC

Not so close! Spread the papers out
for me.

Karla reaches over onto the desk, and fans the papers out.

PONTIAC

(to Jesus)

Do you have anything to say in your
own defense?

Jesus stands.

JESUS

They tried to tell me I'm just a
combination of pagan myths and
Jewish sayings.

PONTIAC

I can see how that would perturb a
man.

He peruses the papers on his desk.

PONTIAC

There's also an out-of-state
warrant for your arrest, concerning
damage to a hotel room?

JESUS

Those walls are worth more after I
wrote on them than they ever were
before!

PONTIAC
Point taken. How do you plead?

JESUS
I've never sinned in my life!

PONTIAC
So, not guilty?

JESUS
I obey higher laws.

PONTIAC
(indecisive)
Hmm. I don't want to go down in
history as the judge who stood in
the way of the Messiah. Again.
Still, I have to do something. I
hate to just leave things hanging.
(beat)
How about the prosecution drops the
charges, if you attend an anger-
management course?

KARLA
Yes, the State would agree to--

JESUS
But I'm the Prince of Peace!

Pontiac leans forward.

PONTIAC
Approach the bench, Mr. Prince.

Jesus walks up to the judges' bench.

PONTIAC
(hushed)
If you want to work out a deal on
the side....

JESUS
What kind of deal?

PONTIAC
Say, if I was allowed to sit at
your right hand for all eternity.

Beat.

JESUS
I'd rather do the course.

PONTIAC
Alright, case, uh....

He reaches toward the gavel, then has second thoughts, and tears open another wet wipe.

PONTIAC
Case....

He wipes down the gavel's head and handle with the towelette, then uses the wipe to grasp the handle, and finally brings the gavel down.

PONTIAC
Case dismissed!
(to James)
Call a five-minute recess. I have to wash my hands.

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

GLORIA (30s) leads an anger-management course.

The attendees--including the business-professional Irishman MATTHEW (mid-30s), and the muscular JAMES THE GREATER (late-40s)--sit in an informal semi-circle around her.

GLORIA
Welcome to Anger Management 101. I'm your facilitator, Gloria van Morrison. Why don't we begin by acknowledging why we're all here. Jesus, we could start with you.

JESUS
Oh, I ... I guess I overturned the tables of some so-called moneylenders. I mean, scholars.

GLORIA
And?

JESUS
And I dumped a pitcher of ice water over one of them.

GLORIA
And?

JESUS
And I defaced a hotel room. But I wasn't angry when I did that.

GLORIA
Alright. Matthew?

MATTHEW
I used to do the taxes for U2. Set
up all their Amsterdam tax
shelters.

Everyone is impressed.

MATTHEW
Part of the payment was supposed to
be that Bono'd give me his favorite
hat. He tried to stiff me--offered
me a pair of underwear instead.
What am I gonna do with Bono's
underwear? He wasn't even sure they
were his--it might have been The
Edge.

OTHERS
Eww.

MATTHEW
I said to him, That hat's
rightfully mine. He told me to
"tell it to Jesus." So I flattened
the little half-pint. Then he calls
the cops!

GLORIA
James the Greater?

JAMES THE GREATER
I'm a bouncer. Got into a fight
with a wanna-be musician.

GLORIA
First offense?

JAMES THE GREATER
No. A couple decades ago, I
accidentally killed a bass player:
Jack-o ... something. It worked out
okay: I found Jesus in prison. He
can forgive anything.

Jesus smiles and nods, with understanding.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Matthew and James the Greater walk with Jesus out of the anger-management course, each of them holding a signed certificate of completion.

MATTHEW

It's simple: We set up a mailbox company in Amsterdam, plus a bank account. All your publishing income goes through that. You don't pay a cent in tax on royalties from radio play.

JESUS

You've certainly given me something to think about on the bus.

MATTHEW

Ever thought of buying a Learjet?

JESUS

I don't think we could afford that.

MATTHEW

With your marginal tax rate, and the time you'd save ... you can't afford not to.

JESUS

I don't know, it's--

MATTHEW

What Would Bono Do?

Jesus considers the question.

INT. ROLLING STONE HEADQUARTERS/MEETING ROOM - DAY

The publisher JAN (late-60s), writer Nick, plus Ricky, TAYLOR (female, mid-20s), and other staff sit at the table, tossing around ideas for the next issue.

JAN

Chrissie Hynde has a new album:
"Smell the Cat"?

NICK

Pfft!

JAN

Yeah, you're right. There's a lot of buzz around the band Rick's been listening to: Jesus & the Apostles.

RICKY

He healed me of my abomination! I like girls now. Praise Jesus!

He pinches the waist of Taylor, sitting next to him.

She squeals, and slaps him across the face.

Ricky massages his jaw.

RICKY

Jesus.

JAN

(to All)

It sounds like they could be bigger than the Beatles. A "Christian Invasion." The next--

NICK

Crusade?

RICKY

If it wasn't for the Crusades, 9/11 would've been a lot worse! Praise Jesus!

JAN

(to Nick)

I'd like you to do the interview.

NICK

(to Ricky)

Satan loves me, this I know
Ozzy Osbourne tells me so
Little souls to him are lost
Burning 'neath the permafrost

JAN

Is that a yes?

NICK

(to Ricky)

Yes, Satan loves me
Yes, Satan loves me
Yes, Satan loves me
The Ozz-man tells me so

JAN
I'm still waiting for a yes.

NICK
What Would Hitchens Do?

JAN
Good. We'll book the flight.

INT. SMALL CLEVELAND ARENA - NIGHT

Jesus sits at a white piano onstage, wearing Lennon-esque granny glasses and a white robe, illuminated by a spotlight.

James the Greater stands at the side of the stage, heading up the security detail in a yellow "security robe" and sandals.

JESUS
Exodus says: Thou shalt worship no other gods; for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a Jealous God.

He starts playing the piano, solo.

JESUS
(singing)
I created all the past
When we walked, and talked, and laughed
Then you tried to hide from Me
Naked, so you hid from Me

Thou shalt not have fun without Me
I'll cast you out, to till the ground (Oy vey)
I'll smite you if I have to
I'm just a jealous God

The rest of the band joins in the low-key arrangement.

JESUS
(singing)
Powerful but insecure
I had to know you love Me more
Circumcise your promised child
Sacrifice your only child (Oy)

Thou shalt have no graven idols
No golden calves or demigods (Oy vey)
I'll smite you if I have to
I'm just a jealous God

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

Thou shalt have no gods before me
Moloch, Baal, Nabu or Mot (Oy vey)
I'll smite you if I have to
I'm just a jealous God

He whistles the melody over the middle-eight bars.

JESUS

(singing)

If you think you'll run away
Remember Jonah, Nineveh
He was swallowed by a whale
He got swallowed by a whale

I even kind of liked him
But spare the child and spoil the
rod (Yah, weh)
Don't tempt me, wretched sinners
I'm just a jealous God (Watch out)
I'm just a jealous God (Armageddon)
I'm just a jealous God

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Nick sits in an armchair, with a pad of paper at his side. He holds a digital recording device, with the mic pointing toward Jesus.

Jesus (still wearing granny glasses, now with his normal robe) sits on the edge of a luxurious double bed.

NICK

Until recently, atheism was growing at a significant rate. Thirty percent of youths were nonbelievers.

JESUS

Atheism will go. It will vanish and shrink. I needn't argue with that. I don't know which will go first-- mp3's or atheism.

NICK

You're the reincarnation of Jesus Christ. Jesus from the Bible.

JESUS

Technically, the Second Coming; but it's an incarnation in human form, yes.

NICK
Can I read you a list of names?

JESUS
Sure.

NICK
(reading from the pad)
Charles Manson, Marshall
Applewhite. David Koresh. Jim
Jones.

JESUS
What about them?

NICK
Each of them claimed to be the
reincarnation of Jesus Christ. What
makes you any different?

JESUS
I'm not a cult leader.

NICK
Define--

JESUS
I'm the only Son of God! The
founder of the One True Religion!
They weren't!

NICK
What do you say to people who don't
believe--

JESUS
(irate)
Do I have to divide the fish and
the loaves for the multitudes
again? Do I have to get crucified
again? Do I have to do the walking
on water again because a whole pile
of dummies didn't see it the first
time, or didn't believe it when
they saw it?

Beat.

NICK
You're supposed to be the Prince of
--

JESUS
We've tried peace. We've tried
drugs. We've tried getting along.
All we're saying is, Give God a
Chance.

Beat.

NICK
Forty-four percent of Americans
believe the Rapture will occur
sometime in the next fifty years.

JESUS
They're right. It's happening May
twenty-first.

NICK
Of this year.

JESUS
Of this year.

NICK
At the New Jerusalem Stadium.

JESUS
Count on it.

NICK
What will the Rapture be like?

JESUS
The waters will rise! The Lord will
rain down brimstone from the
heavens! I say unto you, there
shall be fire in the sky, and smoke
on the water!

Nick raises an eyebrow.

JESUS
All the peoples of the Earth will
see the Son of Man descending on
the clouds of heaven!

NICK
And tickets go on sale--

JESUS
This Friday.

EXT. AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

A Learjet waits, parked on the tarmac.

On the side of the plane, in cerulean-blue lettering, is the painted name: "The Sea of Galilee."

Matthew leads Jesus and his band/entourage toward the jet.

MATTHEW

It's the one Ted Haggard used to own.

JESUS

The same model.

MATTHEW

No, the same plane. We had it cleaned.

They stop to admire the sight.

JESUS

God is good.

EXT. LEARJET - NIGHT

The jet flies through the clear skies above northeastern America.

INT. LEARJET/PASSENGER CABIN

Jesus sleeps with his head on a cushion, in a seat at the back of the plane, snoring intermittently.

The disciples kibitz, passing time.

THOMAS

Okay, dude. But then can God make a square circle?

PETER

Isn't there one on the sleeve of Zeppelin Four?

JAMES

That's a circle-triangle. And it's from the Devil. Everyone knows that.

Sudden rain pelts the windows, and wind shakes the cabin, as they fly into a thunderstorm.

EXT. LEARJET

Heavy winds and rain buffet the jet, amid lightning strikes.
A lightning bolt hits its wing.

INT. LEARJET/PASSENGER CABIN

The sudden bright white flash blinds the passengers.

COCKPIT

The pilot (Philip) rubs his eyes, then shakes his head vigorously and peers at the instruments, trying desperately to read them as his eyes adjust.

Beside him, the copilot (BART, 31) flicks switches, working by feel.

PHILIP
We're losing altitude!

He pulls back frantically on the wheel.

PASSENGER CABIN

The apostles panic.

SIMON
We're goin' down, like Skynyrd and
Buddy Holly! The Day the Music
Died!

JOHN
I can't die now. I'm almost famous!

Terrified, staring into the gaping Maw of Death, the disciples confess their sins:

MATTHEW
I've been embezzling from our tax
shelters!

JUDAS
Me too!

JOHN
I coveted my neighbor's wife! She
was at least a nine!

PETER
I once took the Lord's name in
vain!

ANDREW
I dated a girl named Rhiannon! She
might have been a witch!

JUDAS
I'm gay!

Beat.

JOHN
Somebody wake Jesus!

Peter unbuckles his seatbelt, rises, and strides over to
Jesus, shaking him by the shoulders.

PETER
Savior, don't you care if we crash?

JESUS
(groggy)
I was dreaming of Stevie Nicks.

He notices the storm around the plane.

JESUS
Quiet! Be still!

The wind and rain stop immediately, and the plane's altitude
levels off...

EXT. LEARJET

...just as the plane flies out of the cloud.

INT. LEARJET/PASSENGER CABIN

JESUS
Why are you so afraid? Do you still
have no faith?

Strapped into their seats, the disciples hang their heads in
shame.

JESUS
(to Matthew)
As soon as we land, I'm
transferring the Amsterdam accounts
to my name.
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

(to Judas)

Judas.

JUDAS

(trembling)

Yes, Lord?

JESUS

You have committed an abomination.

Judas swallows hard.

JESUS

Don't do it again.

He closes his eyes, lets his head fall back onto the pillow, and drifts back off to sleep.

JESUS

(mumbling)

The age of ... seventeen....

He begins snoring.

EXT. NYC HIGHWAY - DAY

A stretch limo drives along a riverside highway in New York City, with FRANK (late-20s) at the wheel.

INT. LIMO (MOVING)

Jesus and the band sit in the back seats of the stretch limo, listening to satellite radio as the sights of NYC pass by outside.

HOWARD (V.O.)

(on the radio)

More than 800 million copies of "The Cross" have been sold since its release four months ago. That's more albums than the Beatles sold in their entire career, and five times more than U2.

The vehicle passes a flat, shallow pier, with a small yacht moored at the end of it.

JESUS

Check that out.

SIMON

Nice boat.

EXT. DOWNTOWN NYC STREET - DAY

The stretch limo drives in bumper-to-bumper, downtown NYC traffic.

INT. LIMO (MOVING)

HOWARD (V.O.)
(on the radio)
Stay tuned for the Sirius Radio
debut of Amy Grant's new single,
"Baby, Baby, Jesus, Baby."

JOHN
How cool is this? Huh?

JESUS
It beats riding in on a donkey.

PETER
How do you think Satan will try and
stop us now?

A convention center sign comes into view:

"Monster Con".

EXT. CONVENTION CENTER/FRONT

A female vampire (BUFFY, 18), a WEREWOLF, a FRANKENSTEIN monster, a female MUMMY, a trio of ZOMBIES, and a man in a SATAN costume (with plastic pitchfork) enter the front doors of the convention building.

A dishevelled APOCALYPTIC MAN pickets the front of the building with a scrawled, handwritten sign: "Repent! The End is Night!"--with the latter "t" crossed out.

As Satan enters the building, he looks back over his shoulder at the limo going by.

INT. LIMO (MOVING)

Through the tinted windows, Jesus locks eyes with the man in the Satan costume.

JESUS
Well played, Satan. Well played.

EXT. HOTEL/FRONT - DAY

The limo pulls up to the front entrance of the luxury Hotel Gethsemane, into a gathering throng of screaming teenage girls, and crippled men and women in wheelchairs, including STEPHEN (late-30s).

James the Greater gets out first, followed closely by Jesus, pushing their way through the crowd.

STEPHEN
Heal me, Lord!

He reaches out to grab the hem of Jesus's robe.

James the Greater pushes Stephen's hand away, aggressively.

JAMES THE GREATER
Don't touch the Messiah!

JESUS
(over his shoulder, to
Stephen)
Thou shalt be whole in heaven!

The band dives through the front doors, to the safe haven inside.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316 - DAY

The apostles mill around in an ornate suite.

Jesus sits in a throne-like chair, sipping red wine.

JESUS
It's good to be King ... of the
Jews.

Judas enters, carrying a dozen copies of Rolling Stone magazine.

JUDAS
The cover of the Rolling Stone!

A picture of Jesus (wearing a crown of thorns) graces the cover of the magazine, with the headline: "Jesus Christ: More Popular Than the Beatles."

Judas hands the first copy to Jesus, then passes the rest around.

JESUS

I'm more popular than the Beatles!
Take that John Lennon, you stupid
atheist!

JUDAS

The restaurant's reserved, whenever
you're ready for dinner.

JESUS

Supper.

JUDAS

Pardon?

JESUS

Where I'm from, we call it supper.

INT. HOTEL/RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Along one wall of the restaurant in the Hotel Gethsemane, tables have been pushed together to form a mega-table, with places set only along one side and at the ends, with Jesus at the center. (Cf. Da Vinci's "Last Supper" painting.)

From the end of the table, Bart, James, Andrew, Judas, Peter, and John sit on Jesus's right; Thomas, Crystal, James the Greater, Philip, Matthew, Simon, and Mary (at the end) are to his left.

The seated disciples nosh on bread and wine.

Around the rest of the room attendees from Monster Con dine, in costume, while watching a basketball playoff game (New York Knicks vs. the L.A. Lakers) on several jumbo-flatscreens spread around the walls of the room.

The room noise flows and ebbs, as the battling teams score.

Jesus puts down his wine goblet.

JESUS

Truly I tell you, one of you will
betray me.

JOHN

Surely not I, Lord?

JESUS

The one who dips his bread in the
dish with me will betray me.

He turns his gaze on Judas.

Judas shrugs helplessly at Jesus, indicating the empty bread basket in front of him.

Their waitress (MARTHA, 21) enters.

MARTHA
Is everything alright?

JUDAS
Could we get more bread?

MARTHA
Sure.

She exits.

PETER
Lord, I am ready to go with you to
prison and to death.

JESUS
Peter, you will deny me--

Buffy runs past, screaming, chased by Satan (with his pitchfork) and the growling Werewolf.

SATAN
Surrender to the will of Satan! The
President of Hell, incorporated!

JESUS
(to Peter, pointedly)
As I was saying, you will deny me
before--

Martha enters and sets down a full basket of bread in front of Judas.

MARTHA
There you go.

Judas takes a piece of bread and holds it up helpfully in Jesus's direction, as if to say: "Ready when you are, Lord."

JESUS
(to Peter, through gritted
teeth)
You will deny me before the--

MARTHA
Everyone okay for wine?

JUDAS
We're fine. For wine.

Martha exits.

PETER
Before the what?

As Jesus speaks, a roar goes up from the other diners...

JESUS
The cock crows.

...drowning him out, as the Knicks score a basket, to pull within one point with just seconds remaining in the game.

PETER
(holding his hand to his
ear)
What?

An even louder roar goes up from the other diners, as the Knicks score again, just as time runs out in the game.

Jesus shouts over the noise...

JESUS
The cock!

...while it dies down just as suddenly as it had arisen.

JESUS
The cock!!

All monster eyes turn toward him, in the sudden silence.

Peter winces.

PETER
I don't think so.

Jesus sighs heavily, takes a piece of bread, breaks it, and gives it to the apostles around him.

JESUS
This bread is my body, which is
given for you.

A female YETI and the Mummy rush past the table, giggling, chased by the three stereotypical, droning Zombies.

ZOMBIES
We want to eat your brains.

The trailing Zombie #3 grabs a roll off of Jesus's table, and bites into it.

ZOMBIE #3
(with his mouth full)
Brains!

Crumbs fall out of his mouth.

Barely containing his anger, Jesus lifts his goblet of wine.

JESUS
This wine is my blood, which I shed
on the cross
(he winces)
for your sins.

From the other direction, Buffy chases the Werewolf,
Frankenstein, and Satan past the table.

BUFFY
Your blood! I drink your blood!

Satan screams; the Werewolf howls; and Frankenstein moans,
walking stiffly.

Jesus rises angrily from his chair.

JESUS
Enough!!

The room falls silent, and the monsters stop in their tracks.

JESUS
You're making a mockery of my
Second Coming! By this time
tomorrow, anyone who doesn't
believe in me will be left behind,
to be ruled over by the Antichrist!
When you're at the mercy of real
demons, you'll wish imaginary
monsters were real! And what'll you
do then, if your Father forsakes
you?!

He takes a few strides away, then turns back to face the
monsters.

JESUS
(to Frankenstein)
Only God can raise the dead!
(to Satan)
Sixty-eight percent of Americans
believe Satan is real! They can't
all be wrong!

He storms angrily out of the room, into a

HALLWAY

leading toward the rear exits into the olive garden,
muttering to himself.

JESUS
I can't believe I died for these
people.

RESTAURANT

The troubled Apostles get up from their seats at the mega-
table.

MARY
I'll go talk to him.

She leaves, walking toward the garden.

PETER
I've got to find a ... nevermind.

He leaves, heading toward the hotel's front desk.

ANDREW
(to John)
What are you doing tonight?

JOHN
My virgin daughters are in from
Wichita.

The male faces perk up ... except for Thomas's despondent
visage.

JOHN
What's wrong, Tommy-Boy?

THOMAS
Man, I was just thinking: This is
the last night we can really enjoy
ourselves. Before an eternity of
... heaven.

ANDREW
Married to God.

MATTHEW
The wives of God.

JOHN
(the realization hits)
God's bitches.

THOMAS
Shouldn't we do something special?
Like a ... party?

Beat.

JOHN
A pre-Rapture bachelor's party. On
our last night of freedom!

ANDREW
What about your virgin daughters?

JOHN
I'll bring 'em along! If no one
minds.

ANDREW / SIMON / MATTHEW
No! / Not at all! / The more the
merrier!

FRONT DESK

Peter heads purposefully toward the front doors while doing
an Internet search on his cell phone.

Robert, Earl, Richard, and Dorothy enter the front doors with
their luggage.

Peter stops dead in his tracks.

PETER
(to himself)
They've come for the Rapture.
(he shouts toward them)
Unbelievers! Heathens! You'll all
be left behind!

He reverses his steps, heading toward the rear exit doors to
the garden, muttering to himself.

PETER
That Satan just won't quit.

EXT. NYC STREET - NIGHT

Two policemen--OTTO (early-40s) and his junior partner GRAHAM
(mid-20s)--walk their beat, on the street past the hotel
garden.

GRAHAM

You got tickets for the show tomorrow night?

OTTO

Yeah, front row. I'm taking my daughter, Portia.

GRAHAM

VIP package?

OTTO

You bet. Maxed out my credit cards, goin' to heaven in style. How about you?

GRAHAM

I don't believe in fairy tales. No offense.

OTTO

None taken. Sinner.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus sits down on a park bench under the sky full of stars, looking up at the heavens.

He sighs heavily.

JESUS

One more night.

Mary approaches, and sits down beside him on the bench.

MARY

Are you feeling okay?

In the background, Peter sneaks along the rear wall of the hotel building, heading toward the street, hiding intermittently behind trees and the like, careful not to be seen by Jesus.

JESUS

Look at all those stars. Seven in the Big Dipper, seven in the Little. Seven planets, one for each day of the week. The Lord God made them all. Just for us.

MARY

And God's up there ... somewhere?

Beat.

JESUS
Somewhere.

MARY
Watching over us.

JESUS
He sees us when we're sleeping. He
knows when we're awake. He knows
when we've been bad or good.

Beat.

MARY
That's from the Bible?

JESUS
(wistful)
Sort of.

MARY
Are you coming back inside?

JESUS
You go ahead. I need some quiet
time, with God. To pray.

Mary leans over and kisses him tenderly on the cheek.

She then rises, and walks back inside.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

The Apostles (minus Peter, John, Thomas, Mary, and Simon)
settle in their suite.

Judas holds the TV remote control, scrolling through Netflix.

JUDAS
Who wants The Da Vinci Code?
(a couple of apostles
respond)
And who wants The Blood of the
Christ?

Everyone voices their approval.

Simon enters, carrying a six-pack of light beer in aluminum
cans.

JUDAS
The holy blood-bath!

He starts "The Blood of the Christ" playing.

Simon sits down beside Andrew on the couch.

He pulls a can off the plastic six-pack rings, and hands it to Andrew.

ANDREW
How fast can we drink, without getting drunk?

Simon takes another can off the rings, for himself, and puts the remaining cans on the coffee table.

SIMON
Two drinks an hour. Starting now.

They each pop a can open, and take a long sip.

John walks in through the open hallway door with two attractive teenage girls, PHOEBE and TAMMY.

JOHN
Everyone, these are my virgin daughters: Phoebe and Tammy.

All male eyes rivet on the two girls.

OTHERS
Hi! / Hello! / Whoa.

INT. HOTEL/HALLWAY (3RD FLOOR)

Mary walks up to a vending machine, inserts coins, and purchases a chocolate bar.

INT. HOTEL/HALLWAY (2ND FLOOR)

Frankenstein, Buffy, Satan, and Zombie #3 enter Room #216.

Buffy holds the goblet used by Jesus at dinner.

ZOMBIE #3
(to Buffy)
What's that?

BUFFY
The Holy Grail. Part Two. Revenge of the Christ.

FRANKENSTEIN

Produced by?

SATAN

Mel Gibson.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

Standing at the room's desk, Thomas takes a single-serving box of corn flakes and a small container of milk out of a convenience-store plastic bag.

Judas wanders over.

JUDAS

What do you have there?

Thomas reaches into his pocket and pulls out a small baggie, filled with dried, crumbled green leaves.

THOMAS

Every herb bearing seed, man.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus walks pensively over to a gnarled olive tree in the garden, and kneels down.

He clasps his hands, bows his head, and begins praying with great depth and solemnity, savoring the meditative silence around his sparse words.

JESUS

My Father, who art in heaven.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

Mary enters from the hallway with her chocolate bar.

She walks over to the couch, where Simon and Andrew are sitting.

MARY

What are you watching?

She discards her nun's habit...

ANDREW

The Blood of the, uh...

...revealing a low-cut blouse and ample bosom, caressed by long, flowing blond hair.

Andrew's eyes grow wide, glued to Mary's chest as she sits down beside him.

ANDREW
...Christ.

Mary unwraps her chocolate bar, with unconscious suggestivity.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
Hallowed be Thy name.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

By the closed bedroom door, Matthew flirts with Tammy, as she holds a full glass of red wine.

MATTHEW
So, what's Wichita like?

ANDREW
(from the couch)
Where's John?

The bedroom door opens, and Phoebe sticks her head out.

PHOEBE
(to Tammy)
We need more wine. A lot! Gimme your glass!

Tammy hands her wine glass to Phoebe.

PHOEBE
It's your turn next.

She shuts the bedroom door, from inside.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
Give us this day.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

Thomas stands at the closed hallway door, eating his bowl of corn flakes sprinkled with marijuana.

Crystal and Judas watch him, with interest.

JUDAS
What does it taste like?

THOMAS
(shrugs)
Corn flakes, with grass on it.

JUDAS
Let me try some.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
Our daily bread.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

Peter opens the hallway door and enters, dishevelled, with a live rooster held snugly in his arms.

PETER
(to Judas)
You wouldn't believe what I hadda go through to find a cock at this hour.

Crystal shuts the door behind him.

Peter walks farther into the room, schmoozing, as Thomas continues eating, waiting for the drug to kick in, with Judas watching.

JUDAS
(to Thomas)
I want to try some.

CRYSTAL
Get your own. You're paid enough.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
And forgive us our trespasses.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

Simon, Andrew, and Mary continue watching the movie, at a scene in which an actor-as-Jesus is being whipped mercilessly by Roman soldiers.

SIMON
This is the good part. Turn up the sound!

Andrew cranks up the volume on the remote control, blasting the "torture porn" subwoofer sound effects.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
As we forgive those who blaspheme
Thy name...

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #216

The subwoofer noise from the movie in the room above seeps down through the ceiling.

SATAN
What the hell are they doing?

FRANKENSTEIN
It sounds like they're torturing
someone.

Buffy takes out her cell phone, and dials 9-1-1, inadvertently showing her fangs as she prepares to speak.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
Yay, as we forgive those who
disbelieve in Thee, who disbelieve
in Me ... and who trespass against
us.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

Judas reaches for Thomas's bowl, shouting over the noise from the movie.

JUDAS
Give me that!

CRYSTAL
Get your own!

She reaches in and grabs Judas by the balls, tightly.

JUDAS
Arrrrgggh.

He lets go of the cereal bowl.

Crystal releases her grip.

Judas catches his breath, blue in the face.

In the kitchen, James the Greater cuts up red meat violently with a cleaver.

JAMES THE GREATER
(to Andrew, angrily)
Turn that down!

Andrew timidly lowers the movie volume with the remote control.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
Lead us not into temptation.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

By the closed door to the bedroom, Peter, holding his rooster, flirts with Phoebe, as she straightens her dishevelled clothes and hair.

PETER
You like ... eggs? All we need now
is a chicken.

He winks at her.

The rooster clucks.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
But deliver us from evil.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

By the closed hallway door, Judas straightens back up, nursing the pain in his groin.

JUDAS
"If men get into a fight with one another, and the wife of one reaches out and seizes his opponent's secrets, you shall cut off her hand!" Get a knife! Show her no mercy!

He grabs Crystal from behind.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
For Thine is the kingdom.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

By the closed bedroom door, the rooster struggles against Peter's hold, as James the Greater strides toward Crystal, brandishing the meat cleaver.

PETER
(to the rooster)
Easy, boy. That's not for you.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
The power and the glory.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

By the closed hallway door, James the Greater approaches the frightened, struggling Crystal (still in Judas's grip) with the meat cleaver.

JUDAS
(to Simon and Andrew)
Grab her!

Simon and Andrew rise excitedly from the couch.

Mary follows them at a distance, fascinated, nibbling on the half of the chocolate bar still in her hand.

Judas pushes Crystal awkwardly toward the coffee table.

JUDAS
(to Mary)
Get some towels: there'll be a lot
of blood!

Mary rushes obediently toward the bathroom.

Thomas watches, panicking helplessly.

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
Forever and ever.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

Simon and Andrew force Crystal down to her knees by the coffee table.

CRYSTAL
(to Tommy)
Help me!

Thomas frantically searches the faces of his friends, then concludes:

THOMAS
It's the word of God! You shouldn't
have grabbed his secrets! That
wasn't groovy!

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
In Thy divine justice, and
boundless compassion.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

Judas stretches the immobilized Crystal's left arm across the coffee table, like a chicken's neck on a chopping block, immobilizing her forearm and fingers separately with his two strong hands.

JUDAS
(to Simon and Andrew)
Hold her still!

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus kneels in the garden, continuing his prayer.

JESUS
Amen.

INT. HOTEL/ROOM #316

James the Greater raises the cleaver, taking aim at Crystal's wrist.

CRYSTAL
No!!

JUDAS
Now!!!

The hallway door flies open.

Otto and Graham burst into the room with their pistols drawn.

OTTO
Freeze! This is a raid!

EXT. HOTEL/GARDEN

Jesus rises from his knees.

JESUS
(gazing heavenward)
Please don't let them nail me to a
tree this time.

INT. HOTEL/HALLWAY (3RD FLOOR)

Otto and Graham stand outside Room #316, surveying the former party attendees.

The apostles and other party-goers stand with their hands on the hallway walls, and feet spread apart.

Otto reads the charges from a mobile PDA device in his hand.

OTTO
That's one count of disturbing the peace. Two of drinking under the legal age. One count of possession of marijuana ... corn flakes. Two counts of incest. Four counts of battery with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm. And a reformed prostitute with a chocolate bar.

The elevator doors open and Jesus enters, walking toward the apostles, his jaw dropping.

OTTO
Which one of you is Jesus?

Judas turns around from the wall and steps toward Jesus, puckering up, aiming for his cheek.

JESUS
(recoiling)
Don't kiss me!
(muttering)
Faggot.
(to Otto)
How could you not recognize me? I'm more popular than the Beatles!

OTTO
I have a medical condition: I can't recognize faces. Mr. Christ, room three-sixteen is registered under your name.

JESUS
Yes, I suppose.

OTTO

Do you know what's been going on in there?

JESUS

I was in the garden, praying.

OTTO

(to Peter, indicating Jesus)

Didn't I see you out there with him?

PETER

No.

From the room (O.S.) the rooster crows.

PETER

(to Jesus)

That was only one denial! Not three! I was right!

JESUS

You're thinking of what I said two thousand years ago.

PETER

I ... uhhhhh.

OTTO

And one count of keeping an illegal animal as a pet.

He types the new charge into his PDA.

GRAHAM

I'll call for the police van. Let's get these lawbreakers behind bars.

THOMAS

It's all in the Bible!

OTTO

What?

THOMAS

None of it's immoral, man. It's all in the Bible. Except for the chocolate bar.

OTTO

(to Jesus)

Is that true?

Beat.

JESUS
I believe so.

Beat.

OTTO
The last thing I want is to go down
in history as the pig who stood in
the way of the Rapture. Especially
with my front-row seats.
(to the party-goers)
Alright, I'll let you off with a
warning. It's your last night on
Earth, boys. Try and behave
yourselves.

Jesus points angrily to the open room door.

JESUS
(to the disciples)
Go to your room!

The party-goers file into Room #316 past him, their heads
hung in shame.

Jesus looks them over with disdain.

JESUS
The spirit is weak, and the flesh
is ... even weaker. Just think:
Heaven will be filled with people
like you.

EXT. NEW JERUSALEM STADIUM - DAY

A SCALPER stands outside New Jerusalem Stadium, as the ticket-
holders file in.

SCALPER
Need tickets? Have tickets?

The Apocalyptic Man pickets nearby, with his sign.

APOCALYPTIC MAN
Need salvation? Have salvation?

A short, fifty-something Bono-esque Irishman (PAUL VOX) with
designer sunglasses rushes up to the Scalper, dragging along
his attractive brunette wife (ALLIE) and their TWO DAUGHTERS
and TWO SONS.

PAUL
I need tickets! For my family. Six.
Front row.

SCALPER
Five grand each. Field-level, back
row.

PAUL
What??

SCALPER
For you, four and a half.

Paul shakes his head in disbelief, and then pulls three bank-wrapped bundles of pristine \$100 bills out of his coat pockets.

PAUL
This is highway robbery. The works
of Satan!

He hands the first two bundles over to the Scalper, and then counts out the remainder owed from the third.

SCALPER
Why didn't you reserve earlier?

PAUL
I thought he was a lunatic or a
liar. I didn't know he was the real
Lord!

EXT. STADIUM/FIELD-LEVEL (FRONT ROWS)

The empty stage on which Jesus & the Apostles will perform has seven towering wooden crosses behind the band, as its symmetrical motif: The highest one stands in the middle, the next-highest ones at either end, and another two (supporting jumbotron screens) on either side of the center.

Nick sits down with his notepad and pen in the 10th row center, next to Dan.

Dan recognizes him, and assumes he's converted.

DAN
(knowingly)
There are no atheists in foxholes.

NICK

I heard Lennon and Harrison were coming back to life tonight, to jam with Jesus.

DAN

Really?

NICK

(deadpan)

Swear to god.

EXT. STADIUM/FIELD-LEVEL (BACK ROWS)

The monsters (Satan, Frankenstein, Buffy, Werewolf, the Mummy, and the three Zombies) sit in the last row of the field-level seats.

All except Satan (with his plastic pitchfork) are in their normal clothes, without costumes.

FRANKENSTEIN

Why didn't you take your costume off?

SATAN

Monster Con's not over 'til midnight. I have to stay in character until then. It's in my contract.

Paul and his family find their own seats, beside the monsters.

To his horror, Paul finds himself sitting next to Satan.

PAUL

Uh, hi.

Satan smiles congenially back at him.

EXT. STADIUM/SECOND LEVEL

The Jesus-Mythicist scholars (Robert, Earl, Richard, and Dorothy) and the bowling-team girls (Cindy, Mindy, Lindy, and Wendy) sit down with their beers in cheaper seats on the second level, coincidentally in groups beside each other.

ROBERT

My name's Robert.

He extends his hand, to shake.

CINDY

Cindy.

ROBERT

(gazing around them)

I don't believe a word of this.

CINDY

Me neither. Should be a hoot!

She bumps plastic beer cups with Robert, toasting...

CINDY

Cheers.

...and takes a swig of her beer, as Robert smiles and drinks from his own cup.

EXT. STADIUM/SECOND LEVEL (RAILING)

Ricky and Lance unfurl and hang a banner from the railing in front of the lowest seats: "God Hates Fags."

RICKY

God hates fags!

LANCE

Jesus doesn't, but they'll still burn in hell!

RICKY

Yeah! Praise Jesus!

INT. STADIUM/MERCHANDISE STAND

In the halls of the stadium, Mary and Judas sell t-shirts, robes, sandals, crowns of thorns, and other holy relics to fans lined up at the merchandise table.

AVRIL (blond, early-30s), with heavy eye makeup, and CHAD (early-40s) stand at the front of the line.

AVRIL

Are these really slivers from the cross they used to crucify Jesus?

CHAD

And pieces of his foreskin?

MARY

I believe so.

CHAD

I'll just take a "Sympathy for the Savior" t-shirt. Large.

Mary takes a shirt down: the front has a thick, slightly curving red cross on its front, stylized as a cousin to the Rolling Stones' trademark tongue logo.

CHAD

And, um, a packet of foreskins.

EXT. STADIUM

Throughout the venue other recognizable faces take their seats: Lori, Meg, Gloria, Martha, and Stephen (in his wheelchair).

Pontiac Pilaté, Karla, and James sit down together.

Before sitting, Pontiac wipes down his seat with a moist towelette.

Linda, talking on her cell phone, sits down with her teenage son, NATHAN.

LINDA

Mel? I won't be in for my shift tomorrow.... 'Cause I'll be in heaven, and you can go to hell.

She hangs up the phone.

LINDA

Praise Jesus!

The stadium quickly fills to standing-room-only capacity, as darkness falls.

INT. STADIUM/BACKSTAGE ROOM

A dozen VIP ticketholders (including Otto and his blond teenage daughter PORTIA), plus the band, watch with reverence and awe as THE POPE prays with Jesus.

THE POPE

In nomine Patris et fillii et Spiritus Sancti.

JESUS

Amen.

They raise their heads.

THE POPE
Comminuetis cruris.

JESUS
Pardon?

THE POPE
Break a leg.

As the room empties out, Peter and the rest of the band walk up to Jesus, sheepishly.

PETER
We're sorry about last night,
Savior.

SIMON
Yeah.

ANDREW
Me too.

JOHN
I don't know what got into us. It
must've been ... Satan.

APOSTLES
Yeah.

JESUS
It's okay. If I can forgive James
the Greater for killing Jaco, and
the Inquisition and the witch-
hunters for not killing all the
heretics and witches, I can forgive
you.

APOSTLES
Thank you, Jesus!

The noise of the audience chanting in their seats grows,
reverberating through the rooms backstage.

JESUS
They've waited two thousand years
for this. Let's give 'em a show
they'll never forget.

EXT. STADIUM/FIELD-LEVEL -- NIGHT

Camera operators mill around the stage and in the stands,
preparing to broadcast the show.

INT. STADIUM/BROADCAST BOOTH

The director, MARTIN (40s), sits at a console, with video feeds from a dozen cameras showing in front of him.

MARTIN
Camera one, stand by.

EXT. STADIUM/STAGE

The stadium lights dim, as Jesus & the Apostles take the stage.

The audience rises to its feet, applauding and cheering wildly.

The band dons their instruments, and Jesus approaches the center-stage mic.

JESUS
Good evening, New York City. Are you ready to Rapture?

The audience goes even-wilder.

JESUS
This is a song about believing in the One True Messiah. It's called, "Sheep Will Follow."

The band strikes up the U2-like tune.

In the audience, Paul--still wearing his designer sunglasses in the dark--smiles to himself.

JESUS
(singing)
I was outside Jericho
When the walls came tumbling down
You were lost sheep 'til
I found you, you are found

A rattle goes before a hum
Just wait until my kingdom comes
'Cause baby, you can't live
With or without me

Where I lead, where I lead
Where I lead, where I lead
Sheep will follow

Where I lead, where I lead
Where I lead, where I lead
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

You sheep will follow

I was in the Temple
When the veil was torn in two
You were lost sheep, now you're
Found, because I found you

I am the only Son of God
All false gurus are merely frauds
I died for you upon the Cross
And rose into the clouds

Where I lead, where I lead
Where I lead, where I lead
Sheep will follow

Where I lead, where I lead
Where I lead, where I lead
Sheep will follow

You sheep will follow

The song's key modulates, for the bridge:

Angels, all in Harlem
They are the sweetest thing
The streets of heaven have no name
But there, you too will sing

Chorus:

Where I lead, where I lead
Where I lead, where I lead
Sheep will follow

Where I lead, where I lead
Where I lead, where I lead
You sheep will follow

You, too, will follow
You, too, will follow

The audience (esp. Paul) applauds and cheers loudly.

A huge inflatable sheep floats out from behind the stage,
rising over the audience.

Painted on one side of the animal is a cross, the word
"Believe!" and other Christian graffiti.

On the other side of the sheep are the words from John 3:16,
"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten
Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but
have Everlasting Life."

Jesus recites a spoken-word interlude, over bass and psychedelic keyboards, as videotaped scenes from the Genesis Museum (including Jesus on the unicorn) are shown on the jumbotrons:

JESUS
(through a vocoder)
I am the Good Shepherd
You shall not want
I make you to lie down in green
pastures
I lead you beside the still waters
I restore your soul
I guide you along the right paths
For My name's sake

The audience cheers.

JESUS
Good sheep! Good sheep!! God loves
you!

The audience cheers.

JESUS
And you know that can't be bad. I
say, God loves you!

The audience cheers again, louder.

JESUS
So rejoice now, and be glad!

The audience roars.

John lays down a steady, solo bass beat.

JESUS
I'd like to introduce the band.

The other musicians join in with flourishes, as their names are called.

JESUS
On drums and keyboards, the filet-o-
fishers of men, Simon and Andrew!
On bass, the King of the Bottom
End, Saint John, the Bassist! On
rhythm and lead guitar, the man
upon whom I have built my rock
band, Saint Peter!
(to Peter)
Don't try and deny it!
(to the audience)
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

And I am ... the one and only ...
True Messiah!

The audience roars.

JESUS

We'll do one more. This is the last
song you'll hear before being
raptured up into heaven, to enjoy
eternal life. Or if any of you here
tonight, or the seven billion
watching, don't believe in me,
you'll be "Left Behind."

The crowd cheers ecstatically.

The song starts off with sparse electric guitar.

JESUS

(singing)

You may channel spirits galore
But in the End of Times
You're just a New Age whore
You may have the healing touch
But when the Rapture comes
That won't impress me much

The bass and drums join in, lightly.

You may be a Mormon lad
With two or three good wives
And magic underpants
You may be an atheist
But we're not monkeys, man
I'll cross you off my list

And you'll be

Peter and John sing backing vocals on the chorus:

PETER & JOHN

(singing)

Left behind

JESUS

(singing)

You won't think living on Earth is
nice

PETER & JOHN

(singing)

Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
When you're a slave to the
Antichrist

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
You're gonna fall on your knees and
pray

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
On Tribulation and Judgment Day

With the second verse, the song begins to rock.

JESUS
(singing)
You may sing the Prophet's Song
But when the Queen is dead
You'll find you sang it wrong
You may be a Muslim son
But all your daily prayers
Won't get you Virgin One

You may be a Hindu monk
But you won't be reborn
Believin' all that junk
You may be a kosher Jew
But your six hundred laws
Won't be enough to save you

You'll be

Simon and Andrew contribute backing "Ahhhh" vocals on the chorus.

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
You won't think living on Earth is
nice

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
When you're a slave to the
Antichrist

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
You're gonna fall on your knees and
pray

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
On Tribulation and Judgment Day

The entire crowd rises to its feet, clapping and dancing along ecstatically with the music.

Random people throughout the Beatlemania-esque stadium shout out "I love you, Jesus!" and similar sincere professions of faith.

With the third verse, the band pulls out all the stops, rocking the stadium with ear-splitting volume:

JESUS
(singing)
You may be a witch-woman
Casting an evil spell
Paying the price of sin
You may be a pagan man
Worshiping Stonehenge rays
Dance to the pipes of Pan

You may be an infidel
A godless heretic
By cloven footsteps riv'n
You may be a Satanist
Your pact with Lucifer
Won't get your sins forgiv'n

You'll be

Simon and Andrew again contribute backing "Ahhhh" vocals on the choruses.

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
You won't think living on Earth is
nice

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
When you could be up in Paradise

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
You're gonna fall on your knees and
pray

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
On Tribulation and Judgment Day

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
You're gonna hear a loud trumpet
call

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
And see the fire and the brimstone
fall

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
The full moon with red blood will
drip

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
When you're trapped in the
Apocalypse

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
Because you didn't believe in me

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
You're gonna burn for eternity

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
You shoulda done what the Bible
tells

PETER & JOHN
(singing)
Left behind

JESUS
(singing)
You're gonna burn, baby, burn in
hell

The band continues singing repetitive backing vocals...

SIMON & ANDREW / PETER & JOHN

(singing)

Ahhhh / Left behind
Ahhhh / Left behind
Ahhhh / Left behind
Ahhhh / Left behind....

...as Jesus ascends on a fake cloud (with his mic on a stand).

Smoke-machine smoke swirls at his feet, while he plays searing lead-guitar licks around the backing vocals.

When the cloud reaches the level of the horizontal beam on the central wooden cross, fifty feet above the stage, the ascent and the music (and backing vocals) stops.

A hush falls over the stadium.

JESUS

Do you believe in me?!

AUDIENCE

Yes!!

JESUS

Do you believe in me?!!

AUDIENCE

Yes!!!

The keyboards sound a piercing trumpet call.

Audience members briefly cover their ears in response to the shrill, painful sound.

In the low sky above the stage, real thunderclouds move in.

AUDIENCE

We believe in you, Jesus!

Atop the cloud Jesus lifts his eyes heavenward, and spreads his arms wide.

JESUS

Heavenly Father, let the Rapture
begin! Receive the souls of all
True Christians into Thy heavenly
kingdom!

The fake cloud descends slowly, with Jesus on it.

EXT. STADIUM/FIELD-LEVEL (FRONT ROWS)

In the front row, standing beside Otto, the Pope watches Jesus, rapt.

THE POPE
(to Otto)
Every eye shall see him!

INT. LILLIE'S HOUSE/LIVING ROOM

A sweet, elderly widow (LILLIE, 70s) sits alone on the couch, in her best Sunday dress and pearls, watching the show on her modest, near-obsolete TV.

She clutches her Bible, rosary, and deceased husband's war medals, with tears forming in her eyes.

LILLIE
I believe in you, Jesus.

INT. RURAL CHINESE HOME

A family of Chinese peasants watch Jesus descend on the cloud, via their state-of-the-art TV.

CHINESE FATHER
(in Chinese; English
subtitle)
We believe in you, Jesus!

INT. AFRICAN HUT

A sub-Saharan family of African hunter-gatherers watch the live streaming of Jesus descending on the cloud, via a shared cell phone.

AFRICAN FAMILY
(in their click-based
native language; English
subtitle)
We believe in you, King of the
Jews!

EXT. STADIUM

The standing audience waits breathlessly as Jesus descends on the cloud.

Believers burst into tears of joy, reverence, and ecstasy.

JESUS
(gazing heavenward)
Take thy loyal sheep to heaven, to
live there eternally, in the
sunshine of Thy love!

In the audience, Nick raises an eyebrow.

As the fake cloud descends to stage-level, real thunder
rolls, ominously.

Jesus takes the mic out of its stand and kneels down, to
pray.

JESUS
(into the mic)
Heavenly Father, we beseech Thee,
receive Thy faithful sheep into Thy
heavenly flock. Receive Thy
obedient children into Thy mansion.
Save us from the clutches of Satan!

The entire Audience, including Satan, waits expectantly, on
pins and needles.

JESUS
Give us a sign that we have earned
Your approval. Show us you love us
... as much as we love You.

He lowers the mic, and gazes up at the sky.

Lightning from the thundercloud hits the crosses at both ends
of the stage, plus the tallest cross at the center
simultaneously, accompanied by an ear-splitting crack of
thunder.

The audience staggers back, in fear and wonder.

A deep, resonant Voice speaks from out of the thundercloud:

GOD THE FATHER (V.O.)
This is my beloved Son, with whom I
am well pleased.

JESUS
(in awe)
You are?

The cloud murmurs approvingly, with a soothing, rolling
thunder.

Jesus listens intently as the sustained rumbling conveys
words only he can hear.

Then the thunderclouds part to let the radiant full moon shine through.

JESUS

Yes, Father. Thy will be done.

He rises to his feet atop the stage-level cloud.

The seven towering crosses loom behind him.

JESUS

(into the mic)

God ... my Father ... has spoken to me. The reign of the Antichrist has been ... postponed ... by the forces of Good and Light. That's the Goodness and Light shining in each one of you! Because of your prayers, because of your love for Me, the sinners still have time to repent! Your lost brothers and sisters can still be saved from the clutches of Satan! Thanks to all of you!!

After a stunned silence of cognitive dissonance, a few members of the audience begin a proud chant that quickly spreads to shake the entire stadium--an ocean of raised fists pounding the air in unison:

AUDIENCE

Jesus rocks! Satan sucks!
Jesus rocks! Satan sucks!
Jesus rocks! Satan sucks!

Sensing the growing madness-of-crowds mentality, the Jesus-Mythicists and bowling girls head for the exits.

Nick likewise makes for the doors.

The standing monsters and members of the audience near Satan (incl. Paul) focus on him, keeping their distance while viewing him with suspicion and increasing hatred.

Satan stops chanting with them and looks around, concerned, as the chant continues throughout the rest of the stadium.

SATAN

(fearful)

It's just a Halloween costume. I'm not really Satan! See?

He pulls the mask off his head, revealing a face whose pointed features and flushed skin match the mask nearly exactly.

The surrounding audience members, led by Paul, press in closer to him.

PAUL
No sympathy for the Devil!

Satan backs away from them toward the wall, stumbling over the folding chairs--crouching and raising his pitchfork in frantic defense--looking desperately for an exit, as the Believers close in on him.

EXT. STADIUM/TUNNEL - NIGHT

From the backstage exit, Jesus gets into the rear seat of a black stretch limousine, on the driver's side.

James the Greater closes the door from outside.

The limo pulls away from the stage door.

EXT. NYC HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The limo moves in sparse traffic, away from the stadium.

INT. LIMO (MOVING)

Jesus sits in the back seat, with the protective glass between himself and the driver (Frank) lowered.

FRANK
Back to the hotel, Sir?

JESUS
No. I feel like....

Two red, top-down convertibles approach the limo from behind, the second following right behind the first in the passing lane.

JESUS
Oh-oh.

EXT. NYC HIGHWAY

The first convertible accelerates to pull up beside Jesus's limo.

Earl drives with his arm around Cindy in the front seat, while Robert and Mindy share an open bottle of champagne in the back.

Cindy motions for the occupant of the limo to roll his tinted window down.

INT. LIMO (MOVING)

Jesus apprehensively presses a button to lower his power window.

EARL & CINDY
Great show!

ROBERT & MINDY
You rock!

They toast Jesus with the champagne, and then accelerate past the limo, disappearing into the distance.

JESUS
(confused)
Thanks.

The second convertible pulls up quickly beside the limo.

Lindy (driving) and Richard share the front, with Wendy and Dorothy making out in the back.

ALL IN SECOND CAR
Better than Bono!

They accelerate into the distance.

Jesus grins.

He presses a button to roll up his window, feeling on top of the world.

JESUS
(to Frank)
Have you ever been to Amsterdam?

FRANK
No, Sir.

Beat.

JESUS
I feel like going for a walk. Drop me off at that pier we saw yesterday.

FRANK

Yes, Sir.

Jesus presses a button to raise the protective glass.

EXT. NYC HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The limo pulls onto the road's shoulder, in thick fog.

Jesus gets out of the vehicle on the curb side, and shuts the door behind him.

The limo drives away.

Jesus walks down the riverbank to the position of the shallow pier, now covered by water at high tide, under the full moon.

He stops at the water's edge, savoring the moment.

JESUS

(satisfied)

Better than Bono.

He walks out into the fog-covered river, supported on the surface of the water.

As he walks forward, on the water, he disappears silently into the fog.

TITLE:

"The Cross," by Jesus & the Apostles, is available on 3Magi Records.

Coming soon to a concert hall near you.

See www.rockstarjesus.com for tour dates.

FADE TO BLACK.

Music plays over the end credits--ideally, the intro to Deep Purple's "Smoke on the Water," cross-fading into the Harp Twins' angelic, dual-harp cover of U2's "With or Without You."