

# The Great Cross Conspiracy

*By Anthony S. Cicatko*

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### **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this with great appreciation to my great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.

### **STORY OF THE PLAY**

When assigned to complete a report titled "Jesus: Myth or Reality?" high-schooler Tom wants tangible evidence, not just faith. Resting for a moment, he drifts off, only to find himself a reporter in biblical time assigned a story to disprove that Jesus is the Messiah. Encouraged by the promise of a promotion, Tom sets out to find facts. His friend Carol accompanies him, and just as they go looking for Jesus, Nicodemus secretly pulls them aside to ask only that they speak with Jesus face-to-face before printing their article. Along their journey they meet John the Baptist who is currently imprisoned, a man healed by Jesus, a vendor who heard Jesus's sermon, and Caiaphas as he meets with other high priests in the council room. Hearing their plans to arrest Jesus, Tom finds himself scrambling to save Jesus by spreading the word that He is the Messiah. Instead of getting the word out in the newspaper, Tom is thrown into a dark prison cell where he suffers through hearing the crucifixion. Under the shadow of the cross, Tom weeps in his failure to save Jesus. Awakening, Tom finds all the facts he needs to know that Jesus is real and alive today. He sees that believing in Him changes us, believing in Him gives us joy, and believing in Him gives us purpose, life, and hope. This powerful play runs approximately an hour.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS**

*(8 m, 1 w, 3 flexible, many speaking extras.)*

**TOM:** High school student looking for facts.  
**STONEWALL** (flex): Editor of the newspaper.  
**ZEROX** (flex): Newsroom employee who copies.  
**CAROL** (f): Tom's friend and believer in Jesus.  
**NICODEMUS:** A Pharisee who has spoken with Jesus.  
**GUARD:** Various roles as a guard.  
**JOHN THE BAPTIST:** A prophet.  
**MAN:** Is healed by Jesus.  
**JESUS:** Son of God.  
**PHARISEE 1:** Defends the Holy Law of Moses.  
**VENDOR** (flex): Witnessed Jesus's sermon.  
**CAIAPHAS:** High priest who plots to kill Jesus.

**BIBLE CHARACTERS:**

1st WOMAN and 2nd WOMAN  
1st MAN and 2nd MAN  
WOMAN  
ZACCIEAUS and PRIEST  
MAN  
ROMAN GUARD and SERVANT  
CHILD 1 and CHILD 2  
MESSENGER, 3 PHARISEES and CAIAPHAS

**OFFSTAGE CRUCIFIXION CHARACTERS:**

CROWD  
GUARD  
MAN  
WOMAN  
JESUS  
PHARISEES  
2<sup>ND</sup> MAN ON THE CROSS  
1<sup>ST</sup> MAN ON THE CROSS  
MARY  
VOICES, A SINGLE VOICE

**EXTRAS:** Narrator, newsroom employees, injured people, crowd, and Pharisees.

## **SYNOPSIS OF SCENES**

### **ACT I**

**Scene 1:** Tom's bedroom, modern times.

**Scene 2:** A newsroom, biblical times. Because it is a dream, let your imagination go. I suggest computers encased in granite, tablets of stone, shell cell phones or phones of rams horns.

**Scene 3:** On the street, biblical times. Played in front of curtain.

**Scene 4:** In a prison cell, biblical times.

**Scene 5:** Near the Pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, on the street, biblical times.

### **ACT II**

**Scene 1:** On the street in Nazareth, biblical times.

**Scene 2:** Various locations throughout the theater, biblical times.

**Scene 3:** Council room for the high priest, biblical times.

**Scene 4:** On the street, played in front of curtain, biblical times.

**Scene 5:** The newsroom, biblical times.

**Scene 6:** In a prison cell, biblical times.

**Scene 7:** Empty stage, in the shadow of the cross, biblical times.

**Scene 8:** Tom's bedroom, modern times.

### **A note from the playwright:**

For Act II, Scene 2: If you want the audience to make decisions for Christ after the performance, it is this scene that they will be impacted and influenced to do so. In this scene, feel free to act out any unmentioned portions from the Bible that depict Jesus healing or doing miracles here. Do not feel as if you are bound to this script. Use your imagination and let the Spirit of God guide you.

**Act I**  
**Scene 1**

*(AT RISE: This scene is not elaborate. Just a few furnishings typical of a high schooler's room. On the wall is a pennant "Go Christian Lions." TOM is talking on a cell phone to Carol while pacing the room.)*

**TOM:** Stonewall is a jerk, I tell yah! I mean, who ever heard of such a stupid title for a report, "Jesus: Myth or Reality?" Seriously...everyone knows that Jesus was real, but who can put it in words? *(Pause.)* You know what I mean, Carol. We need fact tangible facts. Something you can wrap your hands around... Sure, faith is one thing, but right now we need facts...You know, like that article we did for the school paper. Remember the headline *(Gives the HEADLINE jester with his hands.)* "Corruption in the Lunch Line." Yeah, now that was fact: 400 cookies at 75 cents each = 300 dollars, and when 300 comes out to 275 there's corruption in the lunch line, FACT! We did a great job on that one. And that's because there were facts. *(Pause.)* NO, this is not the same. Because now we are reduced from fact-finding – shadow chasing, religious theories, and conjectures – nothing factual. Look, I believe just as much as anyone, but I can't work under these circumstances. I need facts. Can you give me one tangible piece of evidence that would make me believe that the Lord Jesus really existed, and that he was really who he said he was? *(Beat.)* Of course he rose from the dead! I believe that as much as anyone, but what I said was do you have any TANGIBLE EVIDENCE. *(Pause.)* Well, neither do I, and that's the problem with this report. *(Pause.)* Hmm, I do remember hearing something about Josephus from Pastor Mark. He was some sort of ancient historian, wasn't he? Yes, we need to research him later. *(Pause.)* No, my dad is doing something on the computer, can you meet me at the library? Say in a half hour or so? Good. Then I'll see you there. *(Hangs up, plops into a chair and mumbles.)* Got a few minutes to relax... Man, Stonewall—what a jerk! *(LIGHTS fade.)*

**NARRATOR:** Job 33:14-16. For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon men, in slumberings upon the bed; Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction. (KJV)

*(LIGHTS dim.)*

## **Scene 2**

*(AT RISE: A peaceful but busy newsroom, in biblical time. EMPLOYEES move about. A third of the room is separated by a wall which is Stonewall's office. STONEWALL is on the phone with his boss. He is uncomfortable and nervously nodding yes. TOM is working at a desk while CAROL is discussing something with another coworker. In the middle of the room ZEROX is writing diligently. He wears a printer's visor. To his right, there is a large stack of scrolls labeled "blank parchments." To his left is a smaller stack of scrolls labeled "finished today's editions.")*

**STONEWALL:** *(Hangs up, goes to the doorway.)* TOM!  
CAROL! GET IN HERE RIGHT NOW!

*(TOM and CAROL look up and give an "Oh no, what have we done now" look.)*

**STONEWALL:** *(Cont'd. To ZEROX.)* Are you done yet?

**ZEROX:** Well, ah... Not yet, sir. I have a few more still.  
*(Pointing to the scrolls marked "blank parchments.")*

**STONEWALL:** How many to go?

**ZEROX:** Hmm... Let's see... 305, sir.

**STONEWALL:** Well, get on it.

*(TOM and CAROL enter the office. STONEWALL grunts at Zerox and follows Tom and Carol in the office. ZEROX returns to his copying.)*

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**STONEWALL:** *(Cont'd.)* Listen up, you two. I just got off the phone with Caiaphas—

**CAROL:** The Caiaphas?

**TOM:** The high priest Caiaphas?

**STONEWALL:** That's right. And the owner of this newspaper Caiaphas.

**TOM:** That can't be good. What does he want?

**STONEWALL:** Well, he wants you two to do a piece on this Jesus.

**CAROL:** I thought it was "code silent" on Jesus?

**STONEWALL:** It was, only—

**TOM:** *(Interrupts.)* —Only the "code silent" is louder than the trumpets on the feast of trumpets. By not mentioning or acknowledging Jesus, the whole paper looks foolish. Jesus is turning lots of heads here, isn't He?

**STONEWALL:** Well, I didn't say that.

*(TOM smiles to himself that he was right.)*

**CAROL:** Speaking of turning heads, I hear that even some of the higher priests are starting to believe in Him.

**TOM:** Is the old man getting a little nervous?

*(TOM and CAROL look at STONEWALL for a reply.)*

**STONEWALL:** Well, you're right, of course you're right. That is why you're the best reporters we have, and that is why you have both been assigned to this story.

**TOM:** You'll need to find someone else. I'm on the Barabbas story. He was arrested again and—

**CAROL:** —Yes, and I'm on the temple project story.

**STONEWALL:** *(Hands up.)* Hang on. My hands are tied. Caiaphas himself wants you both on this. Tom, give your notes to Adrian. Carol, you give your notes to Falagus...

**TOM:** Wow. Wait up here. I did the last "Messiah" story. Remember that dude named Judas of the Galilee back during the time the taxing thing was going on?

**CAROL:** Right, and I did the one before that, remember? His name was Theudas. It ended badly.

### **End of Freeview**

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