

The Story of Jesus

Matthew 26: 47 – 28: 20; Mark 14: 43 – 16: 20; Luke 22: 63 – 24: 53; John 18: 1 – 21: 14

This is essentially the Easter story, describing the events of Easter week, or The Passion and resurrection of Jesus, but with an introduction explaining their spiritual significance – Jesus came to die on a cross to pay the price for our sins and reconcile us to God the Father – and in the context of his birth and ministry.

The Bible chapter and verses given are for reference only and are not to be read out loud. Sceptic 2 and Believer 2 only have one line each, but they are the surprise grand finale, and should be plants sat among the congregation ready to stand up and loudly declare their unbelief and belief respectively, to bring home the point that we are all called to make a decision: is Jesus Lord or not. Sceptic should wear black top, Believer something light (but not white). Sceptic and Believer need to get a different emphasis on each of their lines, eg. sarcasm, anger, or confusion, etc for the Sceptic; joyful praise or heartfelt worship, etc for the Believer. Sketch starts with Narrator centre stage, Sceptic and Believer out of sight behind screen.

Narrator: When the universe began it was created through Jesus (*Hebrews 1:2*) and as the Lord laid the earth's foundations, the angels shouted for joy (*Job 38: 4-7*):

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*said from behind screen, using microphone*)

Narrator: God created people free to choose to live God's way or free to follow their own path. And you know how that story goes: Adam and Eve chose to go their own way. But this didn't catch God off-guard, he already knew what was going to happen, and had factored in a rescue package:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*said from behind screen, using microphone*)

Narrator: It makes your head spin trying to understand why God would do things this way, but then we don't see the bigger picture, we don't see things the way God does. From before time began, God's plan had always been to send his son in human form to earth, knowing that this part of Jesus' story would end with him being killed on a cross, that we might look at it and see only Roman soldiers killing a Jewish rebel, but in the spiritual realm, a mighty battle was won. Everything you've ever done wrong, everything wrong that's ever been done to you, all that evil, selfishness, and pain—Jesus took it all upon himself and took the blame and the punishment. Now when we surrender our lives to Jesus, and God the father looks upon us, He sees us as innocent, because Jesus has paid the price for our sins so that we don't have to.

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*said from behind screen, using microphone*)

Narrator: Of course, not everyone believes this, and the devil -who does know it's true- is much happier when people think it's all a lie, a made-up story, a misunderstanding.

(Believer and Sceptic walk on to stage and stand either side of Narrator)

Narrator: When Jesus was born, the angels, shepherds (*Luke 2: 8-20*) and wise men (*Matthew 2:1-18*) said:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*steps forward, and kneels to worship, arms out*)

Narrator: But when King Herod heard a rival King had been born, he said:

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool**

Narrator: And he had all the boys in Bethlehem who were under two years old killed hoping that Jesus would be one of them (*Matthew 2:1-18*).

When Jesus began his ministry, those who saw him perform miraculous healings (*John 2:23*) said:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*steps forward, stays standing, arms out, then steps back into place*)

Narrator: But when Jesus drove the money-changers and sellers out of the temple for disrespecting God's ways (*John 2:14-22*), the religious leaders said:

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool**

Narrator: Even Jesus own brothers (*John 7:1-7*) said:

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool**

Narrator: When Jesus restored the sight of a man who was born blind, the man said (*John 9:38*):

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*steps forward, stays standing, arms out, then steps back into place*)

Narrator: But the religious leaders, who didn't like the fact that Jesus had the power to heal, said (*John 9: 1-41*):

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool**

Narrator: When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (*John 11: 45*) many Jews said:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*out, then steps back into place*)

Narrator: But the religious leaders said (*John 11: 46-53*):

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool**

Narrator: And from that day on they plotted to take his life. On Palm Sunday, a week before Easter, Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem and the crowds shouted:

Believer: **Hosanna! Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*arms up in praise*)

Narrator: But one of Jesus' disciples, Judas, was not happy with the type of leader Jesus had turned out to be. Judas said:

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool**

Narrator: And plotted with the religious leaders to betray Jesus (*John 18: 2-5*). They had him arrested and questioned him. They didn't like the fact that Jesus was teaching the Jewish people a new way of living, they were afraid of losing their authority. Then the religious leaders took Jesus to the Roman governor, called Pilate. They wanted Jesus killed but only the Roman rulers were allowed to execute someone. Pilate questioned Jesus, trying to determine what he had done wrong (*John 18: 28-40*). Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, the ruler of Galilee who was visiting Jerusalem at that time (*Luke 23: 6-12*). But when Jesus wouldn't entertain him by performing miracles Herod said:

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool**

Narrator: And sent him back to Pilate. Pilate didn't want to kill Jesus, but he didn't understand the answers Jesus gave, about being a king, but not of this world (*John 18: 28-40*). Pilate said:

Sceptic: **Why don't you answer me properly?! Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool**

(Believer looks down in defeat)

Narrator: Pilate's soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus' head. They flogged Jesus (*John 19: 1-3*), saying:

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool** *(mime flogging)*

Narrator: The religious leaders told Pilate that he would be in trouble with Caesar if he let Jesus live after Jesus had claimed to be a king (*John 19: 12-15*). They shouted:

Sceptic: **Crucify him! Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool.**

Narrator: And so Pilate was persuaded to hand Jesus over to be crucified (*John 19:16*). As Jesus hung on the cross, the religious leaders, the soldiers, and the passing crowds all stopped to mock him (*Matthew 27:39-44, Mark 15:29-32, Luke 23: 35-37*):

Sceptic: **You saved others, why don't you save yourself? Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool**

Narrator: Two thieves were crucified next to Jesus (*Luke 23:39-43*).

(Sceptic and Believer both put arms out at same time as though hung on cross as Narrator says this line)

Narrator: One of the thieves called out:

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool** *(arms out as though hung on cross)*

Narrator: But the other thief said:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** *(arms out as though hung on cross, look up slowly)*

Narrator: And Jesus answered him: "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in Paradise" (*Luke 23: 43*).

(Sceptic and Believer put arms down at same time)

Narrator: It was a long, drawn-out, painful death.

(Believer covers face crying)

Narrator: Mary Magdalene was the first to see Jesus alive again (*Mark 16:9, John 20: 11-17*) as she stood outside the tomb crying, wondering who had moved his body and where to. Jesus said to her "Mary..." Mary said:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** *(falling to knees in worship)*

Narrator: As two of the disciples walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus, Jesus joined them (*Luke 24: 13-35*):

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** *(stepping forward, arms out)*

Narrator: Jesus then appeared to the disciples who were hiding in a locked room, afraid of the religious leaders (*John 20: 19-23*). Jesus said, "Peace be with you!". The disciples said:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*falling to knees, arms out, then stand up and step back*)

Narrator: And then again when the disciples were out fishing Jesus stood on the shore and called to them (*John 21: 1-14*). The disciples said:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*stepping forward, arms out*)

Narrator: The religious leaders and Romans talked together to get their story straight. They decided to say the disciples had stolen the body (*Matthew 28: 11-15*).

Sceptic: **There was no resurrection! Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool.**

Narrator: Later, on a mountain in Galilee, Jesus came to the disciples and said "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (*Mathew 28: 16-20*). The disciples said:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*arms up in praise*)

Narrator: Then Jesus ascended into heaven (*Mark 16:19, Luke 24: 50-51*), leaving his disciples with the power of the Holy Spirit to share the good news about the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God (*Luke 24: 45-49*). And the same message still goes out today:

Believer: **Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord** (*said x3 in unison with Sceptic, whilst walking forward. End kneeling, face down in worship, freeze whilst Sceptic 2 and Believer 2 speak and then for a further count of three at the very end*)

Sceptic: **Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool** (*said x3 in unison with Believer, whilst walking forward. End standing, arms folded, looking defiant, freeze whilst Sceptic 2 and Believer 2 speak and then for a further count of three at the very end*)

Sceptic 2: Jesus, Liar, Trouble-Maker, Fool (*stands up from where he/she is seated among the congregation, to be said loudly and angrily, then storm out of church without any apology or explanation and don't reappear until other actors have finished and left the stage*)

Believer 2: Jesus, Saviour, Son of God, Lord (*stands up from where he/she is seated among the congregation, to be said loudly and passionately, arms up in praise, freeze for a count of three*)

The End.