

JESUS ON TRIAL

The Original Stageplay



CHRISTIAN PLAYWRIGHT

COPYRIGHT & LICENSE

(STANDARD PERFORMANCE LICENSE – UP TO 3 PERFORMANCES)

Copyright © 2017. Cleveland O. McLeish/HCP Book Publishing. All rights reserved. This play script (the “Work”) is protected by copyright laws and international copyright treaties. Purchase of this Work does not transfer ownership of copyright. The author/publisher retains all rights not expressly granted below.

License Grant (Non-Exclusive; Non-Transferable)

Upon purchase from christianplaywright.org, and subject to full payment, the purchaser (“Licensee”) is granted a limited, non-exclusive, non-transferable license to use the Work under the following terms:

1. Permitted Use

- Licensee may produce and present the Work in **up to three (3) live performances** during the license term.
- Performances are authorized only for the purchasing entity [**i.e. Organization/Church/School/Individual**].
- License term is 24 months from the date of purchase.
- Licensee is allowed to Record, film, livestream, broadcast, or distribute audio/video of performances (including online streaming and social media), **providing the playwright/publisher is notified**.

2. Rehearsal Copy Permission (Internal Use Only)

Licensee may reproduce and distribute copies of the Work **only as needed for internal production use** (e.g., cast, crew, director, stage manager). No copy may be sold, posted publicly, emailed beyond the production team, or uploaded to public/shared repositories.

3. Adaptation Permission (Limited)

Licensee may make reasonable cuts or minor adaptations **solely for the authorized production** (e.g., time, casting constraints, contextual references), provided that:

- The core storyline and message are not distorted in a way that harms the integrity of the Work; and
- Any adapted version may not be published, licensed to others, or performed beyond the scope of this license; and
- All derivative rights remain the sole property of the author/publisher.

4. Prohibited Uses (Without Written Permission)

Unless separately licensed in writing by HCP Book Publishing, Licensee may not:

- Post any portion of the Work online (including websites, Google Drive links, file-sharing platforms, or social media).
- Sell, sublicense, or distribute the script (or adapted script) to any third party.
- Use the Work (in whole or in part) to train AI systems, upload into public AI datasets, or publish substantial excerpts through automated tools in a way that enables reconstruction of the script.

5. Author Credit (Required)

All programs, posters, and publicity must include the credit line: **“Written by Cleveland O. McLeish. Used by permission of HCP Book Publishing.”** Website credit (optional but encouraged): **christianplaywright.org**

6. Performance Reporting

Within ten (10) days after the final performance, Licensee agrees to report performance dates and estimated attendance to **info@hcpbookpublishing.com**.

7. Breach & Termination

Any unauthorized reproduction, distribution, recording, posting, or performance constitutes infringement and immediately terminates this license. Upon termination, Licensee must cease all use and destroy/delete all copies not required to be retained by law.

For additional performances, additional venues, or large-scale/ticketed events, contact: HCP Book Publishing @ info@hcpbookpublishing.com or WhatsApp 876-352-2650.

Sample Script



SCENE I

LIGHTS UP

Defense enters carrying his briefcase. Jesus is close behind him. They sit at the table SR. Defense leans close to Jesus.

DEFENSE: I know you are God's son and you have much to say, but please let me do all the talking.

JESUS: Ok.

DEFENSE: Just ok?

JESUS: As a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.

DEFENSE: Still quoting scriptures I see. Well, be on your guard. The prosecutor is very cunning, very wordy, and very influential. I've seen him at work. In this very courtroom, I have seen him convince a man that he was a woman.

PROSECUTORS VOICE: You remembered that counselor?

Prosecutor enters. He takes his place at the table SL.

PROSECUTOR: That was a long time ago. You should let bygones be bygones.

Prosecutor comes over and extends his hand to Jesus.

PROSECUTOR: And you must be Jesus.

Jesus shakes his hand.

PROSECUTOR: Your reputation precedes you.

JESUS: Likewise.

PROSECUTOR: Yes...If what I have heard is true then we are in for a wild ride these next few days. I don't know about you, but I'm really excited.

DEFENSE: You are also early. That's not like you.

PROSECUTOR: I had to make an exception for this case.

Bailiff enters the courtroom.

PROSECUTOR: May the best man win.

Prosecutor goes to his desk.

BAILIFF: All rise.

Everyone (including the audience) should stand.

Judge enters and casually strolls to his high-rise desk.

He settles himself and opens his notebooks, adjusts his glasses on his nose, and clears his throat.

JUDGE: Be seated.

Everyone sits.

JUDGE: In all my years governing a courtroom, I have never seen anything quite like this. Many have come claiming to be many things, but never a son of the Sovereign God. I am going to ask the Defendant and his attorney to stand.

Defense stands with Jesus.

JUDGE: Jesus of Nazareth, your accusers have brought many charges against you today. Malicious destruction of property, blasphemy against the Most High God, disturbing the peace, initiating a riot, disrespecting religious leaders and other men of authority, and influencing people to disregard the Mosaic Laws. Of these charges, how do you plead?

DEFENSE: Guilty and not guilty, Your Honor.

JUDGE: I was asking the defendant.

DEFENSE: I am his attorney, Your Honor.

JUDGE: This is my courtroom. You will have your chance to speak, counselor, but I would like to hear this from him.

Pause.

JUDGE: These are some serious charges. Do you have anything to say in your own defense?

Silence.

JUDGE: Interesting. You do realize that I have the power to hold you and the power to release you?

More silence. The judge shakes his head and motions for the defense to proceed.

DEFENSE: You will see that this case will speak for itself, Your Honor.

JUDGE: I hope so, for your client's sake. Your opening statement, please.

Defense motions for Jesus to sit and begins his opening statement.

DEFENSE: Your Honor, I'm only stating what I expect the evidence to prove. We would want to believe that the events of these past few weeks are new, shocking, and unexpected...but that is not the case.

PROSECUTOR: Objection, Your Honor. The defense is speculating.

JUDGE: Overruled.

DEFENSE: Every natural born Jew knew that this day would come. The ancient scriptures speak of it. Isaiah nine verse six: For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

PROSECUTOR: Objection, Your Honor. The defense is assuming.

JUDGE: Overruled.

Judge seems a bit agitated with the prosecution.

Defense continues.

DEFENSE: Your Honor, there have been many other signs Jesus has performed in the presence of his disciples, which have not been written. But these things have been written in order that those who have seen might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you might have life in his name. There have been teachings, miracles, and personal interactions from Jesus' ministry to convince you that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God. Is it really that hard to believe that we are witnesses to the manifestation of these very words in this man sitting right here with us today? If you've already made up your mind that Jesus is not who he claims to be, then there would be no point in this trial. If you're like most, then you've already heard, directly or indirectly, the case against Jesus. But you've probably never seriously considered the case **for** Jesus. Are you ready to be objective? Will you listen intently to the totality of what the defense has to offer before making a judgment? If you are a nonbeliever, are you prepared to set your predetermined perceptions about Jesus aside so that you can take into account the

witnesses called to the stand today with clarity? Ultimately it is your choice to hear the presented evidence, listen objectively, and then make an assessment. Is Jesus the Son of God, the Messiah as he claims to be, or is he a liar, or a lunatic? Today's presentation of the claims of Jesus won't leave you with any other option. Either he is the Son of God and deserving of our commitment, or he's a con man deserving of our judgment, or maybe he's insane and deserving only of our pity. I feel confident that through the evidence presented, you will see the truth and you will find not an ounce of guilt in this man, Jesus. Jesus has done nothing outside of the will of his father in heaven and for this reason, he should walk out of this courtroom a free man.

Defense takes his seat.

Prosecutor gets up buttoning his jacket.

PROSECUTOR: Good day, Judge.

Judge nods in response.

PROSECUTOR: You are looking quite sharp today.

JUDGE: Get on with it, counselor.

PROSECUTOR: What is the significance of quoting scriptures in this courtroom? I am looking at this strapping man sitting here, and I don't see any government resting on his shoulders, and isn't his name Jesus of Nazareth? Not wonderful, counselor, mighty God, Eternal Father, or Prince of Peace. So, the most obvious question to ask is, am I the only one who was wondering what the Defense was talking about? The defense speaks of truth. The truth is, Jesus was originally tried and condemned by highly respected religious leaders, and in their very midst, for all to hear, Jesus admitted that He was the Christ, the very Son of God. Do you understand what that means? It means that Jesus was publicly claiming to be God Himself! That fact alone calls His character into question! You see, Jesus is not merely a preacher of God who gives us instructions for living a holy life. No. No, he claims to be the very Son of God. He claims that those who sin must trust in

him for salvation. No mere preacher would say such things! The more you hear about this man, Jesus, the more you will acknowledge that He is not the Son of God. The Son of God wouldn't mislead his followers. You will see that this man is a foolish and wicked person to teach such things, and that those who believe in him are deceived victims of His malicious teaching. With that said, with the intention of this being a fair trial, you will hear witnesses who wish to defend Jesus. But I'm not worried. These witnesses that you will be hearing from are the people that actually know Jesus, people who have heard Him preach, and were supposedly healed by Him. And let me tell you, these witnesses are not exactly the kind of people you'd want coming to your defense! Be prepared, these are not the upstanding citizens the defense will try to tell you they are. Some of these witnesses have lived contemptible lives. Be prepared to listen to their testimonies with a judicious ear. They will try to persuade you that the claims Jesus has made are true!

Goes to his desk to have a drink of water and retrieves a file.

PROSECUTOR: I have taken the liberty of gathering a petition that has been signed by almost the entire Jerusalem population.

Prosecutor hands the Judge the file. He opens it and begins skipping through the pages.

PROSECUTOR: We just need the signature of a certified Judge to make it a done deal.

Prosecutor pauses and waits smugly at the Judge's desk.

JUDGE: You want me to sign a petition to have this man put to death?

PROSECUTOR: Yes, Your Honor. Death by crucifixion.

JUDGE: He has not yet been tried, counselor.

PROSECUTOR: He is claiming to be the Son of God.

JUDGE: And....

PROSECUTOR: It is the will of the people.

JUDGE: This is my courtroom.

Prosecutor interrupts the Judge.

PROSECUTOR: Surely such blasphemy is worthy of the same punishment as murderers and thieves.

JUDGE: How about we let the case speak for itself.

PROSECUTOR: As I'm sure it will. I simply wanted to save us some time.

JUDGE: Duly noted. *(Gives back the file)*

Prosecutor takes his seat.

JUDGE: Who wants to call the first witness?

Prosecutor gestures for the defense to go ahead.

PROSECUTOR: Knock yourself out, chap.

Defense stands.

DEFENSE: I call to the stand Mary – The Mother of Jesus.

Mary enters and goes to the stand.

DEFENSE: Will you tell the truth?

MARY: Yes.

DEFENSE: Please have a seat. *(Pause)* For the records, could you state your name and relation to the defendant?

MARY: I am Mary and I am the proud mother of Jesus.

DEFENSE: *(Addresses the judge)* If anybody knows this man, Jesus, it would be His mother. *(Turns back to Mary)* Can you help us to understand the type of person He is?

MARY: *(Mary smiles softly)* That may take a lifetime.

DEFENSE: Tell the court about the things that stand out most in your mind.

MARY: I remember the day He was born.

PROSECUTOR: Objection, Your Honor. Do we really have time for a history lesson?

DEFENSE: Your Honor, background is essential in understanding a person's character and motives.

JUDGE: I agree. Overruled.

DEFENSE: Mary, please continue.

MARY: Well, it is not exactly a mother's dream to bring her child into the world in a stable. It wasn't exactly what you would envision for a king. But the night was majestic in other ways. We had our perfect baby and it seemed like the world stood still. It all fell together like it was meant to be. Destined. And then we were visited by the Shepherds and heard about their remarkable journey. I tried to remember every detail, even as I wondered what this precious child would become. But even in the circumstances that surrounded his birth, it was impossible not to see something beyond us at work. And then He grew into such an amazing young man. He even managed to captivate scholars at times. Like the time we lost him when he was twelve.

Copyright © 2017 Cleveland O. McLeish / HCP Book Publishing. All rights reserved. This Work is protected by copyright. Purchase does not transfer ownership.

Licensed Use (if purchased with performance rights or via subscription): The Licensee is granted a limited, non-exclusive, non-transferable license to produce this play under the selected license terms (including performance count and organization). Internal rehearsal copying is permitted for cast/crew only. Recording, livestreaming, broadcast, or public online distribution is allowed with proper notification.

Required credit: **“Written by Cleveland O. McLeish. Used by permission of HCP Book Publishing.”** Visit www.christianplaywright.org to purchase full script with/without performance rights.

Purchase / Licensing Options

Option 1 — Reading Script (Print on Amazon)

Reading Script (Print Book – Amazon)

- ✓ A print copy shipped by Amazon for reading and reference.
- ✓ Print book ordered and shipped through Amazon.
- ✓ Ideal for personal reading, study, or review.
- ✓ No performance rights included.

Performance, adaptation, reproduction, and distribution rights are not included with this option.

Option 2 — Digital Script (Reading Only)

Digital Script (PDF – Reading Only)

- ✓ A digital copy delivered by email for reading and reference.
- ✓ Delivered automatically by email after purchase.
- ✓ Ideal for personal reading, study, or review.
- ✓ No performance rights included.

No production, performance, adaptation, or distribution rights are included.

Option 3 — Digital Script + Standard Performance License (Up to 3 Performances)

Digital Script + Standard Performance License (Up to 3 Live Performances)

- ✓ Best for churches, schools, and theatre groups ready to produce the play.
- ✓ PDF script delivered by email
- ✓ Up to three (3) live performances for one organization
- ✓ Permission to share rehearsal copies internally with cast/crew.

- ✓ Limited adaptation permission for your production (cuts/edits as needed).
- ✓ Recording/streaming included.

Option 4 — All-Access Subscription (Monthly / Yearly)

- ✓ All-Access Subscription (Cancel Anytime). For organizations producing multiple plays per year.
- ✓ Access to the full script library while subscription is active.
- ✓ Performance, adaptation, and internal rehearsal distribution permitted during active subscription.
- ✓ Ongoing access to new releases added to the library.

Rights remain active only while the subscription is active; access and permissions end upon cancellation.

Option 5 — Performance Rights Upgrade (Already Own the Script)

- ✓ Performance Rights Upgrade (For Existing Script Owners). Upgrade if you already purchased a reading script and now want to stage the play.
- ✓ Up to three (3) live performances for one organization.
- ✓ Internal rehearsal copy permission included.
- ✓ Limited adaptation permission included.

Proof of script ownership may be requested (Amazon order receipt or purchase confirmation).

Need more than 3 performances, request a custom license @ info@hcpbookpublishing.com

FAQ

Licensing FAQ

- **Do reading scripts include performance rights?**

No. Reading scripts (print or digital) are for reading and reference only.

- **What does “Up to 3 performances” mean?**

You may stage the play up to three (3) times under one license for one producing organization.

- **Can we make rehearsal copies for cast and crew?**

Yes, licensed productions may share copies internally with cast/crew for rehearsal and production use only.

- **Can we edit the script for our context?**

Licensed productions may make reasonable cuts and minor adaptations for their specific production. Publishing or distributing an adapted script is not permitted.

- **Can we livestream or record the performance?**

Yes, but please notify the publisher/playwright first.

- **Can we perform the play at multiple venues or campuses?**

Multiple venues/campuses may require an expanded license. Contact us for a custom quote.

- **What if we want more than 3 performances?**

You can purchase additional performance blocks or request an expanded license.

- **How do we receive the script?**

Digital purchases are delivered automatically by email after checkout.