

SALVATION

Written by

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Inspired by the Bible and True Stories

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FADE IN:

WRITTEN OVER BLACK: *While based on the Bible and subsequent true stories, the following is not intended as a documentary, but as a search for spiritual truth in a God-haunted world.*

EXT. EGYPTIAN MOUNTAINTOP - 1364 BC - DAY

Heat distorts the air. Down the slight slope: endless waves of brown and gold. Dunes, hills, mesas. A barren world.

A figure materializes through the unruly air. Approaching.

MOSES (37), dark-haired and golden-skinned. Lugs a freshly slaughtered goat atop his hunched shoulders.

He lays the goat carcass upon the flat summit. Gathers dried brush into a pile between smooth stones.

Pulls a KNIFE from beneath his coat. Kneels before the goat.

Slices into its hind legs. Cuts along its belly. Divides skin from muscle. Blood runs onto his hands.

A fire now burns between the stones at dusk. The flayed goat blackens in the flames. Moses kneels before his offering.

MOSES (V.O.)

If You do not go with us, I will
not go. I will not rest until I
dwell with You.

Smoke rises from the HOLOCAUST: fingers grasp to the heavens.

A hand slides onto Moses's shoulder. His sister MIRIAM (43) stands over him.

MIRIAM

We've made it, Moses. Come and see.

EXT. RIDGE ABOVE BEACH - 1364 BC - DAY

Moses crests the sandy ridge. Before him: his people fanning out on a beach before the RED SEA.

EXT. OUTSIDE BETHLEHEM - 4 BC - NIGHT

TWO FIGURES scurry into a cave under the cover of darkness.

Far above, the red and purple remnants of a SUPERNOVA from across the galaxy shine among the veil of stars.

INT. BETHLEHEM CAVE - 4 BC - NIGHT

Amid straw and animal feces, MARY (14) cries out. Pushes her child toward the world. Sweat and dirt cover her face. Tears in her eyes. She squeezes JOSEPH'S (late 30s) hand tight.

She's not ready. She's barely more than a child herself. But she cries out again. Another push.

Tearing. Screaming.

A NEWBORN BOY opens his lungs. Joseph picks up the child now lying between Mary's legs. Dirt, blood, afterbirth cling to the boy's skin.

Joseph hands him to his mother. She wipes the grime from the baby's face. One child trembles as she holds the other.

MARY

My son.

EXT. CHATHAM SHIPYARD - AD 1742 - DAWN

Wind rushes in over the RIVER MEDWAY in the pre-dawn minutes. JOHN NEWTON (17) climbs to a galleon's crow's nest where MARY CARTLETT (15) awaits. Her curly hair gently swaying.

NEWTON

We really shouldn't be up here.

CARTLETT

Where's your sense of adventure, John? Tell me you brought it.

Newton slides a SPYGLASS from beneath his overcoat.

NEWTON

Didn't think father and Thomasina would miss it.

Cartlett swipes the spyglass. Gazes east to the river's mouth.

CARTLETT

Two galleys departing. Where are they off to? India? Africa? Canada?

NEWTON

Far from here, I'm sure.

CARTLETT

But where? Use your imagination.

NEWTON

Cape Town, maybe. The ships father
sent me to Iberia on were smaller.

The sun rises. Newton shields his eyes.

CARTLETT

It's like their sails are little
candles floating on a great pond.

Cartlett lowers the spyglass. Turns to Newton.

CARTLETT (CONT'D)

Promise me you'll take me with you
someday. Please, John. God made so
much beauty I'll never see, but if
I could just taste a bit, I'd be
happy forever.

Newton smiles cheekily.

NEWTON

Sure, Mary. As long as they don't
lock us up for trespassing first.

INT. PENGELLY HOUSE - AD 1914 - DAY

A wood fire crackles in a stove. EDWARD PENGELLY (17) lays on
another log. Collects used dishes. Carries them to the sink.

Scrubs a meal's hardened remnants. A quick peek at a picture
of himself, parents, and brother ROBERT (20s) nearby.

SHOUTING from another room--

EDWARD'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Ya can't just come crawling back
like this. That's not how it ruddy
well works!

EDWARD'S FATHER (O.S.)

Leave it alone, Martha, just this
once! Ya know what ya sound like?

Edward scrubs harder.

EDWARD'S MOTHER (O.S.)

Ya need to listen, Harold! Ya never
bloody listen! Not since Robert!

EDWARD'S FATHER (O.S.)

Listen to what? More cundy leaking
from your bloody quim mouth?

A CRASHING NOISE. Silence. Edward drops the plate. Breaks for the front door.

EXT. NEAR ST. IVES - PENGELLY HOUSE - AD 1914 - CONTINUOUS

Edward takes off down a road. Passes a field where GEOFFREY WARNER (18) hoes the dirt. Geoffrey spots Edward racing past.

GEOFFREY

Ted? What's the matter, Ted?

EXT. CORNISH BLUFFS - AD 1914 - MOMENTS LATER

Edward stops in a grassy field. The CELTIC SEA unfurls before him beneath grey, drizzly skies.

Far out to sea, British warships cut through choppy waters. Smoke billows from funnels, mixing with dark rain clouds.

Geoffrey catches up to Edward, who watches the ships.

GEOFFREY

You all right, Ted?

EDWARD

The world's gone mad, Geoff.

GEOFFREY

You don't know the half of it.
Ben's shippin' out in a fortnight.
And I'm leanin' too. Really am.

EDWARD

Where you go, I go. Don't forget that. And, um, you think I could stay a few with your folks?

GEOFFREY

Any time.

A biplane squadron RUMBLES overhead, racing across the Cornish Peninsula toward France.

INT. FRIARY - CHAPEL - AD 1939 - DAY

In brown Franciscan habit and wire-frame glasses, MAXIMILIAN KOLBE (45) kneels on the wood floor. SERAPHIC ROSARY in his hand. Golden MONSTRANCE atop the stripped-down altar.

The ground shakes. The RUMBLE emanates across the friary.

INT. FRIARY - PRINTING ROOM - AD 1939 - MOMENTS LATER

Kolbe hurries through a room of printing presses where SEMINARIANS typeset.

KOLBE
Shut it down, quickly.

Kolbe presses against the far wall. Peeks outside.

Beyond the friary walls, German PANZERS roll through Polish TERESIN's streets, flanked by infantry in sleek Nazi garb.

An air raid siren BLARES. Heinkel bombers ROAR overhead. Kolbe turns back to the seminarians.

KOLBE (CONT'D)
Grab what you have and head below.
It'll be all right, I promise.

Explosions BOOM in the distance. Kolbe looks over his shoulder, eyes wide in terror.

CUT TO BLACK. WRITTEN: "SALVATION"

INT. JERUSALEM - HALL OF HEWN STONES - AD 26 - DAY

A great stone room. The JEWISH PRIESTS of the SANHEDRIN council on low benches along the back semicircular wall. High Priest CAIAPHAS (60s) reviews a scroll. ANNAS (70s) presides.

A CROWD buzzes and mills about opposite, only paying half-attention to the proceedings.

ANNAS
Next case.

A lone JEWISH MAN (30) with short, black hair steps before the crowd. Caiaphas whispers in Annas's ear.

ANNAS (CONT'D)
Jesus the Nazorean, you stand accused of preaching messianic heresies in our synagogues. Do you have any response to this claim?

JESUS
I can only speak to the truth, nothing more. You say it is heresy.

ANNAS
You do not deny this claim, then?

JESUS

I have said what I've said.

ANNAS

Very well. By order of the Sanhedrin, you are hereby banned from preaching in any synagogue in the whole of Judea. Next case.

Jesus pushes through the crowd. As he reaches the entryway, a young PAGE (8) rushes up to him.

PAGE

Jesus, the High Priest requests a meeting in the temple.

EXT. JERUSALEM - ROYAL STOA - AD 26 - DAY

Jesus leans against the parapet atop the southern wall of the TEMPLE. The open-air colonnade of the ROYAL STOA behind him.

The LOWER CITY of JERUSALEM spreads out below. The sun hangs low to the west over green hills.

Jesus eyes Caiaphas as the High Priest approaches.

CAIAPHAS

Quite the view, isn't it? When I was a child, this whole area was constantly being worked on. They wouldn't allow me up here until they finished, and Herod's father simply wasn't satisfied unless it was the biggest, the best, but now it's a wonder to behold.

JESUS

I hope you didn't summon me here just to reminisce.

Caiaphas leans against the parapet.

CAIAPHAS

Sometimes the best things are worth waiting for. Truly, there's nothing I long for more than the Messiah, but now's not the time. It's not for us to know the hour nor the day, yet you claim to? What makes you better than a street beggar claiming the end is near?

JESUS

I never said I was. We're all beggars, but only the truly poor refuse to accept what's given to them. Who cling instead to pride.

CAIAPHAS

What pride is left in Israel? God's church bleeds. Seven High Priests in as many years. How can we uphold our covenant in such disarray?

JESUS

The Messiah will bring a new covenant, for all mankind.

CAIAPHAS

Our covenant is the Law, but lawlessness breeds in your house! You preach madness while your cousin baptizes converts in the desert. If people truly believe the Messiah is at hand, by what force will they heel before Rome? Revolution is the end for Judea.

JESUS

You worry for your title, your temple. Yet God can rend down this temple and rebuild it in three days. Broken and remade more perfect than before.

CAIAPHAS

I worry for our people, Jesus.

Caiaphas moves toward Jesus. His point isn't reaching.

CAIAPHAS (CONT'D)

I could've handed you to the Romans. Had you scourged or worse. Yet I believe you might still serve God's people. Turn your cousin back before it's too late or else, well, what measure is one life weighed against the people's?

EXT. JERUSALEM OUTSKIRTS - AD 26 - EVENING

Jesus pulls his pack over his shoulder. Heads out into the Judean countryside as the sun sets.

EXT. NEAR THE SEA OF GALILEE - AD 26 - DAY

Jesus walks along a dusty road. Ahead, the hills part. The SEA OF GALILEE comes into view ahead of him.

Comes to a small hut on the sand adjacent to a cliff face. Opens the door to his workshop. Drops his bag to the floor.

Plops down outside against his workshop, resting in the shade. Rubs his temples.

MONTAGE:

- 1) Jesus works on a wooden table in his workshop, light streaming through the thatched roof.
- 2) In a synagogue on the Sabbath, Jesus takes his turn reading from the scroll but sits down immediately afterward.
- 3) After sunset, Jesus walks along the beach. Gazes across the water to the orange-tinged mountains and stars beyond.
- 4) Jesus sleeps on a straw bed in his workshop.

EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - DREAM - MORNING

A quick SERIES OF SHOTS:

- 1) A man stands before the perfectly calm sea. He wears his finest suit, but we can't make out who he is.
- 2) The low sun shines through the lace of a bridal gown. A gentle wind blows the white linen.
- 3) The man takes the hand of a woman.

EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - AD 26 - AFTERNOON

Jesus again walks the shoreline. Ahead: three fishing boats halfway on the shore. Several FISHERMEN, including SIMON (28) and brother ANDREW (31), argue along side. One storms off.

Jesus looks out on the glistening sea. Squints.

The three boats lie almost entirely empty save for nets and a handful of fish each.

JESUS

No luck?

ANDREW
What's it to you, rabbi? Or have
you given up all that?

SIMON
Don't be rude, Andrew.
(to Jesus)
We're out today. We might be able
to sell you some tomorrow.

Jesus runs his hand along the side of their boat.

JESUS
I'm afraid I haven't had much luck
lately, either. Not many buy from
yesterday's preachers.

SIMON
I'm not running a charity here.

Simon stops, watches Jesus.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Why have you stopped preaching,
rabbi? Has your fire gone out?

JESUS
It's complicated, Simon.

SIMON
It doesn't have to be.

JESUS
Perhaps.

Jesus turns to leave. Simon sighs. Grabs one of the few fish
in his boat.

SIMON
Wait.

Jesus turns back. Simon tosses him the fish. Andrew scoffs.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Take it. Things always seem simpler
on a full stomach.

Jesus cracks a mischievous grin.

JESUS
You know, I bet that if you went
out right now, to the deep, you'd
find some. I bet you'd catch so
many fish, your nets tear.

ANDREW
That's not funny.

JESUS
How's this: If I'm right, I get a
cut. If you're right, I'll make you
whatever you want for free.

Simon looks incredulous.

JESUS (CONT'D)
I mean it.

Andrew turns to leave. Simon climbs into the boat.

SIMON
All right, you're on. I know where
you live, so don't even try to
squirm out of this if you lose.
(to Andrew)
You gonna help or what?

Andrew rolls his eyes, then helps push the boat. Jesus sits
on a rock as the boat drifts out.

EXT. SEA OF GALILEE - AD 26 - DAY

On the boat, Simon tosses a net overboard. Waits.

ANDREW
See? Nothing.

Simon pulls on the net, but finds he can't lift it.

SIMON
Help me with this, will ya?

They yank hard. The net flops over onto the deck. Rips open.
Fish pour out around their feet. Simon shakes his head in
disbelief. Turns back toward the beach, but Jesus is gone.

INT. FRIARY - KOLBE'S QUARTERS - AD 1939 - DAY

Kolbe stares out a window from his desk. BLANK PAPER before
him. He fiddles with his pencil.

Framed pictures line the back of his desk. His fellow friars.
Chinese nationalists in SHANGHAI. His monastery in NAGASAKI.

Brass telescope by the window.

EXT. FRIARY GROUNDS - AD 1939 - DAY

Kolbe wanders the grounds. An inch of snow coats the grass. Trees devoid of leaves. Sky overcast.

His hand runs along the stone exterior wall separating the friary from Teresin. Breath condenses in the air.

A broken segment of wall. Beyond: rubble-lined streets.

KOLBE (V.O.)
Where has Your beauty gone?

Down the road, WORKERS shiver in the cold. Wearing white armbands with blue STARS OF DAVID. They clear the streets under watch of pacing NAZI SOLDIERS.

INT. FRIARY - INFIRMARY - AD 1940 - DAY

Kolbe holds a door open as two seminarians carry an unconscious Jewish worker. Lay him on an empty bed. ORDERLIES scurry between injured Jews, Poles, and German soldiers.

Two SS OFFICERS chat with a wounded German. They spot Kolbe.

INT. FRIARY - HALLWAY - AD 1940 - LATER

The officers corner Kolbe outside the infirmary.

SS OFFICER #1
The *Reich* commends you for your work, Kolbe. We'd hate to see our men mistreated.

KOLBE
We do what we can for anyone who comes through here.

SS OFFICER #2
We've heard about problems with your little publishing venture. In the future, you'll need clearance from the Communications Office. They're a bit sticky, would you say? We could grease the wheels.

KOLBE
What's the price?

SS OFFICER #1
Kolbe's a German name, no? We can allow you into the *Volksdeutsche*.
(MORE)

SS OFFICER #1 (CONT'D)
Full German citizenship. A thing
like that's priceless.

KOLBE
You flatter me, but my family is
Polish, my church is Polish. The
Immaculatae is Queen of Poland. I'm
afraid I can't accept your
generosity.

SS OFFICER #1
You know what they say: in Poland,
the Church and Nation are one. Tell
me, how quickly did your government
fall before the *blitzkrieg*?

INT. FRIARY - DINING HALL - AD 1940 - NIGHT

Kolbe, Ivo, and five other Franciscan FRIARS, including
Brother GORGONIO REMBISZ meet around a table.

REMBISZ
You should've taken the offer, Max.
I'd've if I knew a lick of German.

KOLBE
That's truly comforting, Gorgonio.

REMBISZ
After Warsaw-- Half the diocese in
Pawiak, the rest on the run-- and
the Soviet east isn't any better.

IVO
Teresin needs us here. Who will
serve this town if not us?

KOLBE
They won't stop at Warsaw. None of
you saw it, the contempt. I worry
no one else does either, and if
they take us, the truth goes with.
We must speak while we still can.

IVO
The Communications Office would
never sanction it.

KOLBE
Do we not as journalists, as
Franciscans, have a commitment to
testify to the truth? We can't
simply wish it away.

IVO

At what cost? Where will the sick go? The starving? Will we abandon them when they need us most?

KOLBE

No one is safe here. We should either stay and speak up or we should leave. Each of us must choose. If you leave, head for Ireland or America, the further the better. I'll ask Mary to intercede on your journey. But I'm staying and writing for the *Knight*.

Rembisz stands.

REMBISZ

I'm sorry, Max, but I don't intend to martyr myself just yet.

INT. NEWTON MANOR - DINING ROOM - AD 1742 - EVENING

Newton sups with his father JOHN NEWTON SENIOR (45) and step-mother THOMASINA NEWTON (30). An elaborate candle centerpiece casts shadows about the room.

Newton ignores his food. Blank SHEET MUSIC beside his table setting. He scribbles a few notes.

THOMASINA

It's rude to do that at the table.

Newton ignores her.

NEWTON SENIOR

I hear you got along well with the Cartlett girl. I wouldn't disapprove of such a match, but I can't see why they'd accept.

NEWTON

What's that supposed to mean?

NEWTON SENIOR

Since Spain, you've developed a reputation, but I've put in some queries and found you a position in Jamaica. The Kingston plantation had a bumper sugar crop this year. I've arranged for a spring passage before the hurricanes roll through.

NEWTON

What about Mary? About what I want?

NEWTON SENIOR

You think her father would let her marry you?

NEWTON

Shouldn't she decide?

NEWTON SENIOR

How would you provide for her? Take the Kingston station, and when you're ready for a family, you'll be able to afford your own estate here or in any of the colonies.

NEWTON

You're shipping me off to the arse-end of the world like unwanted chattel. Should I marry some negress to pump out mulattos, too?

THOMASINA

Mind yourself, John.

NEWTON

Stay out of this, Thomasina.

NEWTON SENIOR

Don't talk to your mother that way.

NEWTON

She's not my mother!

Newton springs to his feet. Glares cut the tension.

NEWTON (CONT'D)

I'll find my own way.

Newton storms from the room. His father's head drops.

INT. NEWTON'S BEDROOM - AD 1742 - NIGHT

Newton scribbles a letter by candlelight.

NEWTON (V.O.)

My dear Mary, it seems fate again carries me from England's shores. I fear it may be some time before we see each other again, and I can regale you with songs of far-off destinations.

(MORE)

NEWTON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

In the while, never let Chatham
hold you ransom; your heart wasn't
meant to be tethered to the earth.
One day, I'll take you away, but
until then, think of me fondly, for
I shall do of you. All the best,
John.

MONTAGE during voice-over:

- 1) Newton flips through his sheet music. Tucks it in a desk drawer. Slings on a satchel.
- 2) He spots his father and Thomasina conversing in the study. Pauses a moment, then slinks away unseen.
- 3) Newton trudges out into the night, his breath condensing in the crisp Aveley air.
- 4) Along the Thurrock waterfront the next morning, galleons docked on the River Thames beckon. Tall masts. Swarms of crewmen loading crates. Naval sailors pass, catching his eye.

EXT. BEACH CAMP - 1364 BC - NIGHT

A raging bonfire burns in the starlight amid sheepskin tents. The gathered HEBREW EXILES fix their eyes on AARON (41) as he narrates a story with animated gestures.

AARON

I thought he was mad, truly. Like
our staffs could do wonders. But I
did it. I did! I threw mine down
before Ramses, and... nothing. Some
rod of God it was. We were
finished, I knew it. Pharaoh would
slit our throats and throw us in
the Nile. But then it happened! The
staff curled and leapt forward as a
great snake. I'd scarcely believe
it if I hadn't seen it myself. But
that's not even the best part.

Aaron stalks along the seated listeners. Stops before a little freckled girl, HANNAH (8). Bends down to her.

AARON (CONT'D)

The Pharaoh's priests brought out
their own snakes. Two vipers as
fierce as they come. Know what
happened next?

She shakes her head, never breaking eyes contact.

AARON (CONT'D)

Moses's snake gobbled them both up!

Aaron tickles the girl, who squirms and laughs. He grins. Straightens up. Looks across the group.

AARON (CONT'D)

That was the moment when I knew.
That Moses, that my little brother,
would lead us to freedom.

Moses and Miriam watch Aaron.

MOSES

You tell it much better than I do,
Aaron. Much more... lifelike.

NADAB (19) and ABIHU (17) perk up.

NADAB

Seems a bit far-fetched, doesn't
it, father? Maybe the staff became
a snake, but then eating the other
two? Things rarely work out like
that.

AARON

What, you think I'd make something
up like that? Well, I might, but in
this case, I'm telling the truth.

MOSES

After everything we've seen, you
still doubt, Nadab?

NADAB

I can't explain some of what I've
seen. Maybe they even were true
miracles, but that hardly means I
should accept what you say blindly.
Take the "blood" in the Nile. It's
just red silt. It comes down the
cataracts every few years. It's
natural, not a miracle.

MOSES

Let's say you're right, and it was
just silt. Given its timing, what
it helped us do, how can we say it
wasn't a miracle? Miracles don't
always come the way you'd expect.
The Lord can work through the
natural as easily as the wondrous.
It's all the same to Him.

NADAB

Then how can we know His work?

Moses doesn't answer.

EXT. BEACH - 1364 BC - NIGHT

Songs of celebration faintly drift down from camp.

Waves crash against the sandy shore. Forming lines and erasing. Moses sits. Gazes up at the cloudless sky of stars. Fingers knead the sand. His staff nearby.

Miriam finds him there. Plops down beside him.

MIRIAM

So, this is where you're hiding.

MOSES

I'm not hiding. Well, not only.

MIRIAM

Admit it, you couldn't take another one of Aaron's stories.

MOSES

Speak for yourself.

Miriam laughs.

MIRIAM

It's nice to just walk, you know?
Where you want, when you want.
There's so much to take in, like
the smell of the sea or how those
little reeds poke up. How they sway
in the breeze.

MOSES

The stars seem brighter here, the
further we get from Egypt.

(beat)

Do you believe it, Miriam?
Descendants more numerous than all
the stars in the sky.

MIRIAM

I'm not in the mood for a test.

MOSES

It's not a test.

A slight breeze blows in from the sea.

MOSES (CONT'D)

In Midian, the Lord spoke to me. It was clear and beautiful, calm but powerful. No more than a whisper, but more brilliant than all the lights in heaven. In that moment, I knew exactly what I had to do. But now, it doesn't feel real. Like a dream I can barely recall. Just beyond my grasp, slipping away. How can I even be sure I heard it? Am I going mad, Miriam?

Miriam puts her arm around her little brother.

MIRIAM

You'd have to a bit mad to do what you've done, Moses. But who says that's a bad thing?

Footsteps behind them. Moses turns to find a SCOUT (16), short on breath.

SCOUT

Moses, there's been a rider in the night. Asks for you and Aaron.

EXT. BELGIAN TRAIN STATION - AD 1914 - DAY

Train doors open. Young British soldiers stream from the railcar onto the platform. A buzz of excitement in the air.

Edward and Geoffrey step off the train. Wear secondhand private's uniforms with great packs on their backs. Push through the throng. A SHOUT toward them:

BENJAMIN (O.S.)

Geoff! Ted!

People part as Edward and Geoffrey find Lieutenant BENJAMIN WARNER (late 20s) waving to them.

Benjamin waits in a pristine officer's uniform. Tall, handsome-- Clearly with the genetics of an eldest child.

Geoffrey and Benjamin embrace.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

About time you got here.

They follow the crowd down the platform steps to a dirt road.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)

I called in some favours, and you're both assigned to me, all right? Mum would have my ruddy head if anything happened to you two.

GEOFFREY

So, we're your servants?

BENJAMIN

Servants, batmen, orderlies, whatever you'd like to name it. It's the best I can do, all right? You'll be running my letters, cleaning my uniform, getting meals--

GEOFFREY

Be wipin' your arse, too?

Benjamin grabs Geoffrey. Headlocks him with his arm as they walk. Grins maniacally.

BENJAMIN

Know how many times I changed your diaper, ya little shit?
(to Edward)
Should've seen it, Ted. Geoff was the foulest babe you'll ever see.

EDWARD

Don't I know it.

Benjamin lets Geoffrey go.

GEOFFREY

Real funny, you two.

EDWARD

What about fighting, Ben?

BENJAMIN

Not even I can avoid that. How was basic?

EDWARD

Geoff's a natural shot. Must run in the family. Me, well...

Benjamin lays his hand on Edward's shoulder.

BENJAMIN

Good thing you're with me, then.

EXT. GALLEON DECK - AT SEA - AD 1744 - DAY

Now 19, Newton reaches the HARWICH'S bow railing. Ahead, the mouth of the River Medway comes into view. He grins wide.

INT. HARWICH QUARTERS - AT SEA - AD 1744 - LATER

Newton and four BRITISH SAILORS huddle around a barrel. All eyes fixed on the felt CROWN AND ANCHOR board on its lid.

Newton takes a deep breath. Across from him, WILLIAM (20s) stares at Newton as if anticipating some tender meat.

WILLIAM
Better start praying, Newton.

NEWTON
I don't need your God's help,
William.

WILLIAM
Could've fooled me.

Newton places all three of his wooden chips on the heart tile. The sailors smirk among themselves.

SAILOR #2 (O.S.)
Christ, what a git.

Newton shakes the three dice in his hand. Lets them fly.

One settles on crowns. Another on spades. The last die turns over, revealing... clubs.

Newton grimaces. The others burst into laughter.

WILLIAM
That's what? Thirteen shillings
now?

NEWTON
You'll get 'em when I do.

WILLIAM
You've 'til we break port, hear me?

EXT. CHATHAM DOCKYARD - AD 1744 - DAY

Newton walks down the gangplank from ship to stone. A woman in a long, flowing dress shouts out. Newton looks-- A sailor pushes past Newton toward her. They embrace.

Newton watches as long as he can bear. Turns down the dock. Vendors crowd in. Peddle wares to seamen.

NEWTON (V.O.)

What has freedom bought me but
another chain? A slave to what I do
not need to give you what you do
not want. Where is the gold which
can never be gambled away or the
food which never spoils?

He ducks away down an alley. Inland through cobblestone streets. Ahead, a lush green hill dotted with houses. Up there just past the edge of town--

WILLIAM (O.S.)

Oy! Where you off to?

Newton freezes. William and two others stalk up to Newton.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Slinking off with my money, are ya?

NEWTON

It's not like that. I just have to
see someone who lives near here.

WILLIAM

Is that so? 'Cause it looks like
you're running scared to me.

William looks to the other two.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)

Looks like a deserter.

NEWTON

I'm coming back. I just have to--

William grabs Newton by his collar.

WILLIAM

I think I'll enjoy this.

INT. FRIARY - PRINTING ROOM - AD 1941 - NIGHT

The printing presses wind down. The last of the KNIGHT newspapers finishes being stamped into life.

Kolbe picks up a copy. Turns it in his hands. The last will and testament of the now assembled Brothers of NIEPOKALANOW friary. As much for himself as them, he says:

KOLBE

What great grace it is to seal with
our own lives our ideals.

EXT. STREETS OF TERESIN - AD 1941 - NIGHT

Kolbe and the six friars each carry an armful of newspapers into the dark streets. They fan out over town. Leave copies on doorsteps. Tuck them into doorposts.

INT. FRIARY - KOLBE'S QUARTERS - AD 1941 - DAY

Kolbe reads from a copy of St. Augustine's CONFESSIONS. A black telephone RINGS on Kolbe's desk. He answers.

KOLBE (V.O.)

Lord, bring my crown, but not yet.

EXT. FRIARY - ENTRANCE - AD 1941 - DAY

Kolbe emerges outside as three black VOLKSWAGEN cars pull to a stop. Four GESTAPO MEN climb out. One in a long, black overcoat speaks:

GESTAPO AGENT

Maximilian Kolbe, we've received alarming reports about your institution here. Unreported seminarians, illicit communications, political activities, even.

KOLBE

Let's talk inside.

INT. FRIARY - OFFICE - AD 1941 - MOMENTS LATER

Kolbe enters his office with the four Gestapo behind him. Gestures for them to sit. No response.

One Gestapo closes the door. The lead Gestapo pulls papers from beneath his coat as if unsheathing a sword.

GESTAPO AGENT

Arrest warrants for yourself and five of your fellow priests.

KOLBE

On what grounds?

GESTAPO AGENT

We have a signed, sworn affidavit from one of your former members attesting to your crimes. From one Gorgonio Rembisz.

He hands Kolbe a document signed with Rembisz's signature. Kolbe shuts his eyes. The text is written entirely in German.

EXT. FRIARY - ENTRANCE - AD 1941 - DAY

The Gestapo agents lead Kolbe and five other priests to the waiting cars. Lower them into the back seats.

Ivo watches from a friary window. Kolbe glances to him, but Ivo shirks from his gaze. Doors shut. Cars pull away.

EXT. NAZARETH - BASE OF HILL - AD 26 - DAY

Jesus and three NAZOREANS carry a bier to an open tomb. Upon it, the body of Joseph. They lower him into the dark cave.

Jesus stares into the opening. Head slightly cocked. His face failing to mask his pain.

Mary (44) puts her arm around him. Looks up at his face. Touches it tenderly with her hand.

INT. NAZARETH - MARY'S HOUSE - AD 26 - NIGHT

Jesus and Mary sit across from each other, eating dinner.

JESUS

Any thoughts about where you'll live? Clopas is married, but he'd still take you in. Elizabeth is another option, for a while.

MARY

What about with you?

JESUS

My place? Oh, you'd hate it. Right by the sea. Step outside, and you're on the beach. Cool wind blowing through your hair.

MARY

How do you manage?

JESUS

Not well enough, it seems. No one's buying anymore. Even the fishermen are taking pity on me. Might as well pack it up and move on.

MARY

I know what you mean.

MARY (CONT'D)

Actually, I've always wanted to see the Nile again, you know, when we aren't running for our lives. It's so green, you wouldn't believe it. But I can't imagine Elizabeth is up for much travel anymore.

JESUS

Speaking of Elizabeth, how's John?

MARY

"The Baptist"? As far as I know, he's down by the Jordan still. Why? Want him to baptize you?

JESUS

I don't know about that, but he has some interesting ideas.

MARY

About the Messiah?

Jesus quiets. Mary sighs. Her eyes search his face.

MARY (CONT'D)

You're so certain the Messiah's at hand, yet it can't possibly be you?

JESUS

Can we not talk about this now?

MARY

How could I not talk about it? I want to scream it to the world!

JESUS

I know you feel that way, but you're mistaken. That's all it is.

Mary shakes her head.

MARY

You told me yourself, remember? That time in the temple?

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

You said "I must be about my
Father's business"? Did you forget?

Jesus abruptly stands.

JESUS

I was a child. A child with stupid,
grandiose ideas about myself. Only
in the height of vanity could
someone claim to be the Son of God.
How could someone like me be the
Messiah? It's absurd.

MARY

I've seen how much the sin of the
world hurts you. Maybe you think
you're not good enough or that
you're too broken, but the world is
far more broken than you. I know
you feel it, somewhere deep down.
How could you not when I can?

JESUS

I can't be what you want. I can't.

EXT. RIDGE ABOVE BEACH - 1364 BC - NIGHT

Moses and Aaron climb the sandy ridge. A horse and RIDER
(20s) wait just inland of the rise. He holds a torch.

RIDER

I did as you asked. Two days north
and south; there's nothing. Sand
and water as far as you can see.

AARON

Eh, it's all right. I'd rather be
out here than back living under
Ramses. We'll find our way.

Sweat drips down the rider's brow. Moses searches his face.

MOSES

There's something else, isn't
there?

RIDER

Please, do not be angry. I met a
rider from Memphis. He said Ramses
is coming with all his chariots to
reclaim what was his.

AARON

Do you trust his word? People see
all manner of things in the desert.

RIDER

He rode until he collapsed. Who
would do so for a lie?

MOSES

How far off are they?

RIDER

Not far. If he's right, they'll be
here by daybreak.

AARON

It doesn't make sense. He let us
go, right? Why would he do this?

MOSES

If you knew Ramses, you'd
understand.

Aaron paces around. Puts his hands to the back of his head.

AARON

What are we going to do, Moses?

Moses looks out over the fire-lit camp. Shakes his head.

INT. HARWICH STOCKADE - AT SEA - AD 1744 - DAY

Newton languishes in darkness as the ship sways. Chained to
the wall. A door opens. Light blinds him.

EXT. HARWICH DECK - AT SEA - AD 1744 - DAY

A low DRUM BEAT.

Two sailors force Newton toward the main mast of the anchored
galleon. Newton squirms. Struggles against the men.

They rope Newton's arms around the mast.

The galleon's CAPTAIN (40s) paces in front of the assembled
crew of three-fifty.

HARWICH CAPTAIN

John Newton, you have been found
guilty of desertion by court
martial, to be hereby stripped of
all rank and flogged as I see fit.

The sailors rip Newton's shirt back, exposing his skin.

One of the crew members hands the captain a CAT O' NINE TAILS. The captain stretches his arm. Raises the weapon.

The tailed whip lashes out. Bites Newton's back, leaving small streaks of blood. Newton yelps in pain.

No one moves or speaks save Newton and the captain.

Another lash.

Newton grits his teeth. Pulls against the mast.

Another lash.

Newton yells out. Tears well in his eyes.

Another lash.

Newton's cries turn hoarse.

Lash after lash strike until he falls to his knees. The captain strikes again and again. Eight dozen in all.

HARWICH CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

That's enough. Dismissed.

He wipes his brow. Hands off his whip. Heads to his quarters.

Newton curls up against the mast. Face alternating between pain and fury. Unable to steady his breathing.

William unties Newton's arms. Glares at him with disdain.

LATER: Newton's alone, crumpled against the rail of the ship. Moon illuminating the choppy sea.

Grimacing, Newton pulls himself up. Braces against the ship's sway. Face glistens with sweat. Staggered toward the cabin.

INT. HARWICH CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - AT SEA - AD 1744 - EVENING

Newton looms over the captain, who sleeps in his bed. Unaware. Watches as his chest rises. Falls. Rises.

In Newton's right hand: a KNIFE.

He creeps forward. A single creak could betray his trespass. Newton's breath matches the sleeper's. Hovers the knife just above his tyrant's throat.

A moment passes. Another.

Newton pulls the knife back.

EXT. BELGIAN FIELD - AD 1914 - MORNING

Over a hundred British soldiers including Edward, Geoffrey, and Benjamin trudge through a muddy field of long grass. Lee-Enfield bolt-action rifles rest upon their shoulders.

In Edward's right hand: A silver CROSS NECKLACE.

EDWARD (V.O.)

Will You save me from my enemies?
Protect me, guide me to Your peace.

Dour-looking moustached Lieutenant-General DOUGLAS HAIG (40s) rides a white WAR HORSE alongside his troops.

Fog blankets the bases of the nearby hills. Brick and stone houses, shops, and outbuildings stand out before the white.

EXT. NORTH LANGEMARCK OUTSKIRTS - AD 1914 - MORNING

The town is silent. Shutters cover every window. Edward peers down each street. Only soldiers to be seen.

Defiladed British soldiers crouch in shallow, discontinuous trenches just outside town. The fog line, hills loom beyond.

Edward and Geoffrey squat behind the dirt. Hold their rifles.

Benjamin directs Privates LAWRENCE, BILLY, and DANIEL (18) along the trench. Jumps down between Edward and Geoffrey.

BENJAMIN

Ted, you're gonna load chargers for
me. You got that, right?

Edward nods. Benjamin hands him a satchel of four-round stripper clips. Takes two. Loads them into his rifle. Jams the bolt forward and locks it down.

Benjamin and Geoffrey aim their rifles over the side of the trench, aligning their sights.

No movement. Faint explosions sound beyond the fog.

GEOFFREY

Show yourselves, damn it.

Geoffrey grips his rifle tight. Edward pulls two chargers from the satchel. His hands shake.

Haig rides to and fro behind them. Waves his sword about.

HAIG
Steady, men!

A BOOM from beyond the fog. Edward's breath quickens.

An artillery shell SLAMS down twenty feet down the line. Dirt, shrapnel, blood ERUPT into the air. Two soldiers nearly vaporized. Half-dozen others CRY OUT. Fall to the ground, holding bloody limbs and faces.

GEOFFREY
Christ!

Another mortar explodes into the field about thirty feet in front of them.

HAIG (O.S.)
Hold your positions!

Benjamin glances to Edward, whose eyes are peeled open.

BENJAMIN
Just stick close.

Another shell bursts not far away. Screaming from everywhere. British soldiers shoot blindly into the fog.

Bullets whiz back from the white void. Geoffrey fires back.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Here they come!

From the fog, a seemingly endless wave of Germans. Shots burst from all sides. Soldiers cry out. Fall.

Benjamin squeezes his trigger. Jams the bolt up and back. An empty cartridge springs out. Slams the bolt forward. One fluid motion. Squeezes again.

FIRE. SLAM. POP. SLAM. FIRE. Over and over. For each shot, a fallen German.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Reload!

Edward presses two more chargers into Benjamin's chamber. Three more shots.

Germans overrun the trench to their right. A shell SHREDS a village hut behind them.

Other British soldiers peel off. Break for the village.

GEOFFREY
Shit! What do we do?

Benjamin downs two more Germans. Looks around. Haig's nowhere to be seen.

BENJAMIN
Get your bayonets ready.

Edward slides a bayonet on his rifle. Fits Benjamin's as well. Geoffrey does the same. Benjamin peeks over the trench.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
All right, let's move!

The trio leaps from the trench. Darts back toward the village. Bullets narrowly miss.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Where's our bloody cover?!

They hide behind a half-demolished shop just back the line.

Benjamin peers around the corner. British soldiers flee past them. One falls from a German bullet.

Germans overrun the trenches. Benjamin fires twice more. Edward reloads his chamber.

BENJAMIN (CONT'D)
Cover back!

Edward scampers to the opposite end of the shop. A German soldier rounds the corner. Takes aim. Fires. Misses.

Edward raises his rifle. Pulls the trigger. Again. Nothing.

He never loaded his own weapon.

Without thinking, he plunges his bayonet into the German's gut. Twists. Drives him into the dirt. The German cries out.

Stills. Edward gawks at his contorted face. Almost transfixed. Geoffrey runs to Edward.

GEOFFREY
Get up! Get up, Ted!

Across the road, a German wheels around. Charges toward them. Raises his rifle. FIRE.

The bullet RIPS into Geoffrey's right shoulder. He crumples.

The German chambers a new bullet. Another shot RINGS out.

Blood bursts from the German's sternum. Benjamin rushes to Edward and Geoffrey.

BENJAMIN

You hit?

Blood runs between Geoffrey's fingers.

GEOFFREY

It's fine. It's fine.

Far back of the line, Haig rides his horse to block fleeing British soldiers.

HAIG

Hold the line! Hold the line for
redeployments!

Other Britons wheel Howitzer artillery down the narrow streets. A deep BOOM from the south. More mortar explosions burst, this time further north.

The fog lightens to the south. Reveals British and Belgian soldiers advancing.

More British shells fire. A cheer rises several blocks away.

BILLY (O.S.)

We got their Howitzer!

BENJAMIN

About damn time.

INT. LANGEMARCK - FIELD DRESSING STATION - AD 1914 - DAY

A FIELD NURSE sews the bullet hole in Geoffrey's shoulder. Benjamin and Edward watch. Geoffrey winches.

GEOFFREY

What were you doing, Ted? You can't
just bloody freeze like that.

EDWARD

I don't know what happened, Geoff.

Geoffrey's left hand squeezes the table he sits on.

GEOFFREY

You have to be alert. Fast. Sharp.
Christ, Ted, this is important.
You're gonna get yourself killed.

EDWARD
I'm not afraid to die.

GEOFFREY
Dammit, Ted. You ever think about
anyone but you?

Benjamin pulls Edward aside.

BENJAMIN
C'mon. We've got trenches to dig.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - AD 1941 - NIGHT

Smoke billows from a train engine. Nazi guards usher Poles,
Jews, and gypsies onto empty boxcars. Kolbe among them.

INT. TRAIN CAR - AD 1941 - CONTINUOUS

People cram in behind Kolbe. The door slides shut.

Whimpers in the cramped dark. Crying sounds somewhere across
the mass of people.

The train RUMBLES forward. Kolbe peers up through bars to the
black sky above. No stars to be seen.

EXT. CAMP YARD - AD 1941 - NIGHT

The train enters a wide, fenced yard through a brick
portcullis. Slows, stops as a host of Nazi soldiers await
with snarling German shepherds.

Doors open. Prisoners spill out into the cold night.
Shivering. Confusion. Fear.

Dogs snap. A message barks through a loudspeaker. Guards push
the throng toward a gate in the interior fence. Written
above: "*Arbeit Macht Frei*"

Kolbe follows the crowd to an open parade ground. Stone
barracks and outbuildings. Smoke billows from a chimney.
Electrified barbed wire rings the camp.

Kommandant RUDOLF HOSS (40), weasly *Sub-Kommandant* KARL
FRITZSCH (37), five burly Nazi CAPOS loom above on a wooden
platform. Hoss's uniform pristine, Fritzsich's well-worn.

The prisoners halt. Hoss looks to Fritzsich, who walks
forward, inspecting his quivering subjects.

FRITZSCH

Welcome to Auschwitz, dear Poles. I am *Sub-Kommandant* Karl Fritzsch, second to *Kommandant* Rudolf Hoss.

Fritzsch rubs his gloved hands together.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)

You have not arrived at a health spa, but at an instrument for the glory of the Fatherland. You will find only one exit: the crematorium chimney. If that doesn't sound appealing, you may throw yourselves on the electric fences, if you're not shot first. Those are your only options; any escape attempts will see all punished. Any Jews have the right to live no more than two weeks; priests, one month; the rest, three months. But in that time, you will be exalted, reborn as agents of the *Reich*. There is no higher honor for those as lowly as yourselves.

Fritzsch looks to his capos.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)

Process them.

MONTAGE:

- 1) German attendants strip Kolbe of his habit and other possessions, throwing him into an icy shower.
- 2) Attendants shave Kolbe's head to the scalp.
- 3) They hand Kolbe a blue-and-gray striped uniform.
- 4) Kolbe stands before a table. A RECORD KEEPER checks a box next to Kolbe's name on a form.

RECORD KEEPER

Number 16,670. Block 18.

I./E. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - NIGHT

Dazed, Kolbe stumbles toward an old brick barrack: BLOCK 18.

Inside, Kolbe lays on a bed of straw. Rolls toward the wall, curling into the fetal position. His eyes unable to close.

INT. MARY'S HOUSE - AD 26 - BEFORE DAWN

Jesus lies awake in bed, staring at the ceiling. A quick SHOT from the previous wedding dream flashes.

He gets up. Grabs his belongings. Stands over Mary as she sleeps alone. Lingers a moment. Kisses her cheek.

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - AD 26 - DAY

Green-brown groves of date palms and olive trees line the languid river.

A small crowd by its banks, one man set apart: JOHN THE BAPTIST (30s). His self-hewn camel-hair cloak and unkempt hair convey a delicate balance between charisma and madness.

As Jesus nears, the Baptist wades into the water. A HUSBAND and WIFE (both 60s) follow. The Baptist turns to them.

THE BAPTIST

The hour is near, my friends. Let us wash away our sins, break our chains, and stand clean for the coming of the Messiah. For what reason have you come to the river?

The couple look to one another.

WIFE

I've sinned against God. Against my husband. I was unfaithful, many times, for many years. With my servants. With many men. Please, I just want it gone. All of it.

THE BAPTIST

Come.

She wades forward. The Baptist takes hold of her, slides her beneath the surface. After a BEAT, she bursts forth. The Baptist lets go as she sits up. To the husband:

THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

Go to her. Speak to her as God spoke to Israel in Solomon's Song: "Arise, my beloved, my beautiful one, and come! For see, the winter is past, the rains are gone and flowers again appear upon the earth." "For strong as death is love and relentless as the grave;

(MORE)

THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

no depths can quench it nor floods
sweep it away." Go and bear good
fruits as proof of your repentance,
and let your love reflect God's for
His people.

The Baptist returns toward the rest of the crowd.

THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

Behold, their sins repented, their
guilt washed away! I have baptized
them with water, but one mightier
than I comes to baptize you with
the Holy Spirit, to set you aflame
with the love and mercy of God! I
am not worthy to loosen the straps
on his sandals.

Jesus presses forward.

JESUS

And how will we know him? Would we
see him if he stood before us?

The Baptist stares at Jesus, unsure what to make of him.

THE BAPTIST

We'll know. All flesh shall see the
salvation of the Lord.

JESUS

But what of his own?

EXT. JORDAN RIVER GROVE - AD 26 - LATER

In the late afternoon, the Baptist crouches before a
campfire. Roasts locusts speared on a stick.

Jesus sits nearby, watching him.

JESUS

I know your mother, Elizabeth.

The Baptist rotates his kebab. Doesn't look at Jesus.

THE BAPTIST

That so?

JESUS

It's been a number of years now,
but sometimes families lose track
of each other.

The Baptist glances at Jesus.

THE BAPTIST

Who are you?

JESUS

Jesus. Your cousin, supposedly.

THE BAPTIST

That's not what I mean. Have you come to be baptized? Are you a sinner looking for forgiveness? A traveler passing through? A spy from Herod? Who are you, Jesus?

Jesus moves opposite the Baptist, across the fire.

JESUS

Caiaphas is concerned about what you're preaching here, what I preached in Galilee. Fears a rebellion is at hand. I told him otherwise, but he wouldn't listen.

THE BAPTIST

Do you think I should stop?

JESUS

That's not my decision.

THE BAPTIST

But it was. If you stopped, you must think I should as well.

JESUS

It's not that simple.

THE BAPTIST

Sometimes it is. Why did you start preaching, Jesus?

JESUS

I don't know. Because I felt I had to, I suppose. Something in me felt compelled, something I still don't understand. A yearning.

THE BAPTIST

"In the streets and crossings I seek him, him who my heart loves. I sought him, but I did not find him." It's not our choice, Jesus of Galilee, what God has planned.

(MORE)

THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

It is not for us to read the scroll
 He has written for us, but we seek
 to read it nevertheless. Not for
 what it says, but to know the hand
 which writes it. I don't know the
 ending to my story, if it's reams
 away or within a single glance, but
 I know it was written for the glory
 of God. If Caiaphas wants my head,
 I will gladly give it to him. I
 will not stop. I will not. And
 neither should you.

The Baptist bites off a locust.

JESUS

And your family? Our family?

THE BAPTIST

My mother's more resourceful than
 you seem to believe. But you're
 still not telling the whole truth.
 I know when people hold back on me.

JESUS

Everyone holds back. Don't you? Why
 are you out here, Baptist?

THE BAPTIST

God gave me a mission. To baptize,
 hear confessions--

Jesus gives the Baptist a knowing look.

THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)

He said I would baptize His Son.
 And when I did, the Holy Spirit
 would descend like a dove, and I
 would know my work is done.

Jesus waits a moment. Mulls it over in his head.

JESUS

Would you baptize me?

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - AD 26 - MOMENTS LATER

In the river, the Baptist takes hold of Jesus. Swings him
 under the water.

UNDER THE SURFACE, Jesus opens his eyes. The water distorts
 the Baptist's face. Light from the setting sun BURSTS through
 olive trees on the far bank. Reflects in Jesus's eyes.

Jesus surfaces. Gasps for air. The Baptist's face white.

THE BAPTIST

A voice... A voice... It said,
"This is my beloved Son."

Jesus stares at him. Breathing deep.

EXT. HARWICH DECK - AT SEA - AD 1744 - DAY

A small GUINEA TRADER, the *PEGASUS*, rests beside the *Harwich*.
Newton scrubs the deck, inattentive. His captain approaches.

HARWICH CAPTAIN

Get up. You're traded out.

EXT. PEGASUS DECK - AT SEA - AD 1744 - DAY

Newton watches as the *Harwich* fades from view. A RATTLING
noise sounds from a metal grating mid-deck. Newton peers in.

Layer upon layer of prostrate AFRICAN SLAVES lay chained
together on wooden racks, like tiers of fossilized sediment.

The SLAVER CAPTAIN (40s) joins Newton.

NEWTON

What exactly should I be doing?

SLAVER CAPTAIN

Oh, we have a special job for ya.

EXT. COAST OF WEST AFRICA - AD 1744 - DAY

The *Pegasus* at anchor off a small Sierra Leonean island. The
slaver rows a dinghy toward shore. Newton sits before him.
Chains shackle his wrists together.

NEWTON

I'm an able seaman; I could help
your crew. I can handle a few
chained up niggers--

SLAVER CAPTAIN

At least our darkies are honest
workers. Don't see much use for a
deserter on our ship. No, I think
this is just the place for ya.

AMOS CLOWE (30s, white) waits on the palm tree-ringed beach. The boat slides up onto shore. The slaver climbs out. Shakes Clowe's hand.

SLAVER CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
Always a pleasure seeing ya, Clowe.

CLOWE
Been too long. Ya buyin'?

SLAVER CAPTAIN
All full up, I'm afraid. Got something the missus might find amusing, though.

The slaver pulls Newton from the boat. Clowe sizes him up.

SLAVER CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
This one got caught desertin' from His Majesty's finest. Ya can have him half off if ya like.

SLAVER CAPTAIN (CONT'D)
If he don't work, do what ya like. No one even know's he's in Africa.

CLOWE
At that price... Right, it's a deal.

EXT. DESERT - AD 26 - EVENING

A dark mountain of cloud looms on the horizon. Lightning flickers without sound. Thunders ROLLS in the distance.

Jesus trudges through the sand. Looks up toward a large grouping of rocks to the left of the storm clouds.

The wind picks up. Jesus grips his pack tight. Presses on.

Raindrops wet the sand. Gusts HOWL across the flat plain. Jesus struggles against the wind; each step crosses the last.

Flurries of rain and sand batter him. Jesus stumbles, catching himself with his hand on the ground.

JESUS
Adonai! Adonai!

The wind whispers unintelligible words. Jesus presses onward. Another gust ROARS through. Jesus falls to the sand. Cries out. Looks up.

JESUS (CONT'D)
My God, where are You?

Rain and wind continue without reply. More thunder far off.
Jesus pulls himself to his feet, eyeing respite ahead.

EXT. DESERT - ROCK FORMATION - AD 26 - MOMENTS LATER

Jesus presses himself into a shallow indentation in the
rocks, partially sheltering himself from the torrential rain.
Sags to the dirt.

JESUS
If I am Your Son, why do you hate
me so? Have I offended You? Have I
spoken false? What have I done?

Wind again whispers through the rocks. Jesus curls against
the stone. Grabs a small boulder. Turns it over in his hands.

JESUS (CONT'D)
If I am Your Son, I could turn this
stone to bread and feast a thousand
men. But God, what would it matter?
"One does not live by bread alone,
but by every word that proceeds
from the mouth of God." I'd trade
all the bread in the world to hear
your voice, but I know neither.

Jesus looks up at the top of the rock formation.

JESUS (CONT'D)
If I am Your Son, I could climb to
the top of the temple in Jerusalem,
fling myself over, and Your angels
would catch me. All the world would
see. They would say, "I have seen
the hand of God reach down for
Jesus, His Son." But You need no
test, oh God, for what man can
command Your hand?

Jesus lowers his head.

JESUS (CONT'D)
I could conquer every nation, and
bring Your word to every people,
for who could stand in my way? Your
sword would protect me. But I am no
king; I am a beggar at Your feet.
Show me, please. Show me Your will.

EXT. BEACH CAMP - 1364 BC - NIGHT

Moses wanders back through camp. Alone. Unfocused.

MOSES (V.O.)
Do You guide us still? Or have we
passed the limits of Your mercy and
dimmed from Your sight?

The bonfire burns low, barely a third its former self. Moses clutches a tent side. Leans his head against it.

Near the fire, a young couple dance together. Lock eyes. Smile and laugh as only free people can.

Hannah spots Moses. Runs to him.

HANNAH
Moses! Dance with me.

Moses bends over to be at eye level with her.

MOSES
I've never been very good at
dancing.

She grabs Moses's hand. Tugs him toward the fire.

MOSES (CONT'D)
All right, all right.

Moses takes hold of her hands. They dance back and forth. He twirls her around. She laughs. Grins.

HANNAH
See? It's not hard.

Moses picks her up and spins around.

MOSES
It helps when you have a good
partner.

He slows to catch himself.

HANNAH
When we get to the Promised Land,
we can do this everyday.

MOSES
Sounds tiring to me.

HANNAH
What will it be like, Moses?

MOSES

The Promised Land? It will be--

Moses fights back a sudden twinge of sadness.

MOSES (CONT'D)

It'll be wonderful. You'll see.
They say it's a land flowing with
milk and honey. Mountains higher
than the pyramids-- they even get
snow sometimes-- and fields greener
than any by the Nile. Somewhere
beyond this sea, it waits for us.
The God of Abraham, Isaac, and
Jacob promised we'd make it, and He
doesn't break His promises, right?

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1914 - EVENING

Light snow blows about the trench. A dusting coats the
ground. Geoffrey stirs a pot of stew over a campfire.

Benjamin approaches, finishing a conversation with Billy.
They plop down beside the fire.

BILLY

Christ, turnip stew again. You
truly are a shit cook, Geoff.

GEOFFREY

Just you wait. I'm gonna open a pub
in London. "Taste of Ypres", I'll
call it. All the fancy gents will
come for the fancy sounding name;
they'll be too embarrassed to admit
the food is wetter than the ale.

Benjamin laughs.

BENJAMIN

I'll drop by and watch sometime.

GEOFFREY

Too bad Maggie hates the city.

BENJAMIN

You still talk to her?

GEOFFREY

I might have done... Once or twice.

BENJAMIN

You're bloody hopeless.

Geoffrey sips his soup with the ladle. Distant sounds of artillery continue some seemingly far-off war.

GEOFFREY

I've done it. A whole new level of rubbish. I'll put it atop the...

Geoffrey trails off as he spots Edward approaching. Billy scoots away. Benjamin looks back to Edward. Stands.

Edward lugs a sack over his shoulders. Carries another in his arms. Drops them at Benjamin's feet. Panting.

EDWARD

Blankets, bandages, letters, fresh clothing, boots, all here.

BENJAMIN

You get my spare uni?

The realization hits Edward.

EDWARD

Oh, Christ...

Benjamin puts his hand on Edward's shoulder.

BENJAMIN

Edward, you gotta stop this. For Geoff's sake, for Robert's, I'll let this go, but you can't let this happen again. Am I clear?

EDWARD

Yes, sir. I'll get it now.

BENJAMIN

Don't bother. I'll do it. You just... have some of Geoff's stew.

Billy snickers. Benjamin heads back east down the trench. Edward sits down by the fire. Geoffrey doesn't look at him.

BILLY

You two still in a snit over a cushy? Kids these days, I swear...

More artillery thunders from beyond no-man's land, this time much closer. Geoffrey stiffens up. Breath quickens.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

A mortar CRASHES into the trench some ways east. Dirt and mud fly into the air. Screams echo. Geoffrey springs to his feet.

GEOFFREY

Ben?

He takes off toward the smoke. Down a bend to a straightaway.

A crater pock marks the throughway. Blood splashed on the snowy sandbags holding back the trench walls.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

Jesus fucking Christ!

Beyond the crater, two bodies lay contorted. Limbs strewn about. Blood and mud running into the crater.

Geoffrey rushes to what's left of Benjamin: Arm missing. Stomach torn apart. Blood oozes through his uniform. Red mixes with brown mud beneath him.

Geoffrey kneels over him. Squeezes his one remaining hand.

Benjamin gasps to breathe, but his lungs squeak as air escapes. Blood gargles in his throat.

His grip goes limp.

Geoffrey sags back against the trench wall. Shaking. Clutches at his own face, unable to look away from Benjamin's body.

GEOFFREY (CONT'D)

No. No. No, no, no! Ben, no!

Edward staggers toward Geoffrey. Stares at Benjamin's lifeless body.

Geoffrey glares at Edward.

EXT. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - MORNING

All occupants of Block 18-- about sixty prisoners-- stand before Nazi capo KROTT, a muscular tree-stump of a man.

KROTT

Any Jews among you? *Alle Juden?*

No one moves.

KROTT (CONT'D)

No? Any priests?

Kolbe and another man, JOSEPH KOWALSKI (20s) step forward.

KROTT (CONT'D)
That won't do. You five, too. And
you four there.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ YARD PATH - AD 1941 - DAY

Kolbe, Kowalski, and the nine other prisoners jog along a four-kilometer path toward the camp boundary. Nazi FOREMEN wait every hundred yards. Strike at prisoners as they pass.

FOREMEN
Schneller! Schneller laufen!

Kolbe coughs. Tries to keep jogging. Doubles over. A foreman raps at Kolbe's back.

FOREMEN (CONT'D)
Loslegen!

Kolbe stumbles onward.

EXT. BANK OF THE SOLA RIVER - AD 1941 - DAY

Prisoners dig at a rotted tree stump. Others saw down trees. Gaunt faces. Dead stares. Hopeless.

Waist deep in frigid water, Kolbe shovels the riverbed into a wheelbarrow. Three others toil alongside, including Kowalski.

Krott and Fritzsich survey all sixty prisoners from Block 18. Keep a particularly close watch on Kolbe and Kowalski.

HENRY STEMLER (40s) pulls a wheelbarrow to the water's edge. Kolbe shivers. Coughs. Hacks several times.

HENRY
Come on, Kolbe.

Kolbe doubles over, coughing. Henry wades into the river.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Just let me take over.

KOLBE
Thank you.

Kolbe hands his shovel off to Henry. Wades toward the wheelbarrow on the shore. Grabs its wooden handles.

Henry loads the wheelbarrow with sand as Kolbe catches his breath. Once full, Kolbe pushes up the embankment.

A WHISTLE. Kolbe grimaces. Krott stalks up. Waves Henry over.

KROTT
You want to help each other? All
right, we'll let you work together.

Krott glances back to Fritzsich, then turns to Henry.

KROTT (CONT'D)
Get on. Do it. Now.

Henry looks at Kolbe. Climbs onto the full wheelbarrow.

KROTT (CONT'D)
Push.

Kolbe pushes. The wheelbarrow barely budges.

KROTT (CONT'D)
I said push, priest.

The wheelbarrow nudges forward a foot. Krott whacks Kolbe across the back with his baton. Kolbe seizes. Staggers. His strength fails. Falls to the ground.

Krott gestures over to two guards. They drag Kolbe to a stump. Lay him face down. Krott raises his baton--

FRITZSCH (O.S.)
Wait.

Krott looks back to Fritzsich, who gestures to Henry.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)
Have him do it.

The guards drag Henry to the stump. Fritzsich follows.

HENRY
Please, don't.

Krott hands Henry his baton. Henry locks eyes with Kolbe.

FRITZSCH
Do it, or you're next.

Henry closes his eyes. Lashes Kolbe's back.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)
Harder.

And again. And again. Fritzsich smiles. Bends down in front of Kolbe. Grabs Kolbe's jaw. Pushes his head up. Looks around.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)
 Where is your Jew god, priest? Is
 he blind? Is he deaf? Will your God
 save you? Will he?

Kolbe only stares at Fritzsich.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)
 No?

Fritzsich snaps his fingers. Krott shoves Kolbe into the mud.
 Kolbe locks eyes with Fritzsich.

KOLBE
 He will.

EXT. DESERT - ROCK FORMATION - AD 26 - NIGHT

Jesus lays curled up beside the rock, staring ahead. Dark
 bags underscore his eyes. His hair and beard grow unkempt.

Fire burns low in a basin. Jesus rolls away from its embers.
 His eyes struggle to stay open, flutter... then finally shut.

EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - DREAM - MORNING

The bride walks down an aisle between chairs on the beach.
 Guests in white seated on either side. All faces hidden.

At the altar, the groom turns-- His face belongs to Jesus.

EXT. DESERT - ROCK FORMATION - AD 26 - MORNING

Jesus's eyes SNAP open. He recoils back, breath quickened.
 Runs his hands over his face. Pulls his legs to his chest.

In MONTAGE:

1) Jesus returns back across the desert plain.

JESUS (V.O.)
 I don't know what good these hands
 can be to You.

2) Jesus wanders among a small town's buildings. Children
 play in the streets. Roman soldiers pass.

JESUS (V.O.)
 Or what words You'd have me say.

3) A beggar pleads in the street. Grabs at a Roman's legs.
The legionnaire beats him back.

JESUS (V.O.)
But You do, and these hands are
Your hands, this mouth Your mouth.

4) The Sea of Galilee again opens before Jesus.

JESUS (V.O.)
Father, not my will but Yours be
done.

EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - AD 26 - DAY

Jesus waits on the shore as the fishing fleet sails in.
Simon's boat runs aground. He hops out. Wades toward Jesus.

SIMON
Returned for your fish, rabbi?

JESUS
I don't need your fish, Simon. I've
come to ask a favor.

SIMON
What's that?

JESUS
Meet at my workshop tonight. Bring
Andrew and anyone else you trust.
I once asked you to believe. Is it
too much to ask again?

EXT. CLOWE'S PLANTATION - AD 1744 - DAY

Clowe and his African mistress PEYE (30s) lead Newton and
seven African slaves across a field ringed by palm trees.

CLOWE
You'll be gatherin' wood for
buildin', right? This whole lot
needs fellin'. I'm gonna be upriver
a spell, so Princess Peye here'll
be watchin' ya. She's in charge.
What you do to her'll be repaid ten-
fold by me, right?

Clowe comes down the line to Newton.

CLOWE (CONT'D)

I expect the same from you as any
darkie.

Peye glares over as Clowe pats Newton.

MONTAGE:

- 1) Slaves cut down palm trees. Newton works by himself, glancing suspiciously at the other slaves.
- 2) Newton and three others drag a log into the field. Newton bends over. Breathes deep. Exhausted.
- 4) Peye gives each a swig of water from a canteen. Newton walks over, but Peye dumps the water on the ground instead.

EXT. CLOWE'S PLANTATION - AD 1744 - NIGHT

The other slaves sleep by a fire and makeshift field tent.

Newton sits against a palm tree across the field. Drinks from a cut in a coconut. Bright sunburns bloom on Newton's cheeks.

A SERIES OF SHOTS recalls old memories:

- 1) At 6, he balances on a half-wall edging a shipyard's quay.
- 2) His mother, ELIZABETH NEWTON (30s), chases after him, her face hidden. Laughter. She sings a half-remembered hymn:

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

His dying crimson, like a robe...

- 3) Elizabeth coughs into a handkerchief. Red flecks on white.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

*...Spreads o'er His body on the
tree...*

- 4) Newton's father overturns a table.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

*...Then I am dead to all the
globe...*

- 5) Cartlett looking out to sea.

ELIZABETH (V.O.)

...And all the globe is dead to me.

Newton hobbles to the beach. Staggers across the sand. Sags to his knees. Waves break, lapping water up around his shins. Full moon low on the horizon.

Newton pulls his shirt over his head. Groans in pain with every movement of his arms. Plunges his shirt into the sea.

Salt water drains from his shirt as he lifts it up. He pulls it on. Shudders from the chill.

NEWTON

Are you happy, father? Your son's a slave. A bloody fucking slave. Christ. How could someone like you have ever deserved someone as wonderful as mum? Why couldn't You have taken him instead, God? Huh? You got an answer for that?

(laughs)

Didn't think so. There's no reason. It's all pointless. All of it. And now I'm talking to the sky for no damn reason. Bloody pathetic.

Grass rustles behind him. Newton looks back to find one of his fellow slaves, AKIO (30s), walking toward the water.

NEWTON (CONT'D)

What do you want, nigger?

Akio washes his head in the water. Sits up.

AKIO

You talk big for one so small.

NEWTON

Oh, bugger off.

AKIO

What make you think you better than us? You never look us in the eye when we work. You stay away. But I hear them talk of you. Say you born with everything, but you lie; you run. My mother sold I when I young, and now you here, same as I. What that say about you?

INT. AUSCHWITZ MESS HALL - AD 1941 - LATER

Kolbe eats a small bowl of watery soup and corn "bread." Blood and mud stain his back. Stares off into nothing. Henry beside him. Kowalski across the table.

HENRY

I had no idea they'd do that.

KOWALSKI

I'd've traded if it had helped, but--

Another prisoner from Block 18, FRANZ GAJOWNICZEK (40), thuds down next to Kowalski.

FRANZ

Have you lost it?

HENRY

For Chrissake, Franz, not now.

FRANZ

Is it really that hard to just do your damn job? Next time you wanna play martyr, have the good sense to finish the job before Krott takes it out on all of us.

KOLBE

I don't want to suffer any more than you. But I will, if that's what God has in store for me.

FRANZ

There's no God in Auschwitz. There was no God when the Nazis steam-rolled Poland. When they burned my home, took my daughters, and had their way with my wife. Or maybe there is a God, and He just watches while we suffer. Maybe it warms the old bastard's heart.

KOLBE

God never left us, Franz, and He will not leave us here. He will throw open this prison, and you will see your family again, I promise you that.

Franz slams his palms on the table as he stands.

FRANZ

You don't know a damn thing.

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1914 - DAY

Snow falls on Benjamin's frozen corpse. Geoffrey stands over it. His face expressionless. Blank. Broken. Edward slings on his pack. Grabs his rifle.

EDWARD

Let's go, Geoff. If we win maybe we can bury him, right? Come on, we can't fall behind.

Edward takes a few steps away, but Geoffrey remains in place. He sighs. Returns to Geoffrey.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Look, when we buried Robert--

GEOFFREY

Christ, Ted. You think you're the only one shit happens to? Your brother, your parents, all that pain somehow balances out the pain you've caused?

EDWARD

I never meant for this to happen.

GEOFFREY

Intentions never matter when it happens to you, do they? You didn't do your job, and this is what happens. This right here.

EDWARD

And we're only here because you just had to join up in the first place! I joined for you, Geoff.

GEOFFREY

I wish you hadn't.

EXT. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - EVENING

Kolbe waits for the evening roll call. His face more haggard and emaciated by the day. A guard reads off numbers. Each prisoner replies in turn.

After, a Nazi foreman approaches Kolbe's line segment.

FOREMAN

You there, with me.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ FENCE LINE - AD 1941 - LATER

The foreman leads Kolbe, Henry, and four others to the fence.

Two prisoners hang on electric wires, motionless. Another on blackened grass, shirt ripped apart. Covered in dried blood.

FOREMAN

Pick them up, two-to-one.

The other four mill over to the bodies on the fence. Henry doesn't move. Stares at the corpse. Eyes bulging.

Kolbe bends over. Reaches under the dead man's shoulders.

Henry remains frozen in place. Kolbe looks up at him, urging him on with his eyes. The Nazi foreman watches Henry.

Henry gingerly bends down. Takes hold of the body's legs.

I./E. CREMATORIUM - AD 1941 - EVENING

Kolbe and Henry carry the body toward a low-lying brick building. A tall chimney billows ash into the sky.

A RECORD KEEPER jots notes on a clipboard. Points to twin metal catafalques connected to a double-door brick furnace.

Kolbe and Henry lug the body over. Heave it onto the metal.

RECORD KEEPER

Number?

Kolbe turns the deceased's arm over. The record keeper makes a note on his clipboard.

RECORD KEEPER (CONT'D)

Insert it.

Kolbe and Henry push the metal tray along its tracks toward the furnace. The flames flit and flicker in anticipation.

KOLBE

Eternal rest grant unto him, O
Lord, and let Your perpetual light
shine upon him.

They push the tray into the fire. Flames embrace the body.

Henry covers his nose at the horrid stench emanating from within. Kolbe shuts the door.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ YARD - AD 1941 - LATER

Kolbe and Henry return through camp. Henry's steps grow erratic. Stagger to a barrack wall. Flings out his arm to brace himself. Vomits on the ground.

HENRY

The smell... It just fills up your nose and never lets go...

Henry sinks to the ground. Kolbe joins him. Henry breathes--

HENRY (CONT'D)

I was drafted in the Great War, late 1916, but I never saw the front before the revolution hit. I'd hoped I'd make it the rest of my life without that experience. You know, what got me most were the men on the wires. Don't get me wrong, I want to live, to make it outta here, but the world's so dark, so hopeless. It's like reality and the nightmare switched places, and waking up only reveals a new horror every day. Tell me, Father, what can we do with such reckless hate? What's the point in going on if the world's like this?

KOLBE

It seems a bit silly, in a place like this, but every day I pray that I might love without limit. We can't control when what happens here any more than an anemone can control the ocean tide. Only how we react. These sufferings may cause us to crumble, but they can also help us become stronger. They are necessary, even-- together with the sacrifices of others-- so that those who come after us will be happy. That's what I choose to believe. If I don't, who will?

HENRY

But how could anyone be stronger after this? Are the crippled and starving stronger? Are the dead?

KOLBE

It's hard to see, I'll admit.

HENRY

And what of us? Aren't we all in mortal sin here? It's not like they're offering sacraments anytime soon. What's the difference if I throw myself on the wires or if a capo blows out my brains tomorrow? Either way, it's straight to Hell. No, Father, it's too late to love.

INT. JESUS'S WORKSHOP - AD 26 - NIGHT

A KNOCK at the door. Jesus lets Simon, Andrew, JAMES (18), and JOHN (15) into his workshop.

SIMON

Jesus, you've met my brother Andrew. This is James and his brother John. We all work for their father Zebedee out of Capernaum.

JESUS

Please, be welcome and sit.

They sit in hand-crafted chairs. Jesus returns to the window.

JAMES

Why are we here, rabbi?

ANDREW

He's no rabbi, James. Just a lucky beggar.

(to Jesus)

Ever gonna tell us how you knew about the fish?

JESUS

(sotto)

I didn't ask you here to talk of catching fish. I'd rather talk of catching men.

Jesus turns toward them.

JESUS (CONT'D)

You want the truth? Caiaphas threw me to the wolves. I spoke of things he wasn't ready to hear. The priests understand the Law, but not its purpose.

JAMES

John and I heard the Baptist talk
about all this. Is what he says
true? Will God save us from the
Romans? Will His mighty king slay
Israel's foes?

ANDREW

Don't be absurd.

Simon looks away, half hiding his face.

SIMON

Oh God, here we go...

ANDREW

No king can take Rome on and win.
All I need from God is a good catch
and a peaceful land. I don't care
about some despot whose ass grows
numb on a throne beyond the sea.

JAMES

What about justice? How long will
we sleep with centurions in our
streets? Who wait to steal what
little we have and beat us into the
dirt? How long--

Jesus rubs his temples. Raises his voice:

JESUS

Oh, men! How long will your hearts
be closed, will you love what is
futile and seek what is false?
Don't you see? The Messiah will not
save us from Rome, but from
ourselves, from the tyranny of sin
to bring us back to God. He comes
to throw open the gates of heaven
for all who might believe, Jew and
Roman alike. Can't you feel it?
This broken world chokes on a hurt
too deep, too old to put into
words, back and back without end.
In every eye I see it: a pain they
can barely comprehend, a regret
they can never atone, a longing
they have no words to express. All
lost like sheep in the wilderness.
When darkness sets in, they cry
out, "Oh God, where are you?", not
knowing His absence is but a veil
we've placed over our own eyes.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

By every sin, by every crime, by every time we say, "Not Your will be done but mine," we build a distance we can never again cross.

(beat)

But God can. That is why He sends His Son, the Messiah; the Son of Man comes to seek and save the lost. To redeem the fallen. To bridge that gap no man can.

ANDREW

And maybe one day I'll live in a giant palace riding a flying horse. Wake up, this is fantasy! Maybe, maybe in a hundred years, or a thousand, when we're dead and warming the bellies of a million worms, that day will come. Not now.

JESUS

That day is here.

JAMES

You've seen him? You've seen the Messiah?

JESUS

Follow me, and you will see Him. When the hour is upon us, He will be revealed to all.

Andrew scoffs. John stares at the floor to his right.

ANDREW

This is insane.

SIMON

You held the same fish in your hands as I did. There's something here, and you know it.

ANDREW

Do what you want, Simon. I'm done.

Andrew leaves the workshop. Silence for a BEAT.

JAMES

What should we do, rabbi?

JESUS

Go to Capernaum, Tiberias, and Bethsaida and tell them I'll speak on the mountain in a week.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

Until then, pray that God may open your eyes, make peace, and that we might love everyone as God loves them.

EXT. JESUS'S WORKSHOP - AD 26 - LATER

John skips a rock across the glassy sea. Faint fire lights dot the far coast. Air calm and clear. Jesus approaches, but John doesn't acknowledge him at first.

JOHN

You meant it, didn't you? But what if you're wrong? What if... What if I want you to be wrong?

JESUS

Why?

JOHN

People do terrible things to each other. They hurt even those closest to them, who admire them, who love them. I want to hate them, see them suffer. It's what they deserve, right? What we all deserve.

JESUS

What we deserve and what we get don't have to be the same.

JOHN

And that's the problem, isn't it?

JESUS

Is it?

John shakes his head.

JOHN

Forget it.

JESUS

What's bothering you, John?

JOHN

I said to forget it.

John brushes past. Down the shoreline. Jesus calls after him.

JESUS

When you're ready, let's talk.

EXT. CLOWE'S PLANTATION - AD 1744 - NIGHT

The slaves sleep on the house's floorboards. Newton shivers, face drenched in sweat. Holes pock mark his stained shirt.

He rolls over. Crawls to the field of newly sprouting crops. Clutches at the grass. Shoves the roots in his mouth.

Chews the grass. Grimacing, Newton swallows. Quickly gags. Spits out the grass. Rolls over. Shivers. Passes out.

EXT. CLOWE'S PLANTATION - AD 1744 - MORNING

Akio sits next to Newton when he wakes, just before dawn. Newton's cheeks and forehead redden with fever.

NEWTON

I don't think I can work today.

AKIO

Maybe we get work done, then.

Newton feigns a weak laugh. Akio pulls a small chunk of bread from his pocket. Holds it up to Newton's mouth.

AKIO (CONT'D)

Eat.

Newton opens his mouth a crack. Pecks at the bread.

NEWTON

Why are you doing this?

AKIO

Even you deserve better.

INT. TENT - 1364 BC - NIGHT

Miriam sleeps beneath colorful blankets. Moses sits down beside her. Caresses her face. Miriam opens her eyes, pulling back in surprise.

MIRIAM

Don't startle me like that...

Miriam trails off. Sees the pain in Moses's eyes. Sits up.

MOSES

Everyone's so happy, but they don't know.

MIRIAM

Know what?

Moses fiddles with his hands. Takes a breath.

MOSES

Ramses is coming after us. His army will be here by daybreak. Aaron knows, but no one else.

Miriam straightens up.

MIRIAM

Do you have a plan? Can we escape before they get here?

MOSES

I don't know. I've run it over and over in my head, but I don't. I was so sure we'd made it. But it seems I've failed. Forgive me, Miriam.

Miriam drapes her arms around Moses. Hugs him tight.

MIRIAM

Oh Moses, you haven't failed until we're dead and buried on this very spot. When you were a baby, mother put you in a basket and floated you down the Nile, and everyday I prayed for your safety. Not only did you live, but you made us believe in something greater than the chains we wore. I still believe it and in you. Even if we die this very night, you're my brother, my priest, my friend. I will follow you wherever, even to death.

MOSES

I can't ask you to do that. But what options do we have? Knowing Aaron, he'll put up a fight, even if it gets us all killed.

MIRIAM

We'll manage the same way you convinced Pharaoh to let us go.

MOSES

What, have God call down a rain of fire on them? Pray the angel of death kills them all?

(MORE)

MOSES (CONT'D)

Maybe a plague of locusts can dissuade his ire? I can't just order God to smite our enemies. Far from it.

MIRIAM

Just keep listening. And speak to Aaron. He's your brother, Moses. If you think fighting's not the answer, persuade him. He'll listen.

MOSES

I'd more easily persuade God.

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE OVERLOOKING GALILEE - AD 26 - DAY

Jesus crests the mountaintop to find a CROWD of people sitting below. The assembled masses squirm restlessly. Simon, James, and John near the throng's front.

Jesus raises his arms.

JESUS

Repent and rejoice, oh Israel, for now is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand.

JUDAS (20s) shouts from the crowd.

JUDAS

Where is this kingdom, rabbi, which remains unconquered by Rome?

Laughter ripples through the throng. Jesus walks down toward the crowd, staring at Judas.

JESUS

It is not of this world, but now His Messiah comes so His kingdom may take root on earth, shining like a city on a mountain.

PHILIP (30s) speaks up.

PHILIP

God's people starve and freeze. How can we "shine" on empty stomachs?

JESUS

Is not there more to life than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the sky;
(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

they do not sow or reap, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are not you more important than they? Look at the wildflowers. They do not work or spin, but not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will He not more provide for you, Oh you of little faith? Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and what you need will be given. Amen, I say to you, blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

JUDAS

And what of those who hunger for justice and freedom?

JESUS

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God. You've heard it said you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemies, but I say to you, love your enemies as God loves you. Forgive them, sheath your swords; blessed are the merciful, for they shall be shown mercy by God.

Murmurs rise from the crowd. People stand. Leave.

JESUS (CONT'D)

I'm not blind. I've seen the our people's suffering. Soldiers steal from the poor. Dead appear in the night. My mother weeps for her dead husband, but blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted...

Few pay any attention to his words. Jesus turns. Walks up the mountain. Simon chases after him.

SIMON

Please, rabbi, be patient.

JESUS

It's not them, Simon; it's me. I just have so many things I want to say, all tripping up on one another. How can I show them what I see? How can I...

Jesus trails off. Looks down to James and John.

JESUS (CONT'D)

James, how much food do we have?

JAMES

Not much. Just a basket of bread and some fish we caught yesterday.

JESUS

Bring them here.

James brings two baskets to Jesus, who takes them. He chases after the remnants of the crowd. Philip eyes Jesus.

JESUS (CONT'D)

If it's food you want, then come.

Jesus sets the baskets down. Philip pulls out a loaf. Judas does the same. One-by-one, the crowd pulls bread and fish from the basket, far more than it should carry.

Simon, James, and John watch. Judas and Philip join them.

JAMES

How is that possible?

PHILIP

It's not.

INT. AUSCHWITZ MESS HALL - AD 1941 - DAY

Kolbe stares ahead at a table. Turns a small loaf of bread in his hands. Henry slurps soup. Kowalski and Franz eat nearby.

KOLBE

You don't think they have any wine in the kitchen, do they?

HENRY

In there? No. Heard they keep all the spoils in a warehouse. The officers "relax" there sometimes.

KOLBE
 Spoils don't belong to them. It
 wouldn't really be stealing...

Henry stares at Kolbe. Franz eyes them. Kowalski leans in.

HENRY
 You're joking.

KOWALSKI
 I'm in. What use's being a priest
 if I can't exercise my vocation?

Franz slides down next to Henry. Points at Kolbe.

FRANZ
 Stop, right now. I'm thinking a
 cushy kitchen job sounds real nice.

KOLBE
 Do what you have to do.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ WAREHOUSE - AD 1941 - EVENING

Kolbe, Henry, and Kowalski round the back of a long,
 converted hangar on the still outskirts of camp.

Kolbe cracks open the back door. Peers inside. Long shelves
 of boxes. Racks of clothing, luggage, picture frames-- the
 last mementos stolen from thousands of prisoners.

At the far end: firelight. Laughter from distant officers.
 The clink of glasses. Squeals of concubines.

Kolbe looks to Henry and Kowalski.

KOLBE
 Stay low. Out of sight.

INT. AUSCHWITZ WAREHOUSE - AD 1941 - CONTINUOUS

Each takes an aisle between racks. Crouching. Clinging close
 to the walls.

Kolbe scurries past boxes. Surveys as many as he can. Glances
 down to the end. No suspicions. Yet.

Kolbe opens a box. Children's clothing. Another-- gold teeth.

Continues closer to the officers. Goblets on shelves.
 Silverware. Closer still.

A chair SCRAPES the concrete floor. An officer stands: Krott.

Through the metal racks, Kolbe watches as Krott walks down the adjacent aisle. The capo's footsteps waver.

Kolbe presses against the rack. Clasps his hand over mouth. Krott stops opposite him. Kolbe's heart in his throat.

A box slides down. An opening next to Kolbe's head connecting the aisles. All Krott has to do is look--

The capo retrieves a champagne bottle. Replaces the box.

Krott heads back to the others. Kolbe quietly exhales.

He pivots, slides the box toward himself. Clutches an unmarked bottle resembling wine. Sidles back toward the rear.

Crosses to the second aisle. Whispers--

KOLBE

Henry.

Henry meets up with Kolbe. They return to the first aisle. Kolbe spots Kowalski rummaging through a box.

KOLBE (CONT'D)

Kowalski.

Henry cracks open the door. Kowalski isn't ready. Henry exits, leaving Kolbe holding the door. Again--

KOLBE (CONT'D)

Kowalski.

Kowalski pulls a small item from the box. Stands. Runs toward the door... Perhaps a bit too loud as Krott springs up--

KROTT

Halt!

EXT. AUSCHWITZ YARD - AD 1941 - CONTINUOUS

Henry and Kolbe race through camp. Kowalski behind.

They hide behind a building. Kolbe wheezes. Coughs. Henry peeks around the corner. The coast is clear.

Sprint to the next barrack. Commotion rises behind them.

They slip through the camp corridors until Block 18 comes into view. Kolbe gags as he runs, barely staying upright.

Henry and Kolbe make it to the barrack. Before Kowalski can join them-- two Nazi guards appear around the corner.

They pin Kowalski against the side of Block 18. He squirms.

FRITZSCH (O.S.)
Priest-schwein!

Kowalski stills. The guards let go, step aside as Fritzsch and Krott approach.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)
Suche ihn.

The two guards grope Kowalski. Search his pockets. One pulls a ROSARY necklace from Kowalski's pants. Hands to Fritzsch.

Fritzsch holds up the rosary to Kowalski. Shakes his head. Drops the necklace before Kowalski.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)
Step on it, priest. Step on it, and
I'll let you live.

Kowalski doesn't move. Fritzsch steps back. Draws his pistol.

FIRES into Kowalski's stomach.

Kowalski cries out. Crumples against the barrack. Clutches the wound. Bleeds through his striped shirt onto his fingers.

Fritzsch points the gun at Kowalski's head.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)
New offer: step on it, and I'll let
you die. Right here. No more pain.

Kowalski glares at Fritzsch. Says nothing. Fritzsch lowers his weapon.

FRITZSCH (CONT'D)
Very well.

He nods to Krott. Walks away. The capo unsheathes his baton. Raps Kowalski in his bloody wound.

Kowalski cries out. Falls to the ground. Krott beats him again in the stomach. Again. And again.

INT. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - CONTINUOUS

Kolbe pins himself against the wall. Wheezing. Kowalski's screams fill the room. Whack. Scream. Whack. Scream.

Whack. Whack.

EXT. POLYGON WOOD - AD 1914 - DAY

Snow flurries whip through the barren trees. Pink flakes mix with sheets of white. British soldiers fire from behind tree trunks. Germans reply in kind.

Mortar explosions uproot trees. British soldiers scurry away.

Edward crouches behind a tree. Fires. Misses.

Geoffrey squeezes off a round. Chambers a new bullet. Fires. Pulls back on his bolt. Finds his charger spent. Fumbles around in his bag. No more ammunition.

Bullets RIP into Edward's tree. One clips his hip. He falls to the snow.

Geoffrey puts his back to his tree. Sags to the snowy ground. More artillery explosions TEAR through the forest.

British soldiers flee. Lawrence and Daniel grab Edward. Drag him away from the front. Edward looks back to Geoffrey.

With a thousand-yard stare, Geoffrey leans his head back against the wood. Rifle rolls from his fingers into the snow.

German soldiers advance on his position.

As Geoffrey fades from view, he raises his hands. Germans surround him, rifles aimed at his head.

EXT. CLOWE'S PLANTATION - AD 1744 - DAY

Newton, still reddened from his fever, sits against a tree. Cuts into a coconut. Akio does likewise opposite him.

NEWTON

Do you remember your family?

AKIO

Little. Clowe say I was Mane. Say they were great people once. Then war come. They need food, so they sell each other to white man. Most go on boats, but my mother made sure I stay close. I no see her face no more, but I can smell her. Some days, the wind blow from east, and I smell her. Maybe one day I see her again. Maybe.

Newton fiddles with his coconut.

NEWTON

My mum died long ago. My father was always off at sea, but when he came home he mostly just drank. Eventually married someone just like him. No, I'd be fine never seeing them again.

AKIO

You not want to go home, then?

NEWTON

Well, I might. There was a girl-- It's rather stupid actually. I knew her only one summer, wrote a few times. But she made me forget about everything, made me believe there was some great beauty hidden away in the world, just waiting to be uncovered. Made me want to live for something. All ridiculous now. Yet I can't seem to let her go. Can't seem to forget. I barely knew her, yet she haunts me still.

A hoarse CRY sounds from nearby. Akio and Newton get to their feet. Join the other slaves.

Peye staggers out from her tent, hair disheveled. Waves a pistol around recklessly as she approaches.

PEYE

One'a ya niggers been in the food without my say-so. Been stealin' and eatin' what don't belong to ya.

She slurs her words. Sweeps the pistol toward them.

PEYE (CONT'D)

Which one was it, huh?

Peye hobbles up to Newton, putting the gun under his chin.

PEYE (CONT'D)

Maybe it was ya, whitey. Been nothin' but trouble since ya come. I'd do ya in right here if Clowe not so interested in ya. Why he so interested in ya, huh?

Peye moves on to Akio. Presses the pistol to his forehead.

PEYE (CONT'D)

Don't think I don't see what ya
been doin', Akio. With whitey,
slinkin' about in the dark. Ya been
takin' what don't belong to ya?

AKIO

You no feed him. What I to do?

PEYE

Ya admit it? Ya the dirty thief?

Peye pistol whips him across the face. Akio stumbles. Blood runs from his mouth. Peye waves the pistol at the others.

PEYE (CONT'D)

Get him! Grab him or I kill ya all!

They close in on Akio. He doesn't struggle.

PEYE (CONT'D)

To the house.

NEWTON

I ate the food! Let him go!

Peye smacks Newton in the stomach. Knocks the wind from him as he falls to the ground.

Peye grabs a length of rope from a work area. Ties a noose as they go to the incomplete house. Puts it over Akio's head. Slings the other end over exposed rafters.

Akio and Newton lock eyes. Newton struggles to say anything, but only gasping noises escape from his mouth.

Peye yanks on the rope. Hoists Akio into the air. He squirms. Gasps for air. Kicks at nothing.

Newton forces soft, raspy words from his mouth.

NEWTON (CONT'D)

No... No...

Peye watches as Newton sags down. Hatred in her eyes.

Lets go. Akio crashes to the floorboards. Convulses. Vomits. Gasps for breath. Peye points her pistol at him.

PEYE

Next time, I don't let go. Ya hear?

EXT. LANGEMARCK - FIELD DRESSING STATION - AD 1914 - DAY

Bandages wrap Edward's waist under his open uniform. He stumbles to where Lieutenant JACK CARTER (late 20s) briefs Haig with some infantrymen.

EDWARD

We have to go back. We have to get him back!

Edward lunges at Haig. Carter and the infantrymen bar his path, taking hold of him. Haig walks away.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Please, we have to go back.

Carter looks at Edward, more an object of pity than a threat.

CARTER

With what men?

Carter gestures. The infantrymen toss Edward to the ground. Edward cries out in pain. Carter and the infantrymen leave.

Edward lays a moment in the mud and snow which carpet the camp. Flakes fall on his face. He pushes himself to his feet.

Staggering without aim through a maze of open-air tents. Nurses rush about, tending to the screaming wounded.

Edward watches as they have a soldier bite down on cork. Take a saw to the private's leg.

In another tent, a nurse tries desperately to stem a man's bleeding. Without success.

A sergeant cries for his mother, his hand beyond disfigured.

EDWARD (V.O.)

How far have we strayed from Your light? What have we become in this darkness?

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1914 - MOMENTS LATER

Edward stands over Benjamin's broken body. Holds his necklace.

EDWARD (V.O.)

By what right do I deserve to know You? My soul, corrupt and barren, against Your undiminished glory? Who am I to defile perfection?

Edward bends down. Tucks the necklace into the breast pocket of Benjamin's uniform.

EXT. BEACH CAMP - 1364 BC - NIGHT

People milling about replaces the sounds of music and dancing. Antsy horses neigh.

Moses walks past tents where arguments emanate. A Hebrew man rushes past Moses. Carries an arm-load of clothing.

EXT. BEACH - 1364 BC - CONTINUOUS

Moses finds himself on the beach. Down the wet sand, a family hurries off to the south. To the north, two horsemen ride into the night.

Waves lap the shore, uncaring, indifferent to their plight.

MOSES (V.O.)

Why do You reject me? Why do You
hide Your face? Must Your wrath
smolder like fire?

EXT. GERMAN TRENCH - AD 1914 - DAY

ALBERT and FREDRICH (late teens) toss Geoffrey at the end of a line of sitting British prisoners of war. Seven, now eight, British captives, including four officers.

Fredrich removes his helmet. Wipes his forehead. Albert distributes small bowls of soup to each prisoner.

ALBERT

Aufessen. Aufessen.

Albert places the bowl in Geoffrey's hands. He doesn't seem to notice. Simply stares ahead.

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1914 - DAY

MATCH CUT to Edward's blank stare as he sits with Billy, Lawrence, and Daniel. Carter eyes him.

In a rapid SERIES OF SHOTS: the sun sets further and further to the south with each passing evening.

INT. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - NIGHT

Kolbe peers through barred windows. No guards in sight.

The other residents of Block 18 watch him. Kolbe turns to them, holding the bread and a small cup.

KOLBE

A man died for this. A Pole like you and me died so that who we are might live. As Poles. As Catholics. As human beings. I want to offer this mass for him, for Joseph Kowalski, but I'm afraid it's not worthy of his sacrifice, much less Christ's. I... I don't know today's readings. I don't even know what day it is, in truth. This isn't unleavened bread, and I can't say for certain this is wine. But I know it's all we have. Let us pray that like the poor widow our offering will please Our Almighty Father, not by its merits, but by the sincere longing of our hearts.

Kolbe sets the bread and cup on a small wooden bench. Turns away from the others. Kneels. Signs himself with the cross.

KOLBE (CONT'D)

In nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

LATER, the prisoners kneel in a line. One-by-one, Kolbe tears a small bit from the loaf, signs the cross with it, saying--

KOLBE (CONT'D)

Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam in vitam aeternam. Amen.

Mouth open, a prisoner awaits the bread as if he hadn't eaten in years. Kolbe places it on his tongue, then on Henry's.

Franz remains at the back of the barrack, only watching.

EXT. CAPERNAUM SYNAGOGUE STEPS - AD 26 - DAY

Jesus sits atop a stone stairway before a gathering of onlookers. He preaches.

JESUS

...But when the Son of Man comes,
will He find faith on earth?

A PHARISEE enters the back of the square. Stares down Jesus.
Jesus watches his every move.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed like this: "God, I thank you, that I am not like the rest of humanity-- greedy, dishonest, profane, adulterous-- or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and pay tithes on all my income." But the tax collector, standing far away, wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "Oh God, be merciful on me, a sinner!" I tell you, this man went home justified rather than the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

The Pharisee laughs. Leaves.

EXT. CAPERNAUM STREETS - AD 26 - LATER

Jesus walks with Simon, James, John, Judas, and Philip in tow. They turn down a quiet alley, escaping the crowds.

JESUS

If I asked you to leave everything
and come with me, would you do it?

SIMON

I've always wanted to travel.

JESUS

We should leave as soon as
possible. We can head--

Movement ahead catches Jesus's eye: A BEGGAR staggers down the alley. His fingers run along the wall. He reaches beneath his rags. Lunges. Grabs at Jesus's cloak--

--Pulls out two coins. Pushes them at Jesus, who looks into his cloudy eyes.

BLIND MAN

Aren't you the one who fed everyone?

JESUS

I am.

The blind man sinks to his knees.

BLIND MAN

They say you made five loaves become five thousand. Only a man of God could do such a thing, only a great prophet like Moses or Elijah.

JESUS

What they say is true.

BLIND MAN

Then I know that if you willed it, I could be made whole.

Jesus cups the man's cheek. His eyes search the beggar's.

JESUS

Keep your money. Your faith has saved you. Blessed are those who have not seen yet still believe.

Jesus scrapes some dirt from the ground. Spits in his hand. Mixes it together into clay.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Close your eyes.

He closes his eyes. Jesus spreads the clay on his eyelids.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Go and wash in the Pool of Silaom, and you shall see.

EXT. CAPERNAUM - POOL OF SILAOM - AD 26 - MOMENTS LATER

The disciples and a small crowd watch as the blind man kneels by the pool. Splashes water on his eyes. Pulls his head back.

Opens his eyes. Draws back, squinting. Raises his arm to block the sun. Runs his hand through the reflective water.

Jesus walks past the disciples toward him.

The man turns around. His face perfectly balancing between joy and fear. Jesus holds out his hand.

INT. HOSS'S OFFICE - AD 1941 - DAY

Fritzsch knocks on an open door. Hoss looks up from writing letters at a large oak desk.

HOSS

Herr Fritzsch, please, take a seat.

Fritzsch sits facing the desk. Hoss sets his pen down.

HOSS (CONT'D)

You've acquired quite the reputation, *Sub-Kommandant*, for some unusual proclivities.

FRITZSCH

I do what I can to keep our spirits up and the prisoners' down, sir.

HOSS

It's not my intention to interfere with morale, but I'm concerned about your lack of tact in choosing the instruments of your endeavors.

FRITZSCH

I'm not sure I understand.

HOSS

Times change. Rumors of a new front waft down from Berlin. One not far from here, which will require great sums of money, munitions, arms. We have a large, *willing* workforce at our disposal, and *I.G. Farben* pays two marks a day per able worker. It's a steal for them and a boon for our coffers. Everyone wins, unless, that is, you kill all our able-bodied workers.

FRITZSCH

You're soft, Hoss. You'd rather the swine overrun us than risk your precious grift. It's not one or the other, *Kommandant*. Randomness instills fear, and they'll never learn discipline if they don't fear us. How will they work to their potential without discipline?

HOSS

Discipline doesn't matter when you
kill off anyone who can work. How
can ashes learn anything?

Fritzsich laughs.

FRITZSCH

You see them as individuals. Jews,
Poles, Slavs, they're nothing but
organisms. Great gangling masses of
cells trained to dance to the right
tune. When they miss a beat, you
have to shed a few cells, but the
organism remembers. It learns. It
becomes more agile, more graceful
even. In time, it will dance like
Josephine Baker. But like that
negro Baker, they'll never escape
their heritage. They'll never be
more than a means to an end.
They'll never be *human*. But, if you
insist, I can be more systematic.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ YARD - AD 1941 - DAY

Hoss meanders through camp. Arms crossed. Guards and capos
salute as he passes. He doesn't notice.

Nears a quarry where prisoners excavate boulders. Spots Kolbe
below. A guard raps Kolbe's back. INTERCUT Hoss's face with:

1) Hoss (13) enters the parish church amid the autumn-tinged
hills of BADEN-BADEN. Kneels in a confessional.

2) Hoss returns home. A PRIEST whispers to HOSS'S FATHER
(50s) on the doorstep. Dry leaves float down on the breeze.

Hoss pulls out a golden pocket watch. Checks the time.

EXT. EAST OF CAPERNAUM - SHORELINE - AD 26 - DAY

Simon, John, James, Philip, and Judas wait near the marshes
where the Jordan River meets the northern Sea of Galilee.

John skips stones into the water. Simon leans against a tree.
The other three argue.

PHILIP

So, he can perform magic tricks.
Maybe miracles even. That doesn't
make him the Messiah.

JUDAS

What's that thing he likes to say?
"A bad tree can't produce good
fruit." If he's the Messiah, we'll
know it when he frees Israel.

JAMES

Do you even listen to what he says?

JUDAS

No, I'm just following him around
for no reason, James.

Jesus arrives with MATTHEW (25). Judas glares at Matthew.
Simon walks past them. Squints as a figure approaches.

SIMON

Andrew?

Jesus looks back as Andrew approaches.

ANDREW

Couldn't let my little brother see
the world without me.

SIMON

Can't get one over you, can I?

Jesus looks over his seven apostles.

JESUS

Now that we're all here, it's time
to go. We've got work to do.

MONTAGE of the next two years of Jesus's ministry:

- 1) Jesus heals a colony of lepers outside Tyre on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea.
- 2) Jesus preaches to a crowd in the streets of Sidon.
- 3) Jesus and his now ten disciples walk along a desert road.
- 4) Jesus sits next to a motionless young girl laid on a bed; he touches her face. Her eyes snap open. She gasps.

EXT. CLOWE'S PLANTATION - BEACH - AD 1748 - DAY

A trading vessel, the GREYHOUND, lies anchored off the island. A MERCHANT (30s), debarks a now-beached dinghy. Clowe saunters down from the treeline.

MERCHANT

Are you the master of this plantation?

CLOWE

Depends who's askin'.

MERCHANT

I've been contracted by a British gentleman to locate his missing son and heir. Name's John Newton.

CLOWE

Can't say I've heard that name. But I could always think a bit harder.

MERCHANT

There's a reward for his return. You would receive fair compensation should you help us find him.

CLOWE

I've several whites. Can't say I know all their names. Let me ask.

EXT. CLOWE'S PLANTATION - AD 1748 - DAY

Newton (23) chops at underbrush beneath some palm trees. His clothing in tatters. Skin tanned. Scarred.

Clowe whistles at him. Approaches Newton, who stops his work.

CLOWE

'Ay, boy. What's ya name?

NEWTON

Newton, sir. John Newton.

CLOWE

There's a merchant back there who's interested in buyin' ya. Takin' ya back to England. Peys never taken a shine to ya, so I'm inclined to let him, dependin' on his price.

NEWTON

Not sure England's any good for me.

CLOWE

Princess won't be too happy about that. Not lookin' forward to showin' her what's what again. Just remember shit rolls downhill, boy.

NEWTON

All right. Just give me a bit.

CUT TO: Akio hoeing the field. Newton approaches him.

NEWTON (CONT'D)

I'm leaving, Akio. Back to England.

Akio doesn't respond. Newton looks down.

NEWTON (CONT'D)

I... I hope you see your mother
again someday. Goodbye, Akio.

Newton turns. Leaves. Akio looks up after him as Newton walks away, scars across his face.

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1914 - AFTERNOON

An inch of muddy snow blankets the trench. The privates huddle around a fire. Edward shivers. Carter distributes letters. Nothing for Edward. Not that there would be.

Lawrence sighs upon reading his letter.

LAWRENCE

My mum still thinks I'll be back by
Christmas. Don't know I should
write her back. What's the point?

BILLY

Tell her we're having a happy
Christmas right here. Leave out the
part where our stockings are full
o' trench foot, and it's sure not
roast turkey we're eatin'.

LAWRENCE

Christ, I could give two flying
farts about that. It's just wrong,
ya know? Fighting on Christmas and
all. I don't care if you're
English, German, French, or even
Welsh, it's just wrong. Is one day
of peace and quiet too much to ask?

EDWARD

Around here, quiet just means
something bad hasn't happened yet.

BILLY

Always the upper, Teddy.

CARTER

Don't any of you get your hopes up,
but there've been talks about some
sort of meeting tomorrow night.

LAWRENCE

What sort of meeting?

CARTER

Let's just say we're not the only
ones missing Christmas this year.

EXT. CAMP SITE - AD 28 - NIGHT

Jesus (32) and twelve disciples camp near a fire. Most sleep.
Jesus leans against a tree. Watches the dying flames flicker.

John (17) stirs in his sleep. Opens his eyes. Sweating. Sits
up. Glances around.

JESUS

Can't sleep?

CUT TO: John and Jesus sit next to each other under the tree.

JESUS (CONT'D)

I know what it's like. I get these
recurring dreams sometimes.

JOHN

Yeah? What about?

JESUS

There's one I get now and again. A
wedding. Not sure what it means.

JOHN

Maybe you're in love, rabbi.

JESUS

Haven't had much luck in that area.
Probably for the best; this isn't
the life for raising a family.

JOHN

Doesn't make much difference. If
things go bad, they go bad.

JESUS

Is that what you dreamt of?

John doesn't answer.

JESUS (CONT'D)

You can talk to me, John, if you want. I won't tell James.

JOHN

Why? What do you know of it?

Jesus leans his head back.

JESUS

My family was always strange growing up. There was this distance between my parents that we never put into words. They cared for each other, for me, but something was different. They never showed affection toward each other. I don't know. My father was a complicated man; tough, strict, yet generous, but I always felt something went wrong in his life, and he never recovered. He wouldn't say so, but he carried it with him. This little sadness that crept into his eyes from time to time. And my mother... I've never met a kinder, more tender person, but I don't think she really understood him.

JOHN

I still see my mom when I sleep. That's the problem, really. The only way I see her now is how it was the last time. James and I came home from my friend Micah's to find my father beating on a wall, just punching the same spot over and over. And then we saw her, lying there. Face all red, purple, and brown, like someone had swapped all its parts around. Father's never been a kind man. He's successful and everyone loves him, but that's just how it is. Sometimes James or I get something wrong, out on the boat or something, and he'll hit us with an oar. The flat side spreads out the blow and leaves less of a mark. You'd hardly even know. Truth is it doesn't even hurt much anymore. But sometimes I remember her face, and I get so angry, like my insides are melting, and I can't control myself.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

One time I attacked Micah and didn't even realize I was doing it. I just saw the face and had to destroy it. Now he hides whenever I'm around. All because I'm weak, Jesus, I'm so weak. I couldn't do anything. When it mattered, I couldn't do anything. How can God ask me to love someone as weak and pathetic as myself?

Jesus puts his arm around John. Pulls him toward him. John lays his head on Jesus's shoulder, tears in his eyes.

JESUS

We're all weak, John. It is our curse. We feel the pain of sins lashed against us, but we turn the lash on others as if we had never felt its bite. Yet God loves us despite this. He loves you despite this. God loves you more than all the wonders in the world. No matter what, all right? That's why... That's why I'm here.

INT. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - NIGHT

A mechanical BUZZ sounds. Kolbe, Franz, and Henry turn toward a loudspeaker installed high in a corner of the room.

FRITZSCH (V.O.)

Attention. The following numbers are reassigned to kitchen duty. Report at 0500 before breakfast.

Twenty sequential numbers are read off. The broadcast ends. All return to their previous tasks. All except Henry.

HENRY

Guess it's my lucky day.
(to Kolbe)
Maybe I'll sneak back some more wine for you. Thank you for that, by the way. I never thanked you.

I./E. AUSCHWITZ KITCHEN - AD 1941 - BEFORE DAWN

Henry and twenty others, most deathly thin, file into the kitchen. A record keeper jots down their numbers.

Inside, Henry takes position in front of a sink. Turns the handle to start the faucet. Nothing happens. Henry stiffens.

The entrance door shuts. Barred from the outside. The far door opens. Nazi capos with rifles file inside.

Outside, the kitchen windows alight with muzzle flashes.

EXT. JUDEAN MARKET STREETS - AD 28 - DAY

Jesus surveys a VENDOR'S fruit wares: dates and plums, pomegranates and tangerines. Selects a handful. Loads his pack. Pays the man a small handful of coins.

A Pharisee watches Jesus from across the crowded street. Simon arrives, fresh waterskins draped over his shoulders.

SIMON

All set, rabbi?

Jesus takes a last look at the fruit. Turns to leave.

VENDOR

Wait, sir. Please.

Jesus looks back at him.

VENDOR (CONT'D)

Are you the prophet? Who cures the blind and lets the lame walk?

JESUS

I am.

VENDOR

The one they say is the Baptist raised from the dead?

Jesus freezes. Tries to answer the man; can't find the words.

JESUS

From the dead? I... I'm sorry. I must go.

He abruptly walks off through the crowd. Simon chases after.

SIMON

Rabbi! What's wrong?

EXT. JUDEAN MOUNTAIN - AD 28 - DAY

Jesus sits near the peak. Head hung low. Simon, James, and John approach.

TWO MEN speak to him. Backs turned. One turns toward the disciples. They don't recognize him, but we do: MOSES.

A cloud ends its eclipse of the sun. Blinding light shines low as if behind Jesus. Simon shields his eyes, yet when they reach Jesus, he sits alone.

JOHN

Who was here, rabbi?

JESUS

Look, if you must.

Simon, James, and John glance up. A bright light reflects in Simon's eyes. Falls to his knees. Mouth agape. Then-- NIGHT.

Simon snaps to. Searches around. Jesus waits behind them.

JESUS (CONT'D)

It is time we talked.

EXT. CAMP SITE - AD 28 - NIGHT

Jesus sits across the fire from the disciples. Hands clasped. Eyes distant. The disciples wait. Silence over the camp.

JESUS

I'm sure you've heard. That Herod beheaded John the Baptist. My cousin. Truly, I hardly knew him, but I wouldn't be here today were without him. But why are you here?

The disciples look to one another.

JAMES

Because of who you are.

JESUS

And who am I? I've heard many things from many people. Do you know who they say I am?

ANDREW

Some say John the Baptist come again, some say Elijah or Jeremiah or some other prophet. Some call you the King of the Jews.

JESUS
 And after all this time together,
 who do you say I am?

No one dares speak. Simon glances around. Shakes his head.

SIMON
 Are you all too timid to speak what
 you feel? To say what must be true?
 (to Jesus)
 You are the Messiah, the Son of the
 living God.

JESUS
 Blessed are you, Simon, for not by
 flesh and blood has this been
 revealed to you, but by my heavenly
 Father.

Jesus stands. Walks toward Simon, who takes a step back.

SIMON
 Depart from me, Lord, for I am a
 sinful man.

Jesus puts his hand on Simon's shoulder.

JESUS
 You are Peter; you are rock, and on
 this rock I build my church, and
 the gates of Hell will not prevail
 against it.

INT. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - NIGHT

Scattered prisoners sleep. Henry's mat empty. Kolbe stares at
 the ceiling. A BUZZING noise. No one breathes.

FRITZSCH (V.O.)
 Attention. The following numbers
 are reassigned to kitchen duty.
 Report at 0500 before breakfast.

Franz, eyes open, grips his own arm tight.

FRITZSCH (O.S.)
 Forty-six seventy, Forty-six
 seventy-one...

Franz exhales. Releases his grip. Kolbe never reacts.

EXT. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - NIGHT

Kolbe leans against Block 18. Watches the bright full moon.

KOLBE (V.O.)
Loving mother of the Redeemer...

SERIES OF SHOTS across time:

1) Edward patrols the trench at night.

EDWARD (V.O.)
...Gate of Heaven...

2) Venus shines low above the Atlantic Ocean. Newton sprawls out, sitting against the *Greyhound's* Mast. Rum in hand.

NEWTON (V.O.)
...Star of the Sea...

3) Waves lap at Moses's feet.

MOSES (V.O.)
...Assist Your people...

4) Jesus surveys his sleeping disciples. Simon. Judas. John.

JESUS (V.O.)
...Who have fallen...

5) Back to Kolbe outside Block 18.

KOLBE (V.O.)
...Yet strive to rise again.

Franz emerges from the barrack. Kolbe glances to him.

KOLBE
Franz? Would you sit with me?

FRANZ
Only if you don't preach to me.

Franz joins Kolbe. Silence for a BEAT.

KOLBE
I should've seen it coming, Franz.
Henry was there when I needed him,
but where was I? What am I doing
here, Franz? I don't know my
purpose anymore.

FRANZ

You're not the only one, Kolbe. How do you think it feels to be a father who can't protect his children? Or a husband who couldn't protect his wife? That was my purpose. Maybe it's punishment for my failings as a man. Maybe there isn't any purpose at all.

KOLBE

Why don't you just give up? Throw yourself on the wires? You're always so negative about things.

FRANZ

Imagine if they found out I gave up on them. I'd never hurt them like that. I wanna live, priest, same as anyone. I wanna find Helena again. See my daughters. I don't care if they're as rambunctious as ever. Girls their age are like that; I was too strict with them. And I don't care if Helena's getting older. I don't care if we never have a son. It's all so small now. All that matters is going home.

KOLBE

There's no one waiting for me. Perhaps that's why I'm out here, staring at the moon. You know, I studied astronomy at university. I once designed a telescope that could take pictures of planets and stars from orbit. Would've worked, too, if Father Cicchito hadn't nixed it for being too expensive. I've always admired the moon, though. It's constantly reflecting sunlight down to us, lighting even the darkest nights. Even a new moon still reflects a bit of light. That's how I've always been, though. Always searching to find the truth out there. I've spent years in China, Japan, the furthest reaches of the globe. I've almost tasted it, but still I hunger.

FRANZ

I can't imagine not having a home. No roots? Why live like that?

KOLBE

Why? You wouldn't want to hear about it, trust me.

FRANZ

Suit yourself.

KOLBE

When I was about your daughters' age, I had a dream, a vision, whatever you want to call it. The Virgin Mother, holding a crown of thorns in one hand and a crown of glory in the other. She wanted me to choose my destiny. A terrible thing for a boy to have on his shoulders. But, for the life of me, I can't remember which one I chose.

EXT. CAMP SITE - AD 28 - NIGHT

Jesus tosses in his sleep.

EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - DREAM - MORNING

Jesus dreams an old dream. A SERIES OF SHOTS:

- 1) Jesus stands before the perfectly calm sea. He wears his finest suit. He turns to face his guests.
- 2) The low sun shines through the lace of a bridal gown. A gentle wind blows the white linen.
- 3) Jesus takes the hand of a woman. BLOOD trickles down his fingers from a hole in his wrist.

EXT. CAMP SITE - AD 28 - CONTINUOUS

Jesus snaps upright. Breathes like he'd just run a marathon. His eyes dilate. His hands shake uncontrollably.

JESUS

"But he was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins, upon him the chastisement that makes us whole."

Jesus looks to Simon. Sweat runs down his face.

JESUS (CONT'D)

We must head to Jerusalem.

EXT. GREYHOUND DECK - AD 1748 - EVENING

Newton leans on the aft railing. Wears new clothing. Takes a long swig from a bottle of rum.

The sky near the horizon burns bright red. Just brighter than Newton's cheeks. The merchant slides beside him.

MERCHANT

Not happy to be sailing home?

NEWTON

Not sure my father will be getting his money's worth. Don't even know why he bothered.

Newton finishes off the bottle of rum. The merchant sighs. Can't figure how to reply. After a BEAT:

MERCHANT

Quite the sunset, isn't it? You know what they say about red skies, right? Well, don't worry about that... Worry about this.

Points over his shoulder. Newton turns. Eyebrows furrow.

NEWTON

Oh, bloody hell.

Ahead, blackness swallows the sky. Lightning flickers over far-off waters.

MERCHANT

The remnant of a hurricane that hit the American colonies. It turned right and makes for the Isles. I'm afraid there's no avoiding it.

NEWTON

We're just going to sail through?

MERCHANT

We don't have the supplies to go around. I'd start praying for God's mercy if I were you.

EXT. BEACH CAMP - 1364 BC - NIGHT

Moses walks between tents toward where a group bickers. Aaron squats, drawing a rudimentary map in the sand.

ABIHU

What choice do we have? We must surrender. Ramses won't slaughter his workforce. He needs us alive.

NADAB

We can flee. There's still time.

ABIHU

To where? Where will we find water in this desert? The women and children will die in days.

Aaron stands.

AARON

We know well the extent of Pharaoh's mercy, and Abihu's right: we can't survive in this desert for long. As far as I see it, we have only one option: defend ourselves.

Moses pushes into the circle.

MOSES

Ramses's chariots will cut through us like butter. They'll even have a running start down the slope.

AARON

If we can draw them onto the beach, we can reverse his advantage. Surround him and crush him. It's as good a plan as any. You got anything better, Moses?

MOSES

The Lord has led us this far. He'll take us the rest of the way.

NADAB

Why wait for some miracle when we can make our own? You'd rather just sit here and die?

MOSES

If that's His will, I'd rather die standing on my own two feet with unstained hands rather than fleeing or in chains.

AARON

I'm sorry, Moses. I won't leave my family's fate to chance.

MOSES

You'd rather your sons die in some
futile effort to appear strong?
You're scared, Aaron.

AARON

Is that wrong? Are you telling me
you're not?

MOSES

Of course I am! You think I wanted
this? I wish, oh, I wish God had
chosen anyone else, anyone but me.
Everyone thinks it's because I'm
this strong person, like Abraham or
Jacob, but I'm not. I'm not. I'm
just me. I convinced you to follow
me, and if we die, it's my fault.
Do you know what that feels like?

Miriam pushes toward Aaron and Moses.

MIRIAM

Just stop it. This isn't helping.

Moses and Aaron back down. Miriam turns to Aaron.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

Look, maybe your plan can work. I
don't know. I do know most of us
aren't fighters. If we want any
hope of surviving this, we need to
move in a coordinated manner, all
right? Leave panic for later.

(to Moses)

Let's get people ready.

EXT. NAZARETH - MARY'S HOUSE - AD 28 - DAY

Jesus knocks on his mother's door. Mary opens. Face lights
up. Throws her arms around her son.

Jesus draws back, a pained look on his face.

JESUS

You were right. You were right
about everything. I'm sorry I
doubted; I just wasn't ready.

Mary smiles. Teases--

MARY

I suppose I'll have to forgive you.
Just this time, though.

JESUS

Will you come with us? I'd like you
to be there.

Mary's smile dies.

INT. NAZARETH SYNAGOGUE - AD 28 - DAY

A hushed crowd stands. Jesus pushes forward from Mary and his
disciples to the raised dais. A scroll on its stone altar.

Mary glances around at the gathering. Tired faces. Down-
turned eyes. In a few: a poisonous glare toward her son.

John fidgets next to her. He whispers, mostly to himself--

JOHN

I don't like this.

Jesus unfurls the manuscript on the altar. Projects--

JESUS

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;
He has anointed me to bring glad
tidings to the poor. He has sent me
to proclaim liberty to captives and
recovery of sight to the blind. To
free the oppressed and proclaim a
year acceptable to the Lord."

Jesus rolls up the scroll. Pauses. Sits in the synagogue's
high chair. More glares lock on him.

Murmurs ripple through the crowd. Mary's breath quickens.
John inches closer toward her. She puts her arm around him.
Their eyes meet, John's full of fear.

Andrew braces himself. Judas steps back.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Today, this scripture passage is
fulfilled at your hearing.

The crowd roils. Shouts from the back--

CROWD

(various)

Blasphemy! What would a carpenter's
bastard know? A whore's son?

Hands tug at Mary's clothes. John pushes them away.

JESUS

Sins blinds you, Nazareth. Even now, you profane widows in this holy synagogue for what you do not understand. Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand!

The crowd ERUPTS. Jeers. Obscene gestures.

One grabs Mary from behind, dragging her back. Hands yank at her hair. Another locks John's arms behind his back. Simon pushes to John, but a knee to the gut drops him to the floor.

Two men climb the dais. Grab Jesus's arms. He doesn't resist as they drag him toward the front entrance.

EXT. NAZARETH SYNAGOGUE - AD 28 - CONTINUOUS

The crowd shoves Mary and John to the dirt. Flings Jesus before them.

Jesus scampers to his feet. Puts himself between the crowd and his disciples, arms outstretched.

JESUS

Leave them be! I am who you want!

One MAN shoves Jesus back. The other crowd members stay by the entrance.

NAZOREAN MAN

You're no son of this town. Leave, and never return!

He spits in Jesus's feet. The crowd laughs. Jeers.

Jesus simply stares back at the man, who backs off as the crowd files back inside. Its cacophony fades.

Jesus takes deep breaths. Judas approaches him.

JUDAS

What were you thinking?

JESUS

It had to be done.

JUDAS

How do you think Caiaphas will take you defying him? Or that you're declaring prophesy fulfilled?

(MORE)

JUDAS (CONT'D)

Will Jerusalem, under his very nose, take to you more than here?

JESUS

A prophet is always dishonored in his hometown.

JUDAS

That's a reckless assumption!

JESUS

Yes, it is reckless. The way ahead is like this: dangerous and hard, full of pain and persecution. The hour is late, the light among us only a little while longer. What should I say? "Father, save me from this hour?" Yet it was for this hour that I came into the world.

Judas turns his back. Walks a few paces away. Jesus looks to Andrew, Mary, John, Simon. They shy away from his glance.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Do you want to leave me?

Simon looks to Jesus.

SIMON

Where would we go, Lord? You have the words of eternal life.

A small smile breaks on Jesus's face.

JESUS

Then follow me, one more time.

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1914 - EVENING

The sun sets on Christmas Eve. The stars turn on one-by-one. A few stray snowflakes fall despite the lack of clouds.

The other privates wait anxiously as Carter peers over the trench wall to no man's land.

Edward leans against the trench wall, watching the sky.

BILLY

They don't look any different than any other night, mate.

LAWRENCE

My grandmum says the stars are
always brighter on Christmas Eve.
They burn with jealousy as of all
the stars in the heavens, God chose
ours, to become one of us.

BILLY

Who let you out of the nunnery?

Carter hops down to their level.

CARTER

No movement.

DANIEL

Maybe they called it off.

CARTER

Unless things change, I'm not going
out there. Won't ask you either.

Edward shoves off the wall.

EDWARD

I'll go, sir.

CARTER

I'd strongly advise against that.

EDWARD

Sure, they might cut me down the
second I hop up there. They might
take me prisoner. I don't care. All
I know is my only friend left in
this world is trapped over there.
The least I owe him is to try.

Carter sighs.

CARTER

All right.

Edward grabs hold of the sandbags atop the trench wall. Pulls
himself up to lay on the frozen ground.

CARTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Wait.

Edward looks back. Carter takes a thick, brush-like branch
from the fire. Holds it out to Edward.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Take this with you so we can see.

Edward grabs the branch. Pulls himself to his feet. Takes a step into no-man's land.

Carter and the privates press themselves against the trench wall. Peek over with bated breath.

Edward draws a deep breath. Exhales. Steps forward.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF JERUSALEM - AD 29 - DAY

Jesus climbs atop a donkey. Glances to his disciples. John looks to Mary. Together, they press toward the city gates.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - AD 1914 - NIGHT

Edward takes one tentative step after another. His breath quickens. Glistens in the frigid air. Snow refracts the firelight. Illuminates his face.

Ahead, the fires of the German trench can be seen.

EXT. JERUSALEM ENTRANCE - AD 29 - DAY

Jesus rides through the city gates. His disciples and Mary close behind.

All around, the JERUSALEM CROWD lays palm leaves at his steed's feet. Others spread their cloaks.

JERUSALEM CROWD
Hosanna! Hosanna in the highest!

From a window, Caiaphas watches with disappointment.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - AD 1914 - NIGHT

Edward reaches the edge of the German trench. He takes one last deep breath, then leans over.

Albert and Fredrich spot Edward. They wheel around. Aim their rifles at his head.

EDWARD
Weihnachten! Weihnachten!

Edward holds out the fiery branch. Desperately. Pleadingly.

Albert and Fredrich look to each other with tired eyes. Dried blood clings to their faces. They lower their guns.

ALBERT
Weihnachten.

Albert and Fredrich climb up onto no man's land. Edward turns back to his trench. Waves for them to follow.

EDWARD
 It's all right!

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1914 - CONTINUOUS

The soldiers hesitate. Uncertain. Billy shrugs.

BILLY
 Eh, what the hell.

Billy climbs up onto no man's land.

One-by-one, other British and German soldiers climb from their trenches. Approach each other cautiously.

EXT. JERUSALEM ALLEY - AD 29 - DAY

Simon rounds a corner. In the alley, Jesus and Judas argue with whispered voices. Judas flails his arms animatedly.

SIMON
 Master.

Jesus and Judas quiet. Look at Simon.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 I've found lodging for Passover,
 both for us and your mother.

JESUS
 Thank you, Peter.

Judas storms off.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - AD 1914 - NIGHT

Edward, Carter, and the others face Albert, Fredrich, and German Lieutenant LUKAS BECKER (30s).

CARTER
 We wish to discuss terms for a
 prisoner exchange. We have four of
 yours, including two officers.

BECKER

And we have eight of yours, four officers. Eight for four hardly seems even. Since it's Christmas, I'll trade your four officers for our four. One-to-one. Fair.

Edward turns to Carter.

EDWARD

We have to get Geoffrey back.
Please, Carter.

CARTER

We don't have any leverage, Edward, and officers have higher priority.

Edward looks to Becker.

EDWARD

Please, sir, let my friend go, too.

BECKER

One-to-one. Final offer.

EDWARD

Please, he's all I have left.

Albert whispers to Becker.

ALBERT

Ein mehr wurde nicht schaden...

BECKER

Nein. Stehen fest.

Carter watches them.

CARTER

All right, it's a deal.

BECKER

Good. Albert, *holen sie.*

EDWARD

Would you at least let me see him?
Just for tonight.

Becker stares Edward down. Looks around the gathering.

BECKER

Very well.

INT. JERUSALEM HOUSE - AD 29 - NIGHT

Jesus sits at table, bisecting the twelve disciples who sit around him. Simon to his left. John to his right.

While others talk, he's silent. A worried look on his face. Only other person silent: Judas. Jesus nods to him.

JESUS

Do it quickly.

Judas departs. Simon watches him nervously.

JESUS (CONT'D)

My friends.

Jesus looks around. The disciples quiet.

JESUS (CONT'D)

My friends, I'm afraid I will be with you only a little while longer. Where I go, you can not follow.

JOHN

We're finally here, and you're leaving us?

JESUS

I'm sorry, John. If I could have it another way, I surely would. You see, this world and all its people are broken. That's why our Father sent His Son. He sent me, to make all things new. But I haven't told you how this happens. There's only one way: the Messiah must die.

Andrew shakes his head. Philip laughs. John looks shaken, Simon almost angry.

JESUS (CONT'D)

But it's not enough for me to die. My death can only open the door. You must let others know to walk through it, if they so choose. Without that, it's meaningless. For that reason, you have the greater mission than I.

Jesus looks down. Takes in his hands a piece of unleavened bread laying before him. Holds it up.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Take this, all of you, and eat it.
This is my body, which will be
given up for you. Do this in
remembrance of me.

Jesus tears off a piece. Passes it to his left. Each disciple
does the same. Jesus picks up a small wooden cup of wine.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Take this, all of you, and drink of
it. This is the blood of the new
and everlasting covenant, poured
out for the forgiveness of sins.

Jesus takes a small drink. Again passes it around.

After the last disciple drinks of the cup, Jesus looks
around. His eyes barely hold back his grief.

Jesus grabs Simon's right hand, John's left. The other
disciples follow suit. Jesus bows his head. Closes his eyes.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Father, I have revealed Your name
to those whom You gave me out of
the world. They belonged to You,
and You gave them to me, and they
have kept Your word. I pray for
them. Bless them and consecrate
them in the truth. Let them love
Your world despite its sin and
brokenness. I pray not only for
them, but for those who will
believe through their word, so that
they may all be one, as you,
Father, are in me, and I in you. I
in them, and them in me, that they
may be brought to perfection as
one, that the world may know You
love them even as You loved me.
Father, they were Your gift to me.
I pray that wherever I am, they
also may be with me. May the love
with which You loved me be in them
always, until the end of all
things. Amen.

Tears wet most faces. Jesus looks up to his friends.

JESUS (CONT'D)

You have kept my Father's commandments, but now I give you the greatest commandment of all: Love one another as I have loved you.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - AD 1914 - NIGHT

British and German soldiers gather around an artillery crater holding Christmas fires. Edward stands apart.

He waits as Albert leads Geoffrey toward him. Shackles on his wrists. Face haggard. Unshaven. More gaunt than usual.

EDWARD

I'm sorry, Geoff. I couldn't get you out, but I'll find a way.

Geoffrey doesn't respond immediately. After a BEAT--

GEOFFREY

I thought many times about running. Knowing I wouldn't make it twenty feet before I bit a bullet. But I thought, "If I die, I'll just be another thing Edward mopes about forever. Just another tragedy he'd use to pity himself some more."

EDWARD

What about Maggie, Geoff?

GEOFFREY

She doesn't love me, Ted.

EDWARD

Fine. You're right. That what you want to hear? I've been a right selfish bastard. I don't deserve your friendship. Can we ever get past this?

GEOFFREY

I don't know, Ted.

Behind them, German soldiers bring unburied bodies of their fallen friends to the crater. After a BEAT:

EDWARD

Would you help me bury Ben?

EXT. JERUSALEM HOUSE - AD 29 - NIGHT

Jesus stands alone on a hill outside the house. Jerusalem spreads out before him. Simon approaches. Face damp.

SIMON

How do you know it will work?

Jesus doesn't look back.

JESUS

It's all flooding back, Peter. I remember when Satan fell from Heaven like lightning. I have seen his armies crash down like water on rock. I've seen men drown in his storm. But I have also seen the light which follows, when the same waves but wash our feet, slowing until we stand before a glassy sea. Or maybe it was glassy all along but we were just too small to see. I don't know. I can't quite make sense of it all. But if the Messiah was sent to redeem the world yet must still die, maybe it's so death too can be redeemed.

SIMON

Then let me follow you, Master. Perhaps you have to die, but you don't have to die alone.

Jesus turns back to Simon.

JESUS

When no one else believed in me, you did. Look at them in there; they won't make it without you. John. James. Andrew. Philip.

SIMON

I can't... I can't...

Jesus puts his hand behind Simon's neck. Leans their heads together.

JESUS

You have to be their rock, Peter. They need you to be strong, at least for now. I know it'll be hard. I really do. There will be times when you'll stumble, when you'll falter.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

Before dawn, you'll deny me three times, Peter. But it's all right. It is. Faith and doubt are as inseparable as courage and fear. But what matters is that you come back, that you want to come back, all right? No amount of doubt, rebellion, or sin is ever beyond forgiveness.

SIMON

Is this goodbye, then?

JESUS

I will be with you always, Peter. You can find me where I found you, on the Galilean shore where the sunrise turns the mountains red. I'll be waiting for you there.

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1914 - NIGHT

Edward climbs into the trench with Benjamin's frozen body. Off-screen, Lawrence begins to sing at the burial site.

LAWRENCE (O.S.)

O Holy Night, the stars are brightly shining...

Edward bends down to Benjamin. Hesitates. Retrieves the cross necklace from Benjamin's breast pocket.

LAWRENCE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

...It is the night of our dear Savior's birth...

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - AD 1914 - CONTINUOUS

Edward and Geoffrey carry Benjamin's body toward the crowd. As they do, other soldiers on both sides join with Lawrence.

SOLDIERS

...Long lay the world in sin and error pining...

Albert and Fredrich lower the body of a fallen friend into the grave. Others follow.

SOLDIERS (CONT'D)

...'Til He appeared, and the soul felt its worth...

Edward and Geoffrey lower Benjamin on top of the other corpses. They stand back.

SOLDIERS (CONT'D)
*...A thrill of hope, the weary
 world rejoices...*

They stare at Benjamin. Edward joins in the singing.

SOLDIERS (CONT'D)
*...For yonder breaks a new and
 glorious morn...*

Geoffrey's jaw quivers. Tears wells in his eyes.

SOLDIERS (CONT'D)
*...Fall on your knees! O hear the
 angel voices!...*

Geoffrey breaks down sobbing. Edward puts his arm around his friend. Pulls him close.

SOLDIERS (CONT'D)
*...O night Divine, O night when
 Christ was born...*

Another body covers Benjamin. Geoffrey looks up. Sings along.

SOLDIERS (CONT'D)
*...Noel! Noel! O night, O night
 Divine! Noel! Noel! O night, O
 night Divine!*

LATER, Geoffrey and Edward again stand facing each other, the distance somehow less. Albert approaches while they talk.

GEOFFREY
 You've said that you'd go wherever
 I went. You really meant it?

EDWARD
 Always have.

GEOFFREY
 It sounds like we're moving
 somewhere southeast of here. Some
 hill or something. I dunno.

EDWARD
 Doesn't matter where. I'm not
 giving up on you.

GEOFFREY
 Then I won't either.

Geoffrey nods to Albert. Geoffrey turns, Albert ushering back to the German trench. Edward watches him leave.

EDWARD
I'm not giving up.

INT. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - NIGHT

Another week, another announcement to the sleeping barracks.

FRITZSCH (V.O.)
Attention. The following numbers
are reassigned to kitchen duty.
Report at 0500 before breakfast.

Franz rolls up his sleeve. Tattooed on his arm: 5,659.

FRITZSCH (V.O.)
Fifty-five eighty-one, fifty-five
eighty-two, fifty...

Franz yanks his sleeve down.

EXT. BEACH CAMP - 1364 BC - BEFORE DAWN

The sky lightens to the east. Low clouds hang over the sea. Moses and Miriam push through camp. People rush by.

MOSES
Get your things! Be ready to move!

A desperate HEBREW MAN comes up to Moses.

HEBREW MAN
Is it true, Moses?

Moses doesn't reply. The man's fear turns to anger. He storms past Moses. Clips him in the shoulder. Moses catches himself.

MOSES
This isn't working. Nothing's
working.

He looks to Miriam.

MOSES (CONT'D)
Gather them, Miriam. As many as you
can. They'll listen to you.

MIRIAM
Don't give up on us, Moses. Not
now. Not here.

MOSES

You see, that's why they need you.
Go, please. Save as many as you can.

EXT. GREYHOUND DECK - AD 1748 - NIGHT

Lightning cracks. The ship rocks to and fro. Waves pound the *Greyhound's* sides. The crew scampers about. Newton watches, unsure what to do.

MERCHANT

Get below! We're taking on water.

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1915 - DAY

Artillery BOOMS in the distance. Carter reads a letter to Edward, Lawrence, Billy, Daniel, and other British soldiers.

CARTER

By order of Commander Haig, the BEF
Fifth will join with the French to
retake Hill 60 from the German
Thirtieth. We move in an hour.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ FIELD - AD 1941 - DAY

Kolbe and Franz pick rocks from an open field. Toss them in a wheelbarrow. Franz carries an uncharacteristic smile.

Krott and several guards watch about one hundred other prisoners doing likewise. Franz glances toward them.

FRANZ

I'm getting out of here, priest.
I'm gonna see my family.

Kolbe stops.

KOLBE

What are you talking about?

FRANZ

We're breaking out tonight. Me and
a couple other guys from the Block.

KOLBE

You're going to get killed, or
worse. Not to mention what they'll
do to the rest of us.

FRANZ
Then come with us.

KOLBE
Be patient. God will give a way out.

FRANZ
Maybe this is it, then?

KOLBE
You're condemning the whole Block!

EXT. BEACH - 1364 BC - MOMENTS LATER

Moses staggers onto the beach. Until waves lap his feet.

MOSES
Where are You? Will You speak to me
once more, as You used to? Is that
too much to ask?

Nothing happens. Waves continue to wet the shore.

EXT. GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE - AD 29 - NIGHT

Jesus walks alone through a grove. Runs his hand across a
tree's leaves and bark. Kneels in a small clearing. Shaking.

JESUS
Father, of all the ways You could
reconcile the world, why this? You
could simply reach out Your hand
and wipe the world's sin away. Have
I not done as You've willed? Am I
lower than Isaac? You sent Your
angel to stay Abraham's hand;
surely, You can spare Your own son.
What will my mother do? My
disciples aren't ready. This world
isn't ready. Father, if it is
possible, let this cup pass from
me, not by my will but Yours.

Jesus walks back to find Simon, James, and John sleeping.
Shakes his head. Looks up. Torchlight approaches.

INT. GREYHOUND HOLD - AD 1748 - NIGHT

Newton and six CREWMEN bail water from the hold in buckets
out the portholes. Water fills to their shins. Others use
wooden pumps to drain the seawater.

A wave rocks the boat. Newton stumbles into the water surrounding his legs. Through a porthole, two crewmen are swept off the deck out to sea.

CREWMAN (O.S.)
We have to find the leak!

NEWTON
(off-hand)
Lord, have mercy on us.

Newton freezes. His eyes go wide. Shakes his head.

Newton hurries back to his room in a daze. The ship continues to rock. Thunders BOOMS far above him.

INT. GREYHOUND - NEWTON'S CABIN - AD 1748 - NIGHT

Newton shuts himself in. Bars the door with a latch.

He curls up on his makeshift bed. Holds his arms. Yelling and running sound through the door. Newton hyperventilates.

EXT. RIDGE ABOVE BEACH - 1364 BC - BEFORE DAWN

Chariots of the Egyptian army summit the ridge above the beach camp. A layer of fog obscures the camp from view.

Pharaoh RAMSES (43) pulls back on his horse's reins.

RAMSES
Find them.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ FIELD - AD 1941 - MORNING

Kolbe marches with the rest of Block 18 toward the rocky field. Nazi guards flank their line.

Kolbe looks around, but Franz is nowhere to be seen.

An alarm BLARES around the camp. All halt.

NAZI GUARD
Back to your Block! Now!

INT. GREYHOUND - NEWTON'S CABIN - AD 1748 - NIGHT

The ship lists. A jarring noise. The room shudders. Water flows into the room through a small tear in the hull.

Newton scrambles back against the wall. Breathing hard.

NEWTON
No. No. Please, no.

INT. BLOCK 18 - AD 1941 - DAY

Kolbe rushes inside. Finds Franz huddled against a wall.

KOLBE
What happened?

Franz looks up at Kolbe, heartbroken.

FRANZ
I... I didn't make it. Most of the others did. Some were shot. I was at the back, and by the time I was to go, they were onto us. But it doesn't matter. It's over now.

The voice of Fritzsich again fills the barrack.

FRITZSCH (V.O.)
All prisoners in Block 18, report to the yard immediately. All other Blocks, resume normal operations.

Kolbe grimaces. Franz drops his head.

INT. JERUSALEM - HALL OF HEWN STONES - AD 29 - NIGHT

Jesus again stands before the Sanhedrin. Chains bind his wrists. Caiaphas stands over him. Shakes his head.

CAIAPHAS
With what arrogance does one claim to be the Son of God? I thought we understood each other.

Jesus looks down. Caiaphas turns to the Sanhedrin.

CAIAPHAS (CONT'D)
We have no choice. This man has directly ignored our orders, and what's more, he's declared himself the Messiah, the very Son of God!

The council of priests murmurs.

CAIAPHAS (CONT'D)
Turn him over to Prefect Pilate.

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1915 - DAY

Edward, Lawrence, Billy, and Daniel clutch their rifles. Waiting in silence. The hour almost at hand. Edward turns his necklace in his fingers.

BILLY

Think that will protect you,
Pengelly?

EDWARD

I don't want to be protected. All the pain, anger, fear, loss... I want to feel it, remember it. Have it sink into my bones. This isn't meant to protect me. It's meant for something greater.

Carter comes down the line.

CARTER

Everyone ready?

Edward clasps on his necklace. Stuffs it inside his uniform.

SOLDIERS

Yes, sir.

Carter calls back down the line.

CARTER

Blow it!

About a second later, two massive explosions billow out from the German trench across no man's land. Mud flung hundreds of feet into the air rains down on the Allied trench.

CARTER (CONT'D)

Let's kill some Krauts! Let's take this bloody hill! Go, go, go!

Edward climbs up sandbags. Onto no man's land. Over a hundred British and French soldiers scurry up with him.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - AD 1915 - CONTINUOUS

Smoke rises from a maze of trenches circling and weaving up an imposing grass hill. Gatling gun nests rim its summit.

The Allied soldiers charge over pocked ground.

German bullets buzz by. Gatling guns rain fire. Find one in ten British soldiers. Blood flies. Men stumble into the mud.

Artillery shells burst into the dirt. Another one in ten.

Daniel aims his rifle. Fires. A German soldier loses the back of his head. Edward doesn't waste his ammunition.

British soldiers reach the blown open trench. Bayonets fly. Men fall. Edward skewers a German. Slides into the trench.

Lawrence shoots down the trench at enfiladed German soldiers. Billy waves for more soldiers to follow them down.

They push down the trench. Brits flow in like a waterfall.

Bullets ricochet off the trench walls. Explosions sound.

Two Germans peek around a bend in the trench, firing toward the foursome. Edward flings himself to the trench wall. Billy walks straight at them, emptying a charger. Both fall.

The Brits press on. Turn to the left with the trench line. Edward follows around the bend. Up the hill.

German soldiers either fall to British bullets or flee.

The hilltop Gatling guns can't reach them in this row.

The last few Germans in the trench manage to kill a couple Allied soldiers before becoming bloodstains.

The Gatling guns stop firing. The Germans have vanished.

EXT. HILL 60 - THE SUMMIT - AD 1915 - CONTINUOUS

Edward, Lawrence, Billy, and Daniel reach the top. They do a quick search, but no Germans remain atop Hill 60.

Edward searches in the distance beyond the eastern slope of the hill. German soldiers flee into a treeline at its base.

Amid a series of trenches leading down the east slope, Edward spies a small encampment with movement. Wind whips in from the east. He turns to the others.

EDWARD

Hold here for redeployments. I've got to keep going.

EXT. BEACH - 1364 BC - BEFORE DAWN

Moses waits. Hears nothing. Turns. Heads back toward camp.

Finds his staff, discarded in the sand. Squints. There's something about it he can't place.

Picks it up. Turns it over in his hands.

AARON (O.S.)
You said it would do wonders.

Moses spots Aaron standing above him.

AARON (CONT'D)
Well, now would be a great time for one. They're here.

EXT. ROMAN COURTYARD - AD 29 - DAY

Chained to a pillar, ROMAN SOLDIERS take turns scourging Jesus's back. A crowd of on-lookers watch. Blood runs to the stones beneath his feet.

Jesus gasps in pain. Stares off past the crowd.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ YARD - AD 1941 - DAY

The sixty men of Block 18 line up in ten rows of six. Fritzs, Hoss, and a record keeper before them.

FRITZSCH
It has been determined that members from your Block were behind the escape attempt. As punishment and to ensure this doesn't happen again, I will select ten-- or so-- of you to die in our starvation chamber. First row, step forward.

The men do as bid. Kolbe, in the third-from-last row, tries not to look at Fritzs or Hoss.

Fritzs stalks along the first row, record keeper in tow. Scrutinizes each face.

He halts before a prisoner. Grabs his arm. Shows it to the record keeper, who jots down the number.

Row after row. One per row. Reaches Kolbe's row. Surveys his potential victims.

Fritzs stops before Kolbe. Chuckles to himself. He moves on. Picks another from Kolbe's row. Kolbe exhales.

In the row behind Kolbe, Fritzsich stops in front of Franz. Grabs his wrist. The record keeper scrawls his number. Franz blubbers--

FRANZ

Please, no. Please, I have a wife
and children. Please!

Fritzsich continues on. Franz falls to his knees.

EXT. ROMAN COURTYARD - AD 29 - DAY

Jesus looks up as he's whipped. Mary moves to the crowd's front. Holds her fist to her mouth.

The guards unchain Jesus from the pillar. His back drips with blood from jagged gashes. They pull him to his feet. Jesus stares only at Mary.

ROMAN SOLDIER

You're the King of the Jews, huh?

He pulls off his scarlet cloak. Drapes it on Jesus's back.

INT. GALILEAN SHORE - TENT - DREAM - MORNING

Somewhere else, soft light streams through the white fabric of a tent. Gentle wind outside.

Mary helps Jesus put on his suit coat.

EXT. ROMAN COURTYARD - AD 29 - DAY

Another Roman soldier hands the first a crown of thorns. The first guard shows it to the crowd, then lowers it toward Jesus's head.

INT. GALILEAN SHORE - TENT - DREAM - MORNING

MATCH CUT to Mary lowering a golden crown onto Jesus's head.

EXT. ROMAN COURTYARD - AD 29 - DAY

Blood drips from Jesus's temples.

ROMAN GUARD

Behold, your King!

The crowd laughs. Jeers.

EXT. HILL 60 - EASTERN GERMAN TRENCHES - AD 1915 - DAY

Edward creeps through the abandoned trenches. Keeps his head below the trench walls. White knuckles on his ready rifle.

Turns a corner. Nothing. Everything's silent.

Creeps forward. Spins his rifle around another bend.

Steps out to find Fredrich cowering in a corner. Edward aims at him. Finger on the trigger. Terror haunts Fredrich's eyes. Raises his hands.

Edward tentatively approaches. Gestures for Fredrich to get to his feet. He complies.

EDWARD

Where is he? Where's Geoffrey?

Fredrich slowly gestures with his raised hand.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Go.

Fredrich turns. Edward prods him along with his rifle.

EXT. JERUSALEM - VIA DOLOROSA - AD 29 - DAY

Jesus carries his heavy crossbar over his shoulders. Wrists roped to the wood.

Roman guards escort him down the path. Crowds jeer. Throw anything they can. Jesus staggers.

Mary fights her way through the crowd to match Jesus's pace.

INT. GREYHOUND - NEWTON'S CABIN - AD 1748 - NIGHT

A foot of water covers the floor. More every second. Creeping up over the side of the bed. Touching Newton's feet.

NEWTON

This is it. This is the end. I should've never left. But I did. I did. It's my fault. You were right, father. I'm sorry. God, I'm sorry. I've hurt so many people, and I didn't care. Forgive me; I'm not worthy. I'm not. But, please, don't let them die because of me.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ YARD - AD 1941 - DAY

Kolbe's eyes go wide.

KOLBE

(sotto)

I promised him. I promised God
would give a way out.

Breath quickens. He frantically searches for an answer.

INT. GREYHOUND - NEWTON'S CABIN - AD 1748 - NIGHT

Water rises to Newton's knees and chest. Bubbles float away from the tear in the hull. Gurgling. Newton sobs.

EXT. JERUSALEM - VIA DOLOROSA - AD 29 - DAY

Jesus staggers along the road. Stumbles. Falls to the ground. Cries out in pain.

Forces himself to one knee.

A woman, VERONICA (30s), comes to Jesus from the crowd. She wipes Jesus's bloody and sweaty face with her linen veil.

Jesus looks up at her.

EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - DREAM - MORNING

Jesus stands at the altar. The bride steps up to him.

Her face is Veronica's.

EXT. JERUSALEM - VIA DOLOROSA - AD 29 - DAY

Roman guards push Veronica back. Jesus looks to the crowd.

INTERCUT between the road and the dream.

Jesus sees the face of each person in the crowd as the bride in rapid succession.

With one knee on the road, tears run down Jesus's face. Tears of sorrow. Tears of understanding. Tears of joy.

JESUS

I'm ready! Father, I'm ready!

EXT. AUSCHWITZ YARD - AD 1941 - DAY

Kolbe freezes in realization.

KOLBE

He gave me.

Nine prisoners selected take their place with Fritzsch. Franz remains frozen on his knees, crying.

Fritzsch looks to Franz.

FRITZSCH

Get him up. Now!

Kolbe steps forward. Walks to Fritzsch. Everyone's silent. Fritzsch reaches for his pistol.

Kolbe stops in front of him.

KOLBE

I wish to take that man's place.

Fritzsch steps back, unsure what to do. Hoss watches close.

KOLBE (CONT'D)

He's an able-bodied former soldier,
and I'm a old, weak priest. Surely,
it would be better for the camp to
take me in his place.

Fritzsch turns to Hoss. They talk, but nothing is heard. Fritzsch hunches his shoulders. Turns back to Kolbe.

FRITZSCH

Very well. Let's go.

I./E. AUSCHWITZ STARVATION CHAMBER - AD 1941 - DAY

Ten prisoners march toward a low brick building. In MONTAGE:

1) A guard strips them of clothing. Takes Kolbe's glasses.

KOLBE (V.O.)

"O beauty ever ancient, ever new,
late have I loved You. You were
within me, but I was outside, and
there I searched for You.

2) The ten cram down narrow stairs into a basement hallway.

KOLBE (V.O.)

"You called, You shouted, You broke
through my deafness. You flashed,
You shone, You dispelled my
blindness.

3) The guard herds the prisoners into a single room. Locks
the door behind them. Darkness.

KOLBE (V.O.)

"You breathed your fragrance on me,
and I drew You in. I tasted You,
now I hunger for more. You touched
me, and now I burn for Your peace."

EXT. BEACH - 1364 BC - DAWN

The first rays of light peek over the far-off seashore. The
clouds above burn red and orange as if the sky were aflame.

Moses stands by the water line. Feels the wood in his hand.

MOSES

I didn't choose You, but You chose
me. So, to whatever end--

Raises his staff on high.

MOSES (CONT'D)

Your will be done.

Drives it into the wet sand.

MOSES (CONT'D)

I surrender. All I am is Yours.

He turns, staggers from the water as strong gusts whip him.
Looks up. Spots Miriam.

Dawn breaks to the east. The first light illuminates her
face. Wind tussles her hair.

Their eyes meet. All is calm.

If this is the end, it's all right. If this is the end--

MIRIAM

Moses. Moses, look. Look!

Moses turns back toward the sun. He stares. Eyes wide. Is it
even possible?

A small, muddy path of land stretches out from the beach across the sea to the opposite shore.

His staff, stuck in the sand, marks its entrance.

INT. GREYHOUND - NEWTON'S CABIN - AD 1748 - NIGHT

The water rises to Newton's neck. He closes his eyes.

The current lifts the crates from the floor. The ship again lists to its side. The crates float toward the outer hull.

THUD.

The gurgling stops. No more bubbles. Newton opens his eyes-- The rising has ceased.

EXT. JERUSALEM OUTSKIRTS - AD 29 - DAY

Simon sits against a building. Holds his head. Crowds mill by.

ELSEWHERE, John fights his way through the crowds. In the distance, Jesus nears the summit of the hill.

Jesus presses on, carrying his cross with renewed strength. Ahead: a hill with two crosses already erected atop it.

INT. GREYHOUND - NEWTON'S CABIN - AD 1748 - DAY

The ship grinds to a halt. Water drains from Newton's room.

EXT. GREYHOUND DECK - AD 1748 - DAY

Newton pulls himself onto the tilted deck. The *Greyhound* lies beached on the green Irish coast.

EXT. BEACH CAMP - 1364 BC - DAWN

Moses sprints through the remnants of camp. Finds Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu among those willing to fight Ramses. Aaron's army carries rudimentary swords, clubs-- even cookware.

MOSES

Aaron! It's happened! Your wonder's happened!

AARON

What?

MOSES
Look at the sea.

Aaron sidesteps Moses to look between tents. His eyes widen.

AARON
Get everyone to the path. We'll
hold Ramses off as long as
possible, all right?

MOSES
All right.

Aaron puts his hand on Moses's shoulder.

AARON
Take Miriam and go. Go, Moses!

I./E. NEWTON MANOR - AD 1748 - DAY

Newton stands before his father's door. Takes a breath.
Knocks. No answer. Finds the door unlocked.

The house is quiet, motionless. All furniture removed. Only
scattered papers left on the floor. Atop: his SHEET MUSIC.

EXT. CARTLETT MANOR - VERANDA - AD 1749 - DAY

Cartlett (22) sits in a wooden chair, watching the far-off
North Sea. She pens daydreams on blank pages upon her lap.

Newton stops in his tracks upon seeing her curly hair.
Watches her a moment. Takes a breath.

Shakes his head. Turns away. Pauses by the front door. Slips
an envelope through the Cartletts's letter plate.

EXT. GERMAN TRENCH - AD 1915 - DAY

Fredrich turns a corner. Edward's rifle trained at his back.

In a dug-out in the far wall, a gaunt Geoffrey huddles.
Albert spots them. Raises his rifle at Edward.

ALBERT
Halt.

Edward grips his rifle tight. Even he couldn't miss at this
range. Points to Geoffrey.

EDWARD
I've come for him.

Albert doesn't move. Holds his finger to his rifle's trigger.

Edward raises his rifle to Fredrich's head. Fredrich hyperventilates. Cries out.

EDWARD (CONT'D)
He's your friend, Albert. He's a worthy ransom. I'll let him go if you let my friend go.

The rifle shakes in Albert's hands.

ALBERT
One-to-one?

EDWARD
Fair.

Albert lowers his rifle. Pulls Geoffrey out from the dug-out.

Edward prods Fredrich in the back. Geoffrey and Fredrich switch places. Geoffrey gawks at Edward as if seeing a ghost.

Albert looks to them. Pain on his face.

ALBERT
Run. Run now.

Three loud BOOMS to the east.

EXT. BEACH CAMP - 1364 BC - DAWN

The clouds overhead burn off.

A great wave of Egyptian chariots pours down toward camp. Aaron strands firm. Readies his sword.

Moses sprints through camp. Spots Hannah and Miriam. Picks the girl up in his arms.

HANNAH
What are we doing?

MOSES
Leaving. Now.

With Hannah in one arm, he grabs Miriam's hand. They sprint toward the land bridge. Scores pour into the gap in the sea.

A chariot charges at Aaron. He ducks. Slashes at the driver.

Egyptians cut down Hebrews. They don't stand a chance.

AARON
Fall back! Fall back!

Aaron scrambles down the beach. Some of his followers as well. Others stay to fight and die.

Chariots gain.

INT. CARTLETT MANOR - ENTRANCE - AD 1749 - DAY

Cartlett picks Newton's letter off the floor. Opens it. Two pages: the first, a letter; the second, sheet music.

EXT. HILL 60 - EASTERN GERMAN TRENCHES - AD 1915 - CONTINUOUS

Edward and Geoffrey race back through the German trenches. Sprint through zig-zagging corridors. Wind at their back.

Mud flies up as shells explode around them.

If only that were all they were.

From their craters: great, grey-green nebulae of CHLORINE GAS stretch up into the air. Wind blowing them up the hill.

They swallow British soldiers in parallel trenches along the hillside. Bending, vomiting. Writhing in pain on the ground.

The cloud advances on Edward and Geoffrey as they run. An all-consuming monster nipping at their heels.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
*Amazing grace, how sweet the
sound...*

The cloud gains. Edward grimaces. Grabs at his hip. Stumbles. Falls. Geoffrey pulls him to his feet. Helps him run.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
...That saved a wretch like me...

EXT. HILL 60 - THE SUMMIT - AD 1915 - CONTINUOUS

Edward and Geoffrey crest the hill. Lawrence, Billy, and Daniel take off down the hill as Edward and Geoffrey follow.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
*...I once was lost, but now am
found...*

The cloud blows over the summit. Down along the trench.
Following Geoffrey and Edward. Close behind. Never relenting.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
...Was blind, but now I see...

Ahead, British soldiers force themselves back down the
western slope. Pushing each other. Trampling each other.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
*...'Twas grace that taught my heart
to fear...*

Edward, Geoffrey, Lawrence, Billy, and Daniel race past the
trampled soldiers. The cloud envelops the fallen.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
...And grace my fears relieved...

Germans in gas masks retake the Gatling gun atop the hill.
Allied soldiers climb from trenches, only to be mowed down.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
*...How precious did that grace
appear...*

Edward, Geoffrey, and the others turn a bend: Dead end.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
...The hour I first believed...

The gas cloud blocks off the way back and the way forward.
The southerly cloud advances down the trench.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
*...Through many dangers, toils, and
snares...*

Edward looks around frantically. Bullets echo everywhere.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
...I have already come...

Edward sees horrified faces: Geoffrey. Lawrence. Billy.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
*...'Tis grace hath brought me safe
thus far...*

Puts his arm around Geoffrey.

EDWARD
Never give up, Geoff. Never.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
...And grace will lead me home...

Edward steps back. Turns to the others.

EDWARD
 Make a break for it. I'll distract
 them. Go, damn it!

Edward walks as close to the cloud as possible. Trains his
 rifle on the hilltop. Fires.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
*...The earth shall soon dissolve
 like snow...*

Climbs up onto no-man's land. Runs toward the hill. Zig-
 zagging. Firing. Gatling gun bullets narrowly miss him.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
...The sun forbear to shine...

Geoffrey and the others climb out the back of the trench.
 Bolt toward the Allied line.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
*...But God, who called me here
 below...*

Gatling gun bullets follow Geoffrey's group. The bullets inch
 closer. Closer. Nick Daniel's foot.

CARTLETT (V.O.)
...Will be forever mine.

EXT. CALVARY SUMMIT - AD 29 - DAY

Roman guards lay Jesus back against the main mast of the
 cross. His crossbar slides into place.

They stretch out his arms. Hammer nails into Jesus's wrists.
 Through his ankles. Blood runs into the wood.

Jesus cries out in pain.

They raise his cross up vertical. Slide its base into a hole.
 Jesus looks to the assembled onlookers. Strains to breathe.

Mary nears the cross, her face red. Jesus meets her eyes.

JESUS
 Mother... Don't cry, mother...

Jesus spots John near Mary.

JESUS (CONT'D)
John... John.

John looks up at Jesus, his face on the verge of tears.

JESUS (CONT'D)
John... Behold your mother. Mother,
behold your son.

John puts his arm around Mary, who cries even harder.

EXT. LAND BRIDGE - 1364 BC - DAWN

Moses and Miriam run. Chariots pursue. Closing in. An Egyptian raises his sword to cut down Aaron. Swings.

The chariot wheels catch on the mud. Its horse rears back.

Moses and Miriam run up the slope of the opposite beach.

EXT. CALVARY SUMMIT - AD 29 - DAY

Jesus looks out over Jerusalem. Over the world. To the sky. With one last breath:

JESUS
It is accomplished.

Jesus leans his head back. Closes his eyes.

EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - DREAM - MORNING

Jesus puts his bloody hand to the bride's face.

She smiles, beaming. They kiss.

The guests applaud silently.

FADE TO WHITE

INT. AUSCHWITZ STARVATION CHAMBER - AD 1941 - DAY

DAYS LATER, light floods the room. Nine prisoners on the ground, almost as if sleeping. Kolbe hunches against the back wall. Skin barely stretched over bone.

From the light, the silhouette of Fritzscher emerges. He carries a syringe of CARBOLIC ACID. Bends down next to Kolbe.

FRITZSCH

Still think your God will save you,
priest?

Kolbe looks at Fritzsich. Whispers--

KOLBE

Even now.

Kolbe smiles. Holds out his arm.

Fritzsich jabs the needle into Kolbe's arm. Presses the
plunger. Acid races through Kolbe's veins.

Kolbe's head rolls to the side. He dies, a smile on his face.

EXT. NO MAN'S LAND - AD 1915 - DAY

No more bullets. The Gatling gun nest lies empty.

Geoffrey races back across no man's land. Finds Edward lying
in the mud. Blood oozes from his stomach from multiple bullet
wounds. Edward wheezes. Coughs blood.

Geoffrey stoops down to his friend. Chokes on words stuck in
his throat. Edward cracks a smile. Clutches at his necklace.

EDWARD

I saw it, Geoff. I saw it...
Peace... And if I could find it...
Maybe you can... Maybe they all
can... Maybe one day... it will
engulf the world... Maybe...

Edward's grip goes limp. The light gone from his eyes.

INT. TRAIN CAR - AD 1945 - DAY

Franz sits with dozens of prisoners. Stares ahead, depressed.

FRANZ (V.O.)

Why? Why would he do that for me?

EXT. SACHSENHAUSEN CAMP - AD 1945 - DAY

Franz pushes a cement mixer. A RUMBLING sounds from the east.
Guards flee. Prisoners shout with joy.

Tanks break through the fence around the camp. Other vehicles
follow. Aloft: the red and gold flag of the SOVIET UNION.

INT. ARGYLE - CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS - AD 1750 - DAY

Newton holds a letter from Cartlett. Tears it open. It reads:

CARTLETT (V.O.)
My dear John, it is with my deepest
sympathies that I must inform you
that your father drowned in an
accident on Hudson's Bay...

Newton crumples the paper. Tries to hold back.

EXT. PORT OF ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA - DOCKS - AD 1750 - DAY

Newton wanders without direction. Aimless. Before him, the
white marble of ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL.

INT. ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL - AD 1750 - DAY

Light streams through stained glass. Newton looks up. Tears
run down his face.

NEWTON (V.O.)
Can You take this? Can You take it
all? Burn, consume, melt it away.
Bury its ashes. Take these tears to
water it, so we can grow anew.

INT. FRITZSCH'S HOUSE - AD 1945 - DAY

Fritzsich hurries from window to window, watching as Soviet
tanks roll through BERLIN. A red hammer and sickle flag rises
on a distant rooftop, replacing the Nazi banner.

Soldiers' footsteps outside. Beating on his door. Fritzsich
snatches his pistol off the table. Searches for a way out.

Puts the gun to his head. Pulls the trigger.

INT. HOSS'S HOUSE - AD 1945 - DAY

Hoss sits at a table, downing dark German beer. A gun waits
next to his left hand.

His front door busts in. Soviet soldiers stream inside. Hoss
sets his glass down. Raises his hands.

INT. NUREMBERG TRIAL COURTROOM - AD 1946 - DAY

Hoss sits amid a court box full of former Nazi officers.

A long table of judges sits high above them. The central judge swings his gavel down.

INT. PAWIAK PRISON - AD 1947 - DAY

Wearing prisoner's garb and chains around his wrists, Hoss is led by a guard to a cell where a CATHOLIC PRIEST awaits.

Hoss enters the cell. The guard slams the door behind him. Hoss sits in the chair facing the priest. Lowers his head.

PRIEST

In the name of the Father, the Son,
and the Holy Spirit.

Both the priest and Hoss sign themselves with the cross.

HOSS

Bless me Father, for I have sinned.
It's been over thirty years since
my last confession. Long ago
stopped believing. Turned against
the Church for what she did to me.
But that's no excuse.

EXT. AUSCHWITZ YARD - AD 1947 - DAY

Hoss trudges toward the gallows.

HOSS (V.O.)

I could've stopped it at any time,
but I didn't. I just pressed on. I
doubt any man could forgive me for
what I've done.

The executioner places the noose around Hoss's neck. Pulls the lever. Hoss drops. Neck snaps.

INT. PAWIAK PRISON - AD 1947 - DAY

The priest shifts in his seat.

PRIEST

Then why ask me here?

Hoss looks up at the priest, tears in his eyes.

HOSS

I once saw a man willingly die for someone he barely knew, who by all accounts hated him. Is it too selfish to think someone once died for me?

EXT. CHATTENDEN SHORE - AD 1751 - DAY

Newton watches the River Medway from the beach. Dressed in a black funeral suit. A salty breeze caresses his face.

Cartlett joins him in a long black dress.

NEWTON

Nine years. I can barely remember his face. Just the back of his head the night I slipped away. He'll never know how much I regret that.

CARTLETT

He didn't hold it against you.

NEWTON

How's that?

CARTLETT

When they first found your ship, he came by and spoke with my aunt. He was different than any time I'd seen him before: relieved. Said his son was dead, but had come to life again, and that was worth anything, even being shipped off to Canada for the debts he incurred.

NEWTON

All that time I hated him. I only returned to see you, Mary, not him. You're the reason I survived, you and God, but he's the reason I'm not still a slave on that island. I knew my world would make sense if you were in it, but now I don't know if I want it to. I've done things I regret. Hurt many people. But maybe that's why God had mercy on me-- because only someone as wretched as me could have so much good left undone. I don't know.

Newton turns to Cartlett.

NEWTON (CONT'D)

But I know one thing: This life is cruel and beautiful, but all that it is I want to share with you. Will you be the Ireland in this Atlantic storm? Will you be my wife?

CARTLETT

If God spared you to do His good, then I'd be happy to do it with you.

Cartlett takes Newton's hand. Leans in, and they kiss.

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1917 - DAY

Geoffrey, Billy, and Lawrence gather their belongings into bags as fresh deployments file into the trench. Private CLIVE LEWIS (19) stops at Geoffrey's dug out.

GEOFFREY

You my relief?

LEWIS

Looks like it.

Geoffrey stuffs the last of his things into his bag before spotting Edward's necklace on the ground. Picks it up.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

Did your necklace actually help at all? Seems a bit pointless to me.

Billy smirks. Gives Lawrence a knowing look.

GEOFFREY

It's not mine. It belonged to a good friend. Died at Hill 60.

LEWIS

Did him a fat lot of good, then. God doesn't spend much time in places like this.

Geoffrey rubs the necklace. Lawrence turns to them.

LAWRENCE

My grandmum told me something once.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Edward opens his eyes on a stone slab in a desert cave.

Light streams through the entrance. He climbs up rocks.
Climbing toward the entrance. Climbing toward the light.

EXT. DESERT VALLEY - CONTINUOUS

A wide desert valley stretches before Edward. Sun setting over distant mountains. Above, the red and purple remnants of a SUPERNOVA shine among stars too bright for the sun to dim.

A great mass of people in white traverses the valley floor. Carry palm branches. Flowers sprout and bloom in their wake.

LAWRENCE (V.O.)

"...People always talk about great suffering as if no future happiness could make up for it..."

EXT. VALLEY FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Edward staggers toward the procession. The crowd stops.

LAWRENCE (V.O.)

"...not knowing that heaven, once attained, will work backward in time to turn even their greatest sorrow into joy."

Familiar faces at the front of the crowd: Benjamin Warner. Robert Pengelly. They watch Edward as he comes.

A man in a wedding suit steps forward. Edward stops in his tracks. Falls prostrate to the ground.

The man bends down. Holds out his scarred hand.

EXT. TRENCH - AD 1917 - DAY

Geoffrey looks to Lawrence, then to Lewis.

GEOFFREY

I don't know if it's true. If any of it is. But I'd like to think so. I hope wherever he is that bloody hill looks a green garden, flowering under a clear sky.

EXT. CHATHAM DOCKYARD - AD 1751 - DAY

Newton and Cartlett approach the ARGYLE. Pass three slaves being bid on by a crowd. For a second, one's almost Akio.

EXT. NEAR THE SEA OF GALILEE - AD 29 - LATE AFTERNOON

Simon, John, and Mary walk ahead of other disciples toward Galilee. Defeat all over their faces.

JOHN

Was it all a dream, Simon?

Simon puts his arm around John. Smiles weakly at him.

EXT. SINAI BEACH - 1364 BC - DAY

The Red Sea submerges the land bridge. The trio stands amid a thousand Hebrew slaves, now forever beyond Ramses's reach. They smile. Hug each other.

MIRIAM

Where's Aaron?

Moses looks around. They search around the beach, looking for him. Find him sitting by the waves. Nadab and Abihu near by.

HANNAH

Aaron!

Hannah runs over to Aaron. He grabs her. Aaron looks to his siblings, relieved and confused. Stands as Moses approaches.

AARON

I don't know what I'd say if I could.

EXT. OUTSIDE RAWA MAZOWIECKA - AD 1946 - DAY

Franz (45) rides in the back of a pick-up truck. Ahead, a low, red castle by a river.

EXT. RAWA CASTLE COURTYARD - AD 1946 - DAY

Refugees huddle in the muddy courtyard of RAWA CASTLE as rain falls. Franz crosses under the portcullis. Desperately surveys the refugees. A woman stands across the courtyard.

Franz runs to HELENA GAJOWNICZEK (40s).

They collapse into each other, hugging with all their strength. Franz grins for the first time in years.

EXT. STEAM SHIP DECK - AD 1917 - DUSK

Geoffrey watches as the French coastline fades from view.
Wearing Edward's necklace.

A letter addressed to Maggie in his hands.

EXT. COAST OF WEST AFRICA - AD 1752 - EVENING

The *Argyle* between Clowe's island and continental Africa.
Cartlett watches a dinghy run ashore on the mainland.

On the shore, Akio walks toward the jungle. A pack over his
shoulder. Turns back to Newton.

AKIO

Why are you doing this?

NEWTON

Especially you deserve better.

Akio smiles. Slips away into the underbrush.

LATER, The *Argyle* sails out into the open Atlantic.

NEWTON (V.O.)

God moves in mysterious ways, His
miracles to perform. He plants His
footstep in the sea and rides upon
the storm.

EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - AD 29 - DUSK

Simon and John walk along the beach. Simon unfocused.

JOHN

Simon. Look.

John goes racing off. Simon looks up. Ahead, a man runs his
scarred hand along Simon's boat.

Simon walks staggers forward, mouth agape.

Jesus turns to him. Simon falls to his knees. Laughs, unable
to believe his eyes.

EXT. MOUNT NEBO - 1324 BC - DAY

Footsteps climb a rocky path. With each step, rocks give way
to shrubs. To grass. To flowers.

Moses (67) helps Miriam (72) over rocks. Ahead, Aaron (71) awaits. At the summit, they become their younger selves. Miriam puts her hand on Moses's shoulder.

Below, the lush Jordan Valley spreads out in every direction. The surviving Hebrew refugees pour into the valley.

EXT. BASE OF MOUNT NEBO - 1324 BC - DAY

Hannah (48) carries her similarly-freckled daughter (6) amid the sea of people. Points forward. Whispers inaudibly.

The young girl stares ahead. Eyes filled with the promise of a new beginning.

A new life-- Unafraid. Unbound.

Limitless.

CUT TO BLACK

WRITTEN: John Newton was ordained an Anglican priest in 1757. John and Mary dedicated their lives to freeing people from spiritual and physical slavery. Newton mentored MP William Wilberforce, who worked to finally pass the Slave Trade Act of 1807, ending the slave trade in the British Empire. Newton died nine months later, to be buried beside Mary in London.

Franz Gajowniczek returned to Maximilian Kolbe's friary and told Brother Ivo of the sacrifice which saved his life. On October 10, 1982, Franz was present in Rome when Pope John Paul II canonized Kolbe as a saint and martyr of charity in the Catholic Church. Franz lived in Poland with his wife Helena until her death in 1977. He died in 1995, survived by his second wife Janina and grandchildren.

Karl Fritzsch is believed to have committed suicide as Nazi Germany fell. Rudolf Hoss was hanged in 1947 for the murder of over three million Jews, Poles, and others. He wrote a letter asking forgiveness and returned to his native Catholic Church just days prior.

The story of Edward Pengelly and Geoffrey Warner is based on an amalgamation of British soldiers from the First World War. Notable among them is Edward Warner, who fought at the First Battle of Ypres, partook in the Christmas Armistice of 1914, and died during the German gas attacks at Hill 60. Millions like him died nameless, their stories known only to God.

FADE OUT.