

ΕΝ ΤΩΙ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΙ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΖΩΡΑΙΟΥ

In the Name of the Nazarene¹

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΛΟΥΚΑΣ

ΙΕΡΕΙΣ

ΠΕΤΡΟΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ (ΛΑΟΣ ΙΣΡΑΗΛ)

The scene is set in Jerusalem, ten to a dozen weeks after the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth by the Roman governor at the instigation of the Jewish religious authorities.

Led by Peter, the disciples of Jesus have been inspired to continue the mission of their teacher, whom they now proclaim as the Messiah, the divinely-anointed ('christos') Saviour King, foretold by the prophets.

Peter has just performed his first recorded miracle (the healing by faith of a man who was born a cripple) and preached to a large crowd in the city. He told them that God 'gave the highest honour to his servant, Jesus' and 'raised him from the dead'; that anyone who calls on God in his name shall have his sins forgiven; and indeed that salvation is to be found in Jesus alone (hence, not simply in the strict observance of Mosaic Law, as interpreted by the priests and doctors of law).² Fighting words...

That evening, on the orders of the high priests, Peter and John are arrested and put under guard until the following day.

¹ The play is a dramatisation of the fourth chapter (vv. 1-31) of the Acts of the Apostles.

It was conceived as a sequel to *The Conquering Hero Comes* (which was taken from Psalm 24, 7-10; cf. notes 3 and 4 below). In other words, it was first intended as a tool for the teaching of Ancient Greek by direct method to beginners at a primary school, providing a simple but powerful text, more than 2000 years old, for them to learn and perform in the original language. In its shorter recension, it would be suitable for the same class who gave the premiere of the earlier play.

The text has been abridged, but apart from the replacement of the participle 'saying' to the finite form 'you who said' in verse 25, the only changes are to the punctuation (minimal) and to the lay-out: the lines have been printed as free verse to assist declamation; and the names of the speakers have been added in English. Verse numbers are given at the beginning of each speech.

² The *didascalia* draws on the first three chapters of Acts. The estimate of 'ten to a dozen' weeks allows enough time (after the elapse of seven weeks from the Crucifixion down to the feast of Pentecost (2.1; cf. 1. 3) for the first period of growth during which the new community rose in numbers 'day by day' (2. 47) from the original 120 (cf. 1. 15) via the arrival of an extra 3000 (cf. 2. 41) to the present figure of 5000 (4. 4).

The phrase 'God did the highest honour to' (3. 13) is in keeping with the cautious wording of Peter's earlier statement on the day of Pentecost itself, that Jesus was 'a man singled out by God and made known to you by miracles, portents, and signs, which God worked among you through him' (2. 22). But it was provocative to claim that the disciples were able to 'forgive sins' through Baptism in Jesus's name (2. 38), as we know from the opening of the Gospel of Mark (1. 5-6.)

Peter has twice already asserted that Jesus is the anointed Messiah, prophesied by Moses, David, and all the prophets (2. 25 ff. and 3. 17), although it is clear that his present understanding of the Messiah is still that of a king who will 'establish once again the sovereignty of Israel' (cf. 1. 6). But Jesus is not yet the 'Son of God'. His followers are recognised by the priests simply as 'having been with Jesus' (4. 14); and Peter pins him down as the 'Nazarene' — hence my title.

ΕΝ ΤΩΙ ΟΝΟΜΑΤΙ ΤΟΥ ΝΑΖΩΡΑΙΟΥ

In the Name of the Nazarene

STORYTELLER (LUKE)

¹Οἱ ἱερεῖς καὶ ὁ στρατηγὸς τοῦ ἱεροῦ
³ἐπέβαλον αὐτοῖς τὰς χεῖρας
καὶ ἔθεντο εἰς τήρησιν εἰς τὴν αὔριον·
ἦν γὰρ ἑσπέρα ἤδη.

⁵Πολλοὶ δὲ τῶν ἀκουσάντων τὸν λόγον ἐπίστευσαν,
καὶ ἐγενήθη ὁ ἀριθμὸς τῶν ἀνδρῶν ὡς χιλιάδες πέντε.

⁶Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν αὔριον συναχθῆναι αὐτῶν
τοὺς ἄρχοντας καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους καὶ τοὺς γραμματεῖς
ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ,
καὶ Ἄννας ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς, καὶ Καϊάφας,
⁷καὶ στήσαντες αὐτοὺς ἐν τῷ μέσῳ ἐπυνθάνοντο·

THE PRIESTS

⁷Ἐν ποίᾳ δυνάμει ἢ ἐν ποίῳ ὀνόματι ἐποιήσατε τοῦτο ὑμεῖς;

PETER

⁸Ἀρχοντες τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ πρεσβύτεροι,
¹⁰γνωστὸν ἔστω πᾶσιν ὑμῖν, καὶ παντὶ τῷ λαῷ Ἰσραὴλ,
ὅτι ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου,
ὃν ὑμεῖς ἐσταυρώσατε,
ὃν ὁ θεὸς ἡγείρεν ἐκ νεκρῶν.

¹²Καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἄλλῳ οὐδενὶ ἢ σωτηρία.

STORYTELLER

¹³Θεωροῦντες δὲ τὴν τοῦ Πέτρου παρρησίαν καὶ Ἰωάννου,
καὶ καταλαβόμενοι
ὅτι ἄνθρωποι ἀγράμματοί εἰσιν καὶ ἰδιῶται,
ἐθαύμαζον,
ἐπεγίνωσκόν τε αὐτοὺς ὅτι σὺν τῷ Ἰησοῦ ἦσαν.

¹⁵Κελεύσαντες δὲ αὐτοὺς ἔξω τοῦ συνεδρίου ἀπελθεῖν,
συνέβαλλον πρὸς ἀλλήλους, λέγοντες·

THE PRIESTS

¹⁶Τί ποιήσωμεν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις τούτοις;
ὅτι μὲν γὰρ γνωστὸν σημεῖον γέγονεν δι' αὐτῶν
πᾶσιν τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν Ἱερουσαλὴμ φανερόν,
καὶ οὐ δυνάμεθα ἀρνείσθαι.

¹⁷Ἄλλ' ἵνα μὴ ἐπὶ πλεῖον διανεμηθῇ εἰς τὸν λαόν,
ἀπειλησώμεθα αὐτοῖς
μηκέτι λαλεῖν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι τούτῳ μηδενὶ ἀνθρώπων.

STORYTELLER

¹⁸Καὶ καλέσαντες αὐτοὺς παρήγγειλαν τὸ καθόλου
μὴ διδάσκειν ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

¹⁹Ὁ δὲ Πέτρος καὶ Ἰωάννης ἀποκριθέντες εἶπον πρὸς αὐτούς·

PETER

¹⁹Εἰ δίκαιόν ἐστιν ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ
ὕμῶν ἀκούειν μᾶλλον ἢ τοῦ θεοῦ,
κρίνατε·
²⁰οὐ δυνάμεθα γὰρ ἡμεῖς
ἂ εἶδαμεν καὶ ἠκούσαμεν μὴ λαλεῖν.

STORYTELLER

²¹Οἱ δὲ ἀπέλυσαν αὐτούς, διὰ τὸν λαόν,
ὅτι πάντες ἐδόξαζον τὸν θεὸν ἐπὶ τῷ γεγονότι.

²³Ἀπολυθέντες δὲ ἦλθον πρὸς τοὺς ἰδίους
καὶ ἀπήγγειλαν
ὅσα πρὸς αὐτοὺς οἱ ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ οἱ πρεσβύτεροι εἶπαν.

²⁴Οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες
ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἤραν φωνὴν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν καὶ εἶπαν·

THE PEOPLE (*in prayer to God*)

²⁴Δέσποτα,
σὺ ὁ ποιήσας τὸν οὐρανὸν
καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς.³

²⁵σὺ ὁ τοῦ στόματος Δαυὶδ εἶπας,
“παρέστησαν οἱ βασιλεῖς τῆς γῆς
καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες συνήχθησαν
κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ”.⁴

²⁷συνήχθησαν γὰρ ἐπ' ἀληθείας ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ
ἐπὶ τὸν ἅγιον παῖδά σου Ἰησοῦν, ὃν ἔχρισας,
Ἡρώδης τε καὶ Πόντιος Πιλάτος
σὺν ἔθνεσιν καὶ λαοῖς Ἰσραήλ,
ποιῆσαι ὅσα ἡ χεὶρ σου καὶ ἡ βουλή προώρισεν γενέσθαι.

²⁹Καὶ τὰ νῦν, Κύριε, ἔπιδε ἐπὶ τὰς ἀπειλὰς αὐτῶν
καὶ δὸς τοῖς δούλοις σου
μετὰ παρρησίας πάσης λαλεῖν τὸν λόγον σου.

STORYTELLER

³¹Καὶ δεηθέντων αὐτῶν
ἐσαλεύθη ὁ τόπος ἐν ᾧ ἦσαν συνηγμένοι,
καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν ἅπαντες τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος,
καὶ ἐλάλουν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ μετὰ παρρησίας.

³ Cf. Psalm 24. 1-2, and the next note.

⁴ Psalm 2. 2. It is this quotation (known to Luke in the Septuagint) that determined the lexical choices in verse 6.

The opening of the Acts of the Apostles is saturated in the language and mind-set of the Psalms.

In this adaptation I have cut the the first verse of Psalm 2 and the explicit quotation of Psalm 118. 22 in verse 11.

In the first three chapters of Acts, Luke makes Peter quote from the Psalms six times: (in order) 69. 25; 109. 8; 16, 8-11; 132. 11; 118. 22; 146. 6. (He also quotes Gen. 22. 18; Exodus 3. 6; Deut. 32. 5; 18. 15, 19; Lev. 23. 29; Isaiah 57. 19; 52. 13; and Joel 2. 28-32; 3. 5).

David is referred to by name four times in the first two chapters (1. 16; 2. 25, 29, 34) as well as in verse 25 of chapter 4 (retained in this dramatisation). Incidentally, it was prophesied that the Messiah would be a ‘son of David’.