

SCRIPT TITLE

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PILOT EPISODE - "MARY, HEROD & THE ANGEL: DAYSPRING DAWNING"

MAY BE ANIMATED

TEASER

SUGGESTED MUSIC: Mozart's Coronation Mass with its powerful beginning -- a constant reminder that the ordinary people in each episode doing ordinary things are part of a greater scheme of things they cannot begin to imagine.

OUTER SPACE

A star explodes itself into existence.

(Each episode of this
Christmas "Season" will
add another action to the
star until, in the last
episode, it becomes a
grown Jesus)

INT. HEAVEN INSIDE THE STAR - "DAY"

GOD (eternal) is a slow swirly sparkling mist that is everywhere. He has a booming voice.

GOD

Son, I've selected your mother. See
her down there? She is still a
baby, but she will be strong. She
will love you through it all.

JESUS (29) is tall and muscular. He has black hair just touching his shoulders and a short beard. He wears a short brown work tunic with a carpenter's belt and small ax.

He stands inside the mist looking up.

GOD-KING JESUS

And I will love her, Father.

INT. PALACE THRONE ROOM - DAY

The throne of AUGUSTUS CAESAR dominates the room as it dominates the world.

The lesser throne of LEGATE MARCUS IPSANIUS AGRIPPA is to the right.

Its twin is to the left of the great throne for KING HEROD.

SUBTITLE - ANTIOCH, SYRIA - BC 19 - MARY IS 4 YEARS OLD

A group of six GADARENE men represent an economic cross-section of their province and their clothes show it.

As one, they clench their fists in anger and tremble in fear. Their eyes dart around the room then settle on their emperor.

GROUP OF GADARENES

Hail, Caesar!

They bow prostrated to the hard, unforgiving marble floor. They must wait to be allowed to stand in the presence of the taloned Roman eagle hovering over them.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR (44) has thick black curly hair cut with bangs. He has a longish face with high cheek bones and a firm square jaw. On his head is a gold laurel wreath.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

You may rise.

Caesar looks to his right with brows lowered.

The Legate shrugs.

Caesar looks to his left.

Herod presses his lips together as he nods.

Caesar leans on one elbow and struggles to hide a yawn.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

Now, what is of such importance you would interrupt my holiday?

OLD SPOKESMAN has gray hair. His eyes are clouded just enough to make one wonder how much he can really see. Or understand.

Old Spokesman steps forward. He leans on his cane. His trembling hands try to steady themselves.

OLD SPOKESMAN

Great Caesar, King Herod is bringing atrocities on our people in Gadara. And...

Herod's eyes turn dark despite his pretended laughter.

Caesar waves his hand at them as though shooing away a fly.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

Herod, my friend, could they be
telling the truth?

KING HEROD (54) wears his kingly long tunic and robe. His hair grows half way down his back. On his head is a tunic with a large ruby on the front

On his chest is a gold chain with large square pendant bearing twelve gemstones representing his people. His long grayish beard is divided to show off the pendant.

KING HEROD

Ah, your majesty. I am a benevolent king. Everyone knows I would never abuse my subjects.

LEGATE MARCUS IPSANIUS AGRIPPA (44) has a round face and receding hairline. His hair is combed forward to hide his male-pattern baldness.

MARCUS wears a short white ceremonial tunic with gold designs, a white leather stripped "apron", and a red cape.

As the host, he will not be sidelined.

LEGATE MARCUS IPSANIUS AGRIPPA

Wait out in the ante-room while we
straighten this out.

When the Gadarenes leave, the DOORMAN leaves the door open.

INT. ANTE-ROOM OUTSIDE THRONE ROOM - DAY

AUGUSTUS CAESAR (O.C.)

How long have we been friends,
Herod?

KING HEROD (O.C.)

After we dispose of these pests,
I'm in the mood for a good horse
race.

The ambassadors, hear and know they are doomed. Herod will have his revenge on them. He always does.

SHORT GADAREEN AMBASSADOR

I will slit my own throat rather
than let him torture me to death.

TALL GADAREEN AMBASSADOR
We will die our own way

EXT. CITY OF ANTIOCH - DAY

MONTAGE.

- A Gadareen jumps off a cliff
- A Gadareen falls on his sword.
- A Gadareen jumps into the river.
- A Gadaareen cuts his own throat.

EXT. HELI'S & SARAH'S COURTYARD - NIGHT

The courtyard floor is middle class, so covered with clay tiles of various colors. A stairway up to the roof is made up of similar tiles as the courtyard floor.

The gate to the street is wooden with a long bar locking it. A plaster design is attached both courtyard side and street side.

SUBTITLE - NAZARETH, GALILEE PROVINCE, PALESTINE

HELI (32) has black hair full of dried mortar. His long brown work tunic too. He has no beard.

Heli closes the gate and walks into the courtyard with his mason's leather tool belt still on. He greets his wife.

SARAH (22) has long black hair that falls into her eyes when engrossed in her work.

MARY (4) has long black hair that comes to a "widow's peak" at her forehead. She wears a plain brown tunic and giggles easily. She has unusual blue eyes that portray innocence.

Mary runs up to her father.

MARY

Papa! You came home to see me.
Did I grow any today?

Heli takes off his tool belt, takes Mary's hand, and speaks to Sarah.

HELI

Sorry, I must go back into the village.

MARY

Papa! Did I grow any?

HELI

Of course you did my little rose bud.

He picks up his daughter and continues.

HELI (CONT'D)

Someone wants me to build a booth for them at the market. I need to measure for it.

Sarah grabs her shawl and money pouch.

SARAH

We're going with you. I need some things at the market.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF MARKET - DAY

Heli and Sarah meander. Mary is still in Heli's arms.

OC Birds sing.

OC Children giggle.

Mary wiggles.

MARY

Lemme down, Papa.

Heli sets Mary down.

OC The sound of horses galloping.

Heli and Sarah look for the source of the sound.

Mary grins and picks up a shiny piece of glass off the street.

OC A woman screams. A man shouts.

Mary, Heli, and Sarah look in each direction, searching for the source of possible danger.

Two HERODIAN SOLDIERS wearing blue uniforms appear on their horses, knocking over whatever is in their way.

Mary screams.

TALL HERODIAN SOLDIER
Halt! In the name of the King,
halt!

RAGGED COMMONER (18) wears a brown tunic. He runs past Mary, Heli, and Sarah.

Heli grabs Mary.

The soldiers overtake Ragged Commoner.

Short soldier dismounts and cracks his whip onto Ragged Commoner.

SHORT HERODIAN SOLDIER
You dare defy the king? For that,
you die!

Mary's screams become faster and more shrill.

Heli hides Mary's eyes.

Ragged Commoner escapes.

The other soldier still on his horse throws a spear and kills Ragged Commoner.

Soldiers gallop away, leaving the body behind.

Heli and Sarah run back the way they had come.

Mary looks back over her father's shoulder and sees the body.

INT. HELI'S & SARAH'S COURTYARD - DAY

The couple leans against their closed gate. Heli's arm is stretched protectively around Sarah's shoulders while clinging to Mary, still screaming.

HELI
Where is the God-King? We need his
protection. Where is he?

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

INT. HEAVEN INSIDE THE STAR - "DAY"

GOD

Well, Son, do you think you're ready for this?

GOD-KING JESUS

Oh, yes. I've thought it through many times over the past centuries. I'm definitely ready to travel to earth.

EXT. PLATFORM IN FRONT OF A LARGE CAVE IN HIGH CLIFFS - DAY

To the left is a cave opening about 20' high and wide with a platform in front of it.

To the right of that is another platform with a man-made grotto about 10' high with a statue of the god Pan in it.

To the right of that is a temple to Jupiter with great, wide steps leading down from it.

To the right of the Jupiter steps is a large fenced platform with goats playing on a statue of a sacred goat in the middle.

Surrounding the cliffs and sanctuary, a forest of mighty oaks rises protectively.

PRIESTS OF PAN wear only loin cloths of goat hair and shoes of goat skin. On their heads are goat horns.

A Contubernium of ten HERODIAN SOLDIERS wearing blue uniforms and helmets of brass line up in two rows waiting to escort the king.

HERODIAN SOLDIERS CAPTAIN wears a helmet with blue dyed straw sweeping out from it like Roman centurions do.

SUBTITLE: PAN, SYRIAN PALESTINE - BC 18 - MARY IS 5 YEARS OLD

Herod and his building contractor stand on the platform in front of the smaller grotto. Herod carries a large scroll.

KING HEROD

I've got to stay on the good side
of Caesar.

BUILDING CONTRACTOR (40) has leathery skin and is big and muscular. He wears a white turban on his head. He carries a clay tablet attached by a rope to his waist with a stylus attached for jotting notes.

BUILDING CONTRACTOR

Yes, Your Majesty.

KING HEROD

I will be the first to build a
temple to our August Caesar.

BUILDING CONTRACTOR

And this is the perfect place to do
it, sire.

King Herod leads his building contractor over to the entrance
of the cave.

KING HEROD

You know they call this the Gate to
Hades. Have you ever gone swimming
in that deep pool at the back of
Pan's cave?

BUILDING CONTRACTOR

No, Your Majesty.

KING HEROD

I did when I was young.

Herod snortles and elbows the contractor.

The contractor looks over at the soldiers guarding the king's
journey.

The HERODIAN SOLDIERS laugh on cue.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)

The priests said the waters that
swallowed up their sacrifices were
sacred. Well, so am I! Ha!

The Herodian soldiers laugh as ordered. Obey or die.

I threw my towel over one of Pan's
statues in there and my clothes
over another one.

Herod whispers in the contractor's ear. Herod has many secrets.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)
 Caesar believes in this nonsense,
 so I shall make him happy. I want
 his temple to back up to Pan's
 cave. The cave will be the most
 holy place for the temple.

They find a large waist-high rock and Herod waits. The contractor throws stones off it. Herod waits. The contractor wipes it clean with his hands. Herod waits. The contractor takes off his white turban and wipes it clean.

Herod opens his scroll.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)
 Now, I want Caesar's temple made of
 the purist white stones with four
 columns....

Herod looks up. He sees one of his soldiers talking to another. Give them at least one chance, Herod.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)
 Silence! Now, you will see here it
 will be larger than this temple to
 Jupiter.

WHISPERING HERODIAN SOLDIER
 (to another soldier)
 He cannot do this!

KING HEROD
 Make a covered walkway between my
 temple to Caesar and Pan's Grotto
 and...Young man, come here.

Silence in the ranks. The busy priests of Pan stop. The birds stop. The kingdom stops.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)
 Are you displeased with honoring
 your emperor?

WHISPERING HERODIAN SOLDIER (15) stands before his king but speaks to an unhearing priest behind the king carrying a sacrificial goat.

WHISPERING HERODIAN SOLDIER
 Your Majesty, this is idolatry.
 Caesar is not a god.

KING HEROD

You should feel lucky I am not
having you tortured first.

The soldier looks at his king. His eyes widen, his youthful
voice screeches.

WHISPERING HERODIAN SOLDIER

But, this is so far from Jerusalem,
maybe no one will ever know.

Herodian Captain steps forward and runs his sword through
Whispering Herodian Soldier.

KING HEROD

When we get back to Jerusalem put
all your men in my prison. I will
deal with them later.

EXT. HELI'S & SARAH'S COURTYARD - DUSK

SUBTITLE - NAZARETH, GALILEE PROVINCE, PALESTINE

Mary runs into the courtyard crying.

MARY

Mommy. Daddy. The mean king is
under my bed.

Heli grabs up his daughter and cradles her in his strong
arms.

HELI

My little rose bud. Papa will not
let anyone hurt you.

MARY

But the mean king is everywhere I
go. He follows me.

HELI

God is everywhere too. Only
bigger. The next time you see the
bad king, just shout, "God is
bigger than you."

INT. HEAVEN INSIDE THE STAR - "DAY"

GOD

What about the adjustments on
earth? They're infinite. Do you
think you can handle them?

GOD-KING JESUS

Like giving up streets of gold for streets sometimes littered with putrid garbage? I can handle that, Father.

INT. THRONE ROOM - DAY

SUBTITLE - CAESAR'S PALACE, ROME, ITALY - BC 17 - MARY IS 6 YEARS OLD

King Herod wears a tall black turban on his head with a precious stone at the front. As always, he wears his square pendant on his chest with twelve precious stones and his long beard tied in half to show off his pendant.

Herod bows before his Caesar who only allows him to be king as long as Caesar likes him.

KING HEROD

And so, Sovereign Ruler Caesar, Emperor of the World. It is with the greatest of sorrow that I bring my two sons before you -- Alexander and Aristobulus.

It is Herod's day at the highest court in the world. The charges being brought by himself against his sons are, of course, for the sake of the kingdom.

Herod sweeps his arm out as though performing on a stage. Which he is.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)

Once again, they are trying to overthrow my kingdom. My oldest son has been warning me. My sister has been confirming it.

Herod stands still for his grande finale.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)

I must protect my people at all costs.

Herod walks over to a gold-plated table with four gold goblets and pitcher as a reminder of his lavish gifts to his protector.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

Are you sure you want to do this?
Bring in the accused.

HERODIAN SOLDIERS bring in the accused. The clank clank of chains around their ankles echo in the ears of Herod who turns his back in momentary denial.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR (CONT'D)

This certainly is unusual. Are you sure about this? They seem to be a little young to overthrow a powerful king like you.

Herod's anger returns. He paces in front of his sons in royal indignation.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

Take those chains off them. This is just a family gathering

Alexander and Aristobulus step before Caesar, bow, and kiss his feet.

Then they turn toward their father. He shifts behind the gold table. They stare at him with tears in their eyes.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

Now, young man, would you and your brother like to defend yourselves?

The young men turn toward their imperial savior.

ALEXANDER (18) has black hair and a sparse beard. His hair and clothes are immaculate. Even his gold necklace with a Roman Eagle pendant begs for approval by the only man alive who can boss their father around.

PRINCE ALEXANDER

Sir, he is listening to lies! Our older brother is just jealous of us. He did catch Aristobulus and I sitting on his throne last winter when no one was around. We were just having fun.

Herod stands aside with a smirk. He knows his sons will never convince Caesar. Didn't he just build a temple to him?

ARISTOBULUS (14) has no beard and his voice is still changing. His royal clothing looks like he slept in them, but he dons the same eagle pendant as his brother.

PRINCE ARISTOBULUS

Why would we want to assassinate our own father? Would we have more wealth or prestige than we have now? No. He is our father. We love him."

Alexander takes off all his jewelry and Aristobulus joins him.

PRINCE ALEXANDER

Here, Father. We know how valuable this jewelry is. We give it back to you.

The brothers fall to their knees before their father.

KING HEROD

Isn't this a little too late?

Tears in the eyes of the sons and in the eyes of Caesar. No tears in the eyes of King Herod.

Herod looks over at Caesar, eyes wide, pacing fast. Has his old friend sided with his incorrigible sons?

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

Go home, Herod. Take your sons with you. You should be proud of such fine young men. A little mischievous perhaps, but I'll bet you were even more so when you were their age.

Caesar lowers his voice and motions with his little finger for Herod to come closer.

AUGUSTUS CAESAR (CONT'D)

Give them a party.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. HELI'S & SARAH'S COURTYARD - DAY

SUBTITLE - NAZARETH, GALILEE PROVINCE, PALESTINE

Sarah holds her baby with one arm while kneading dough with her other hand.

MARY

Can I hold her, Mommy?

SARAH

Bring a cushion with you to sit on.

Carefully the exchange is made. Mary runs her hands over baby Salome's thin, silky hair.

MARY

I'm going to have a baby someday,
aren't I, Mommy?

SARAH

Yes, indeed, you will, little Mary.
Probably a house full.

MARY

And I will never bad soldiers hurt
my baby because God is bigger.

Mary hands the baby back to her mother and runs to hug her grandpapa's knees.

MATTHAT (50) is tall and ample around his waist. He has salt-pepper hair and carries a cane.

MATTHAT

Careful there, little girl. You
don't want your old grandfather
falling right down on top of you.

MARY

Grandpapa! I'm so glad you moved in
with us.

Mary takes her grandfather by the hand and walks him over to a bench. Then she twirls around the courtyard.

MATTHAT

You're going to be dizzy and fall.

EVE (40) is short and her black hair has a little gray at the temples.

They are what any child around the world has envisioned grandparents to be -- in one way or another. Typical is nice. Typical can calm the trembling heart.

Eve enters the courtyard.

EVE

Just a matter of time before the
old fool dropped all the firewood
and fell on top of it. No one
would be able to lift him off.

Mary returns to spinning around the courtyard.

Matthat watches Mary, smiling. His eyes become sad and he turns toward Sarah.

MATTHAT

Daughter, why in the world did you
name that little girl Mary?
Bitterness? That's what her name
means.

Mary stops twirling, puts her hands on her waist, and glares at her grandfather in mock disapproval, the twinkle in her eyes remaining bright.

MATTHAT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, little one. I shouldn't
have been thinking out loud.

MARY

That's silly grandpapa. No one can
think out loud.

Mary brightens and spins one more time, innocence transforming their world into hope.

She stops and climbs up into her Grandmother Eve's lap.

MARY (CONT'D)

Why can't we go to the syn...
syn... synagogue?

Eve silently shakes her head.

MARY (CONT'D)

Why can't I see my friends on the
Sabbath any more?

EVE

Well, because King Herod will not allow us to assemble in groups anymore He's afraid we're planning his downfall.

MARY

Is he afraid of falling down?

Eve tries to smile. She fights back tears. The happiness of the innocent child wins.

SARAH

I'll teach you a new song if you promise not to sing it in public.

MARY

But, why? Why can't people in the pub...public sing my new song?

SARAH

Our king is afraid of the happiness in songs. I think he's just afraid of happiness.

MARY

Doesn't he ever laugh? You and Papa laugh. Sometimes. Doesn't the king know how to laugh?

SARAH

Probably not, sweetie. I heard he spies on us personally. Puts on a disguise and spies on us.

MARY

What's a disguise?

SARAH

It's where you put on a mask and don't let people know who you really are.

MARY

Can we wear masks sometimes?

SARAH

I think we already do.

Now Mary's dander is up. She puts both hands on her hips, ready to make her pronouncement.

MARY

If I ever see that mean King Herod,
I'm going to tell him he's being
naughty. He doesn't scare me anyway
'cause God's bigger.

Heli enters from the front gate, mortar all over him. He returns the family from innocence to reality.

HELI

How can King Herod hate his own
sons? I heard about it at work.
Thank God Caesar wouldn't let
him...

Heli suddenly notices Mary.

HELI (CONT'D)

...do bad things to them. Where is
the God-King we were promised. It's
been centuries. Why does he delay?

INT. HEAVEN INSIDE THE STAR - "DAY"

GOD

Your powers, Son. You know you'll
have to give up most of your powers
most of the time. Can you handle
that?

GOD-KING JESUS

You mean like when I'm angry at
sinners and tempted to call
lightning down on them? It wouldn't
serve my purpose. I'll use my
powers only when necessary to do
good and prove I am from heaven, no
more.

EXT. NARROW CITY STREET - NIGHT

JERUSALEM, JUDEA PROVINCE, PALESTINE - BC 9 - MARY IS 14
YEARS OLD

Two Herodian soldiers lead the way for Herod and four others,
all wearing hoods. They have no torches. The night is black.
It will become blacker.

EXT. MINIATURE OF THE TEMPLE FRONT HEWN INTO A CLIFF - NIGHT

The facade is a miniature of the real temple with its two great columns towering 27 feet on each side of imposing double doors.

KING HEROD

I need King David's money. And Solomon's. They certainly don't need it any more.

Herod looks at his most trusted friends and snortles.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)

Someone else stripped it of the gold coins, but there's always the gold furnishings and I need the money.

The two Herodian soldiers in front hand out torches.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)

Wait until we're inside to light your torches. Anyone lighting them out here will be executed. Understood?

It is dark once again. The kingdom crawls its way through it. Tonight greed slithers through its blackness.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)

Break the seals.

Herod leads the way into a large domed room. His lusty grin broadens, despite the dust that grabs at his breath.

Torches reveal furnishings of gold.

TRUSTED FRIEND 1

I see gilded furniture.

KING HEROD

I'll send some of my slaves back to take them out to be melted down.

TRUSTED FRIEND 2

Here is the stairway. David's and Solomon's crypts will be down there.

INT. STONE STAIRWAY - NIGHT

Two Herodian soldiers lead the way. Dust stirs up. As others join them, they cough.

INT. STONE ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone wanders around with their torches, bumping into each other.

A flash.

HERODIAN SOLDIER 1

Ahhhhhh.

Soldier 1 runs around the room, his clothes on fire.

TRUSTED FRIEND 1

Someone, save him.

Another flash.

HERODIAN SOLDIER 2

"Ahhhhhhh!"

Both on fire. Both in flames. Tortured beyond endurance. Tortured like the twisted mind of a mad king.

Herod looks around at the empty room lighted with the bodies and at the empty stairs.

KING HEROD

Stop. Come back. Deserters.
Traitors. I'll have you executed
for this. If you ever tell....

INT. HELI'S & SARAH'S COURTYARD - DAY

SUBTITLE - NAZARETH, GALILEE PROVINCE, PALESTINE

Mary's heart-shaped face with the widow's peak is now graced with high cheek bones and fuller lips, but with the same fiery eyes of her earlier childhood.

Eve's hair is a dark silver gray now.

Eve sits at a loom with Mary beside her.

EVE

Now, how tight you make your rows
depends on what thread you use

Heli sits with his father-in-law, Matthat, on the other side of the courtyard. Heli scrapes mortar off his trowel and looks over at his beautiful daughter. He calls over to her.

SALOME (8) has brown hair worn with pigtails on top of her head. She has a garland of daisies in her hair and a necklace also made of daisies.

SALOME

Mary's got a boyfriend. Mary's got a boyfriend.

MARY

I do not.

Salome waves a small scroll in her hand. Mary lunges at it.

SALOME

Does Papa know he's sending you letters from Bethlehem?

MARY

Of course he knows. He gave his permission when we visited Jerusalem and our cousins Zechariah and Elizabeth.

SALOME

Mary's got a boyfriend.

MARY

Ha! I just may marry him.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - NIGHT

SUBTITLE - JERUSALEM, JUDEA PROVINCE, PALESTINE - BC 8 - MARY IS 15 YEARS OLD

A large hooded man follows a man and woman. They periodically look back and walk faster.

INT. HEROD'S THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

Herod's hair is disheveled, his beard unkempt, and his eyes bloodshot. He paces like a lion waiting for its prey.

KING HEROD

I can't sleep with my own sons on the verge of rising up against me.

HEROD'S ADVISORS stand silently by, some wearing night shirts.

Fear dominates their eyes. The walls move forward as though helping them disappear. Will they live through the night?

KING HEROD (CONT'D)

Spies. I need more spies. How am I suppose to protect my kingdom? Recruit more spies. Pay them whatever is necessary.

Herod paces like a lion waiting for two dear fawns to draw close enough to devour.

And my sons, Alexander and Aristobulus -- find out who all their friends are. They're trying to take over my kingdom again -- or still. My Kingdom! Mine!

He pounds on a table, then swipes at the pitcher and half-empty goblets. They fly and empty their red contents on the wall. Red like blood.

I knew not to trust them. My own flesh and blood. We've got to find eye witnesses. Enough to convince Caesar they are traitors. Take their friends into custody.

BALD ADVISER wears his night shirt and is barefooted.

BALD ADVISOR

How far do you want us to go in the interrogation, Your Majesty?

HEROD THE GREAT

You have to ask?

INT - COUNCIL CHAMBERS - BC 7.

SUBTITLE - TEMPLE TO JUPITER, BEIRUT, LEBANON - BC 7 - MARY IS 16 YEARS OLD

Herod wears royal robes with a turban on his head tall and proud.

Rather than wear his square pendant with 12 precious stones, he wears a pendant depicting a lightning bolt. It matches the lightning bolt of the great statue of Jupiter commanding the back of the temple.

Herod walks around pretending to admire their temple to Jupiter.

KING HEROD

The temple I built in Jerusalem isn't this big. They made me stick with the plan of King Solomon a thousand year ago. But, my temple complex is as large as the old City of David.

JUPITER TEMPLE PRIESTS wear white tunics and white togas with purple stripes around the edges.

On their heads are wooden skullcaps (apexes) with straps under their chins.

The high priest wears a tall wooden conical head covering with a point like that of a spear on top. He is heavy set and has a large curled beard.

The temple priests assemble in a semi-circle. Silently they pray to Jupiter their judgment will keep them out of trouble with Herod.

PRIEST SCROLL READER

Hear ye, Hear ye. By the authority of Augustus Caaesar, ruler of the Roman empire and king of the world, this assembly is come to order.

KING HEROD

Go on. Hurry up with it. I want to get this over with.

PRIEST SCROLL READER

Great Caesar, having been presented with enough evidence to the truth of the accusation, hereby has approved these proceedings regarding the life or death of Princes Alexander and Aristobulus.

HIGH PRIEST

Bring in the accused.

Alexander (now 28) and Aristobulus (now 24) step toward the judges, chains around both their wrists and ankles. They are dressed in torn, brown tunics.

KING HEROD

Now, then, Did not you, Alexander, circulate letters about your hatred for me, your king?

PRINCE ALEXANDER

Father, you killed our mother. And our uncle, the high priest. And you were never sorry for it.

KING HEROD

I did indeed have your mother executed. But she was trying to overthrow me and become queen. I could not have that. She was beautiful, I'll have to admit, but she was still a traitor.

PRINCE ALEXANDER

But, Father, all I ever wanted was for you to love me.

Herod swings around from Alexander and jabs his finger at Aristobulus.

KING HEROD

And did you, Aristobulus, arrange with your friends to have me assassinated?

PRINCE ARISTOBULUS

You put my friends to the rack and tortured them. They admitted to anything just to get the pain to stop. How could you, Father?

KING HEROD

Liar! If it hadn't been for torture, they would have never betrayed you like you planned to betray me.

The monster has won. It opens its mouth to send flames of warning to potential enemies.

Herod turns toward the jury of Jupiter priests who have no idea what is truth.

KING HEROD (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, you have heard enough. They deserve death. For the sake of my kingdom, my very sons -- oh how I hate to say this -- must die.

Immediately, two Herodian soldiers stand behind Alexander and Aristobulus, put ropes around their necks, and twist them by the handles at the ends of the ropes until they can breathe no longer. Herod's sons are dead.

INT. CAESAR'S THRONE ROOM - DAY

SUBTITLE - ROME, ITALY

AUGUSTUS CAESAR

It is better to be Herod's pig than
his son.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. HELI'S & SARAH'S COURTYARD - DAY

SUBTITLE - NAZARETH, GALILEE PROVINCE, PALESTINE

MARY

How could he do it? How could the king have his own sons executed? Will he stop at nothing? He's a monster. I could never allow anyone to execute my son.

Matthat has just arisen from his afternoon nap. His hair is mussed and his eyes only half open. He sits and falls back asleep.

MARY (CONT'D)

Grandpapa, did you hear me?

Her grandfather opens his eyes and mumbles.

MATTHAT

If only the God-King would come. I'm just glad my grandfather didn't live long enough to see all this.

Mary kneels by her grandfather's bench. His wrinkles are deeper, his gray beard sparcer, his eyes darker.

All tired from looking for the promised God-King. Forever promising but never coming.

MARY

Was Herod this bad before I was born?

Matthat rouses himself for the sake of his innocent grand daughter who is innocent no longer.

MATTHAT

Did I ever tell you about when he was made our king? Jerusalem shut all its gates and wouldn't let him in. Soldiers killed so many of us, he almost didn't have enough people left for a kingdom. That's true. That's true.

Mary lays her head on his shoulder.

MARY

Well, he doesn't scare me. Not any more. Not him, not his brutal soldiers, not his kingly crown. God is with all who make God our king and God is bigger.

Mary stands and looks around. What can she do? Nothing. She's too small, too unknown, too young to make a difference.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm going up on the roof to beat the dirt out of some rugs. I might even pretend it's Herod's meanness I am beating out of him.

Salome enters the courtyard just in time to hear her sister's declaration.

SALOME

Good idea. The rug from my bedroom has been up there a week waiting for you to clean it for me.

INT. HEAVEN INSIDE THE STAR - "DAY"

GOD

How about giving up your spirit body that can be everywhere in the cosmos at once? You're going to be trapped in a body that can touch and see and hear only a few feet in any direction. Very confining. Can you handle that, Son?

GOD-KING JESUS

Yes, Father. I can handle it.

INT - HELI'S & SARAH'S COURTYARD - DAY

Matthat's chin is down in his long beard, and he mumbles in his sleep.

A knock at the gate stirs him but only turns his mumbling into growling.

MATTHAT

Go away.

JOSEPH (26) peaks his head over the outer gate and stares into the courtyard. His hair is black and thick and unruly. His hands are big. His voice is strong and husky.

JOSEPH'S HEAD

Uh, sir, uh, well, I am Joseph of Bethlehem.

Ah! The promise. It is peaking its head out of eternity.

MATTHAT

I don't care if you're Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Go away.

Joseph's head darts around the courtyard. His brows furrow more.

JOSEPH'S HEAD

Uh, excuse me, kind sir. Uh, I'm Joseph. I don't mean to disturb your sleep, but, well, I've walked a long way and...

Heli walks into the courtyard and spots Joseph's head. He laughs heartily and points.

HELI

Joseph, what in the world are you doing up there? Get down before the neighbors see you.

As Heli opens the gate, in walks Hope. A hope the kingdom -- the world -- has all but given up on.

JOSEPH (26), carpenter and lumberjack, is tall and muscular with a short beard and windblown hair to just below his ears. He is a man's man.

HELI (CONT'D)

Welcome, Joseph. Welcome. Sorry I didn't hear you knock. We did not know you were coming. You caught us by surprise. Come in. Come in.

Heli helps Joseph take the long ax off his backpack. The large backpack is next, full of necessities and his hopes for him and Mary.

HELI (CONT'D)

We weren't able to give you a proper welcome. And look at me. Mortar all over from the house I'm building.

Joseph accidentally backs into Matthat still asleep.

MATTHAT

Go away. We don't want you. Nobody wants you. You're just a worm.

HELI

Father, wake up.

MATTHAT

Huh? Huh?

HELI

Here, take that heavy carpenter belt off. And I see your water skin is empty.

Matthat snorts and clears his throat and brushes the wispy thinning hair out of his eyes. He stares at Joseph, brows lowered, and confusion in his eyes.

HELI (CONT'D)

Father, you nearly ran off our young friend here, Joseph. Remember? We met him last year while visiting Zechariah and Elizabeth.

Sarah walks into the courtyard and looks around.

SARAH

Well, if it isn't Joseph. Come away from the gate, dear boy.

Heli looks up at the roof and sees Mary fast at work beating rugs.

HELI

Mary! Come down. You have company!

Mary's hair is matted with lumps of dust. Her eyes are like blue diamonds amidst a complexion as gray as a tombstone.

MARY

Eeeek! Father!

Sarah gives Joseph "the look" and he reacts by ducking his head in miniature apology, tipping it to one side, and shrugging his shoulders.

HELI

Uh, Joseph, why don't you and I go for a little walk while the women in my household get control of themselves under my father-in-law's supervision?

EXT - STREET OF NAZARETH - DAY

HELI

You haven't been around women very much, have you, Son?

Joseph stares ahead and whispers to himself.

JOSEPH

Son. He called me Son.

HELI

Well, we need to give the women time to clean up, put rose oil on their hair, and pretend they look and smell like that all the time.

Still grinning, Joseph looks ahead, then looks over at Heli with his smile under control. From up in heaven, God-King Jesus looks down and he, too, smiles.

JOSEPH

Yes, sir. Uh, yes, sir.

HELI

Let's just walk around the block. Am I to presume you have come to ask my permission to betrothe my daughter?

Joseph's grin is back. Once again, he answers to the air in front of him, then controls his smile enough to answer his future father-in-law.

JOSEPH

Uh, yes, sir. Uh, if that is all right with you sir. Could she marry me?

HELI

You understand that, during your betrothal period, you have to build a house for Mary, or at least buy someone else's house and fix it up for her.

JOSEPH

Yes, sir. Whatever you say, sir.

HELI

And you have to establish yourself in a business so you can support her. A lot of houses are being built in Sepphoris where King Herod has his summer palace. It's just an hour's walk from Nazareth.

JOSEPH

Yes, sir.

HELI

Since I do the actual building, you and I could become partners and you could finish each house as I build it.

JOSEPH

You would do all that for me, sir?

HELI

I would do it for my daughter. You will vow to me you will never hurt her. If you break that vow, you do not want to know what I will do to you.

JOSEPH

Yes, sir. I vow.

HELI

Now there is a small house for sale down at the end of the street where I live. It has only one room, but the courtyard is big enough for an ox and wagon, and for you to store your lumber and work on your projects. Do you have any money?

JOSEPH

Yes, sir. I have been saving it up for the past year, ever since I met your daughter.

HELI

We're almost home. Tomorrow I will show you the house. You can pretend to the women you just arrived in Nazareth and they will do the same.

JOSEPH
Oh, yes, sir.

Heli stops Joseph in front of their gate and looks Joseph in the eyes.

HELI
They will be all fresh and sweet smelling. But, you must never tell them that. It is impolite to tell a woman how she smells.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN.

EXT - STREET AND BROKEN FRONT GATE TO A HOUSE - DAY

HELI
Well, this is it. Doesn't look like much.

INT - COURTYARD OF JOSEPH'S RUNDOWN HOUSE - DAY

Joseph leads a mule piled high with household stuff and looks in all directions of his new property.

JOSEPH
Sir, I like it. It's everything I need.

But Heli is serious. He knows about Joseph on the inside. What beats in that heart of his?

HELI
And what about God? Do you need God?

Joseph walks away from Heli, then back to him. He looks intently into Heli's eyes. He speaks his heart.

JOSEPH
Sir. I pray all the time it seems. About Mary and you, of course, and my house which I thank you for finding, and my job, and for our king.

Heli jerks back and paces. He hits the door to the one room of the house and the frame falls off.

HELI

You pray for that evil wretched
King Herod?

JOSEPH

Sir, I also pray for our eternal
king. Our God-King. I pray for him
to come in our lifetime if it is
possible. We're losing hope.

Heli returns to Joseph and puts his hands on Joseph's
shoulders. He whispers.

HELI

I had no idea. No idea. You are
not only big in that body of yours,
but you are...

JOSEPH

Just me. I'm ordinary me with big
feet.

Heli unties one of the ropes holding the cargo on the back of
the mule.

HELI

Well, let's get these things Sarah
and Mary packed for you into your
house. We'll go to Sepphoris
tomorrow.

INT - JOSEPH'S COURTYARD - DAY

Heli, wearing his mason's belt, stands in front of the broken
gate.

HELI

How was your first night in your
very own house?

JOSEPH

Good morning, sir.

HELI

Are you ready to go with me to
Sepphoris? I want to introduce you
to some of the other workers. We'll
be there in an hour.

EXT - AN UPPER-CLASS UNFINISHED HOUSE - DAY

SUBTITLE - SEPPHORIS, ROYAL CITY OF GALILEE PROVINCE,
PALESTINE

HELI

Well, this is the house I am
building. It will need door and
window frames. You can do that.

JOSEPH

Yes, I made plenty of those.

HEZEKIAH (40) has a long beard and is well dressed.

HEZEKIAH

Who do you have here, Heli? A new
employee?

HELI

More than that. As of this
afternoon, he will be betrothed to
my daughter. Joseph, Hezekiah lives
next door and...

SOUND of a lumber falling.

AMOS (O.C.)

Help me!

The three men run toward Amos at another new house on the
other side of Heli's.

HELI

Hang on, Amos.

When the three men arrive, they see a ceiling beam collapsed
on the floor and Amos trapped under it.

HELI (CONT'D)

Who did this? You build solid
houses.

AMOS

Just get this beam off me.

Joseph leans over and finagles his big arms around the beam.
The beam no one can lift alone.

HEZEKIAH

Wait while Heli and I each grab an
end. Wha...?

Joseph shifts the beam onto one shoulder.

HELI

I figured you were strong, but...
It's as big as some trees up on
Mount Tabor.

Joseph's face turns red.

JOSEPH

Where should I put it?

HEZEKIAH

There's a vacant lot down about a
block. But that's too far for you
to...

Joseph takes big steady steps and walks away with the
impossible on his shoulder. Strong man. Strong shoulders. A
burden carrier.

HEZEKIAH (CONT'D)

Well, I'll be. Look at that. He's
slugging that thing down the middle
of the street.

Heli grins. A grin of victory. He pushes his chest out and
slaps Hezekiah on the back.

HELI

That's my boy!

Joseph reappears. His grin is back. He wipes perspiration
off his forehead with his forearm.

Now freed, Amos happily stands.

Heli looks up at the sky. The sun is low and shoots forth
rays of hope onto a world dreading what the night will bring.

HELI (CONT'D)

Oops! Almost late for the
betrothal.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. HELI'S & SARAH'S COURTYARD - DAY

SUBTITLE - NAZARETH, GALILEE PROVINCE, PALESTINE

Eve, Sarah, & Salome all dressed up for the ceremony, look toward a door to one side of the courtyard.

Mary enters. Her hair is braided and wrapped around the back of her head in the traditional bridal knot. She wears a long white tunic, and yellow veil that reaches to the floor in the traditional wedding style. A garland of flowers hold the veil on.

MARY

How do I look, Grandmother?

Eve, Sarah, and Salome have flowers in their hair and wear long tunics of pastel colors.

EVE

You look beautiful, sweetheart.
Your betrothal will be one to remember.

SALOME

Some day I'm going to be married.
And he's going to be the handsomest
and richest man in all of Galilee.
All the world.

They hear a knock on their gate. Sarah answers and opens it to the rabbi.

SARAH

Rabbi, I'm sure the men will be here momentarily.

RABBI NAHUM (30) has black oiled hair combed flat against his head then flowing half way down his back. His nose is extra long and pointed. His black beard is down to his waist. He wears a long white tunic and a large priestly shawl with dark blue stripes in it.

HELI (O.C.)

Are you ladies ready in there?
Sorry we're late. Here we come.

The men enter.

Joseph wears a tunic whose sleeves are about to split under the pressure of his bulging muscles. The hem is between his ankles and knees.

The family lines up before the rabbi. An unknown family in an almost unknown village.

A young lady who sometimes has dust bunnies on her nose and a young man who sometimes stumbles over his own big feet.

God-King Jesus looks down on them and smiles.

JOSEPH

I promise to give Mary a good home
as soon as our betrothal is over.
And never beat her. And I promise
she will never go hungry. And I
will give her many sons and
daughters. And teach them to love
God.

INT - JOSEPH'S AND MARY'S COURTYARD - DAY

Mary wears her daily short brown work tunic.

MARY

You are making so much progress.
Our home is becoming beautiful.

Joseph's hair and short work tunic are full of sawdust.

JOSEPH

We will be able to marry in a few
months.

Mary

You do love stew, Joseph of
Bethlehem. Every day I come here to
bring your dinner, your bowl from
the previous day is licked clean!

JOSEPH

Look what I made you last night. I
etched it on this nice piece of
wood for you. Maybe later on I'll
etch it in stone. And it will last
forever.

MARY

Is that me? You etched a likeness
of me? Oh, how sweet. Well, I've
got to leave now. Don't want the
neighbors talking.

EXT. HELI'S & SARAH'S COURTYARD - DAY

Sarah is busy in the kitchen area of the courtyard. Salome re-braids her hair. Eve sits and stares.

HELI

Who wants to walk to the market square and back to get some fresh air? Especially you, Eve. Ever since Matthat died, you do hardly anything but sit.

EVE

I do not. You just want me to exercise more. I've known you since you married my daughter. Well, if you walk slowly, I guess I can go along.

Mary sits on the floor with three small clay tablets in front of her.

MARY

I want to go over my wedding plans some more. I've got bride's maids to pick out, food for the feast, and... Is it okay if I don't go along?

HELI

It's okay as long as you keep the gate barred. There are more of Herod's soldiers out there than ever. And spies. And who knows what else.

MARY

I'll be fine. I'll bar the gate as soon as you leave. No one will be able to get in. That's for sure.

As Mary bars the gate, she calls out to them.

MARY (CONT'D)

With all those clouds up there, you might get wet.

The family leaves.

Mary's SOUL WHISPERER speaks

MARY'S SOUL WHISPERER
It's time, Mary. It's time.

Mary takes the steps to the roof.

INT. HEAVEN INSIDE THE STAR - "DAY"

GOD
But, Son, have you thought of the
cross you're going to have to
endure for them? Can you keep
yourself from calling on your
powers to deliver yourself from the
torture? Can you handle it, Son?

GOD-KING JESUS
Father, we love those people. Only
when they see I am really dead can
I come back to life to prove we can
bring them back to life too.

EXT. HELI'S & SARAH'S ROOFTOP - TWILIGHT

Mary spreads out her tablets and talks to herself.

MARY
Our wedding will be the talk of the
town. Won't Salome love that?

ANGEL GABRIEL is seven feet (7') tall with black skin. He wears an ordinary tunic and robe. He looks human, not angelic.

The battle begins. A strong-willed, opinionated maiden, too unknown and small and young to make a difference in this dark world, will soon be pitted against Evil -- and win.

GABRIEL
Congratulations.

Mary jumps up and backs toward the roof wall.

MARY
Don't hurt me. I've got a rug bat
here and I know how to use it.

Fear engulfs Mary. She does not move. She cannot move.

GABRIEL
Hurt you? Never in a thousand
years.

MARY
Who are you? How did you get in
here?

GABRIEL
I just came to congratulate you,
Mary.

The stranger talks but nothing more. Mary relaxes her arms.

MARY
How did you know my name?

GABRIEL
Oh, I know all about you. Please
forgive me for not introducing
myself. My name is Gabriel. I'm an
angel.

Mary snickers deep in her throat and her eyes flash in
disbelief.

MARY
You're not kidding me. Who are you?
Just leave before I scream.

GABRIEL
Please listen to me just a moment.
Then I promise to leave. See, I'm
not getting any closer to you.

Mary crosses her arms in defiance. Her eyes stare at the
stranger under heavy eyebrows.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
Just stand there by the wall. If I
try to come any closer, you may
scream all you want. Then all the
people down on the street can come
rescue you from me. Fair enough?

Instinctively, Mary puts her hands on her hips.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)
I just wanted to give you my
congratulations.

MARY

You already said that. Besides, how did you know I was getting married? Leave, or I'll scream.

GABRIEL

Oh, not about that. Besides, you promised not to scream.

MARY

Getting married is the only important thing I'm doing these days. And I never promised you.

GABRIEL

You are a very favored lady because the Lord is with you.

MARY

I know God is with me all the time. He's bigger than you. He'll protect me from you unless you really are an angel. Which I doubt.

GABRIEL

But God has decided to bless you in a special way.

MARY

What kind of special way? Not that I believe you.

GABRIEL

Very soon now you will become pregnant and have a baby boy.

MARY

What's so special about that? All wives have babies for their husbands. But a boy? How can you know that?

GABRIEL

Remember, I'm an angel. God has told me everything. Furthermore, you are to call your baby Jesus.

MARY

Jesus? My husband will be Joseph. I plan to name my first son Joseph.

GABRIEL

There's more. He shall be great beyond imagination.

MARY

Great? How great?

GABRIEL

He shall be called -- try to grasp
this -- the Son of God.

Mary's mouth opens, but in speechlessness. Gabriel's words swirl around in her mind, her heart and echo across the rooftop. ...of God...of God...of God.

Mary's mouth opens, but in speechlessness.

(Mary cannot see God-King Jesus, but the audience does.) Jsus appears between Mary and Gabriel.

GOD-KING JESUS

Mary, listen to what he says.
Listen hard.

GABRIEL

He will govern his kingdom forever.
His kingship will never end!

Gabriel's words echo through her mind and are trapped there in a confused abyss. She sits on a bench by the wall, her trembling hands grasping its edges.

Jesus appears on her left side.

GOD-KING JESUS

I know that's a lot to believe,
Mary, but try, Mary.

GABRIEL

The child will not belong to
Joseph. You will become pregnant
miraculously before you are
married.

MARY

No. This is some kind of dream.
I'm having a big wedding and...

GABRIEL

Remember the prophet Isaiah saying
a virgin will bear the Son of God?
That virgin is you.

Jesus moves over to Mary's right side.

GOD-KING JESUS

Come on, Mary. Remember how your
father quoted it just yesterday.

GABRIEL

And when I said his kingdom would never end, I was quoting from the prophet Daniel.

MARY

Okay, I believe the prophets. But I do not believe you.

Jesus looks out to the audience smiling.

GOD-KING JESUS

Stubborn, isn't she? Wait 'til she sees how stubborn I can be.

GABRIEL

Daniel even predicted exactly when the God-King would be born. His birth year, Mary, is next year.

Mary shakes her head back and forth, then puts her hands on her hips.

MARY

No. You're not fooling me. Just who are you, any way?

GABRIEL

Do you have a scripture scroll? I will show you.

Jesus sits on the floor in front of Mary.

GOD-KING JESUS

He's offering you proof now. He's helping you believe.

Silence. Mary crosses her arms and locks them.

GABRIEL

I'll go get it myself. I know where it is.

Mary lifts her eyes heavenward.

MARY

Please, Lord God. Help me. You're bigger than him. Make him go out the gate while he's down there and never come back. Save me, God. Save me.

GABRIEL (O.C.)

I found it!

MARY

I'm watching you. And I still have the bat I clean rugs with. It's in my hand. I'm pretty strong, you know. God too.

Gabriel bounds back up the steps, turning the scroll as he does.

GABRIEL

Here it is. Do you want to read what Daniel predicted?

MARY

No.

Gabriel returns to his bench and reads. Jesus sits on a table next to Gabriel as he reads.

GABRIEL

It will be 49 years. That's 7 weeks times 7 days in a week. Plus 434 years from the time the command is given to rebuild Jerusalem. Then God's crowned One will come. That's a total of 483 years.

MARY

I can count as well as you.

GABRIEL

It has been 452 years since Jerusalem was rebuilt.

GOD-KING JESUS

Just as I had Daniel write it in his book. Good man, that Daniel.

MARY

Everyone knows that.

GABRIEL

He will be a descendant of David.

Jesus counts on his fingers as Gabriel goes through the next points.

MARY

Both Joseph and I descend from King David. What does that prove?

GABRIEL

...and he's due to be born next year.

(MORE)

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

Then 30 years from now -- the age
priests are eligible to begin
serving -- he will become priest of
the world. That will be the 483rd
year.

Jesus stands in front of Mary.

GOD-KING JESUS

Grasp what he's telling you, Mary.
You know he is telling the truth.
You've read it in God's Word all
your life.

Mary paces while keeping her eyes on Gabriel. Jesus paces
with her.

She sits. She stands. She stares up at the sky. Jesus does
the same with her. She stops.

MARY

But I'm a virgin. How can I have
the baby? How can I conceive?"

GABRIEL

Okay. Can you handle it? What I'm
about to tell you? Try, Mary.
Really try.

Gabriel stands and steps slowly toward Mary his empty hands
raised. He kneels in front of her and looks into her eyes.

Jesus kneels before her also.

Full of excitement, Gabriel; whispers as though telling a
special secret.

GABRIEL (CONT'D)

(a loud whisper)

God's very own spirit will come
upon you!

MARY

God's Spirit? His Holy Spirit
helped David write his psalms. He
does other things too?

Gabriel's exhilaration swells. His eyes widen, his smile
broadens. His words trip over each other in excitement.

GABRIEL

Yes! Yes! The power of God will
enter your body with his glory.

GOD-KING JESUS
 Come on. You know we believe.
 Kind of. Here's the rest.

GABRIEL
 Therefore, the baby born to you
 will be thoroughly celestial.

Mary's body grows limp as her mind struggles with her heart.

Jesus stands next to Mary, puts his arm over her shoulder,
 and supports her.

MARY
 Celestial?

Jesus looks down on Mary.

GOD-KING JESUS
 Hang on, Mary. Here comes the rest
 of it. You didn't get it when he
 told you before. Grasp it now.

GABRIEL
 Your baby, Mary, will be the Son of
 God!

Jesus moves around to face Mary. He puts two hands on her
 arms. His eyes glisten.

GOD-KING JESUS
 That's it. That's the final thing
 you've got to believe. Do you
 believe it, Mary? Try, Mary. Will
 you be my mother?

Silence.

A sparkling swirl which represented God in heaven now hovers
 over her.

MARY
 The God-King? Me?

The gray rain clouds overhead open up to a dazzling sun.
 Angels rise from behind it.

Mary stands and steps toward the angel.

MARY (CONT'D)
 If God wills it, it will come true.
 Won't it?

Jesus looks up into heaven.

GOD-KING JESUS

Yes!

Gabriel looks into Mary's eyes a little longer then stands.

He slowly backs up.

GABRIEL

Do you need any more proof? Okay.
Here it is. Six months ago, your
elderly cousin, Elizabeth -- the
infertile one, they called her --
became pregnant. God's promise to
you will come true also.

He continues to back up. Slowly.... Slowly....

Mary stares at Gabriel. She hugs herself. She looks down at
her abdomen, over at the scroll, and back to Gabriel.

MARY

If it is God's will, it will
happen, and I am willing.

His work done, Gabriel backs through the bench....through the
rooftop wall....suspended now over the street below....
fading....fading.... gone.

Mary steps to the bench where the stranger had sat and feels
it. It is still solid as ever.

She picks up the scroll Gabriel had read from.

MARY (CONT'D)

Me, Lord? Me?

Jesus now stands behind Mary, swaying back and forth, a smile
on his lips and tears in his eyes.

SARAH

Mary, it's nearly dark! You're
going to ruin your eyes reading
like that.

Jesus disappears from the audience's view.

Mary follows her mother down and to the courtyard.

MARY

Everyone, I love you all.

EVE

You're a good girl, but you look a little peekid.

MARY

I'm going to bed early.

HELI

Be sure and say your prayers.

MARY

Oh yes, Father. I will.

INT. HEAVEN INSIDE THE STAR - "DAY"

GOD

Well, Son, I guess this is it. You are about to be reduced to a miniscule fertilized egg hidden deep in Mary's little womb. But Son, I won't forget you even there. Mary is about ready for you.

Heavenly Father and heavenly Son embrace. Angels stand around watching, some brushing away tears of farewell. But Gabriel -- he smiles.

GOD-KING JESUS

Good-bye, Father.

EXT. ROOFTOP - EVENING

The sparkling swirl goes into Mary.

END OF ACT FOUR

FADE OUT