

## The New Testament Retold

*The Earth is seen from space. Palestine spins into view. The camera rapidly pans in on this section of the globe. The picture resolves into desert. A low level helicopter pan sweeps above the sand and eventually reveals steep banks leading down to a river. A caption across the screen reads: 'Jordan- in the twenties'. Beside the river stands a man dressed in camels hair (the hump is visible on his back and the head sits upon his own) and he wears a leathern girdle around his waist. A crowd of people are gathered around him. All are dressed as Arabs but most have accessories. The three men and the two publicans have Akubras on; the sailors have their head cloths tied into knots at the four corners; the woman have curlers coming through the cloth on their heads and both are smoking cigarettes. One of them is ironing. All speak with broad Aussie accents. There seems to be some major consternation. The man has his hands raised to quell the noise.*

John            Please everyone! Just give me a minute here!

*The noise dies down.*

                  Thankyou. Now all I said was: 'Repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' What's so bad about that?

Man 1            What about the next bit?

John            What next bit?

Man 1            About cutting down all the trees that don't bear fruit and throwing them in the fire?

John            Oh that.

Man 2            Yeah that!

John            I was speaking metaphorically.

Man 2            Well next time you decide to speak meta ... whatever-it-was-ively, would you not do it in front of the kids? My silly bugger of a ten year old went out and chopped down and burnt half me bloody orchard before I knew what was goin' on!

*The crowd noise rises up again. Various voices chiming in with: 'Mine too!'; 'Bloody right!' etc John quells the noise again.*

John            Please! Please! I can't be held responsible for the actions of one child.

Woman 1        One child? My kid did exactly the same thing!

Woman 2        They all did! Look!

*The woman points up to the banks above the river. There we see an enormous bonfire. Half a dozen boys stand around it, leaning on their axes, smiling effusively. They wave down to John and the crowd.*

Man 1            So next time you open your big mouth about trees bearing fruit could you at least do it in a season when the orange trees actually *have* fruit?

*Again the crowd agrees vociferously.*

John            Look, I'm sorry. Alright? I'm doin' the best I can here. *(As if quoting)* I am not myself the light. I was sent here to bear witness of that light.

Man 3            What's that supposed to mean?

Man 1            It means he's middle management.

John            I'm a prophet.

Man 3            Oh yeah? Say something prophetic then.

John            There is one whom you know not ...

Woman 1        What sort of syntax is that?

Man 1            Ssh. He's being biblical.

John            He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me who's shoes I am not worthy to unloose. After me cometh a man which is preferred before me for he was before me.

Man 2            What the bloody hell is he on about?

Woman 1        He has trouble with his tenses.

John            Esias wrote of: 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness. Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'

Man 1            When was the last time you saw a straight path in a desert?

Man 2            He's speaking metaphysically.

Man 1            Oh, right.

John            If you have two coats, give one of them to someone who has no coat.

Man 3            That reminds me, I gotta paint my hovel.

John            Share your meat with someone who has none.

Woman 2 That's easy for you to say. All you eat is locusts and wild honey.

John *(Pointing)* You, publicans- exact only the taxes which you require.

Publican 1 Is he having a go at us, Rex?

Publican 2 Don't worry about it, Phil- when was the last bloke you knew who liked taxes?

Publican 1 We don't pay taxes but.

Publican 2 Enough said, Phil.

John And you sailors, don't get involved in fights and be happy with your wages.

Sailor 1 He's obviously not a union man.

Sailor 2 Funny that, coz up til then he was sounding like a communist.

John I baptise with water, but the one who comes after me will baptise with the Holy Ghost ... and fire, depending upon which Testament you prefer.

*By this time John is obviously losing his audience.*

Man 1 Hey, mate, you are John the Baptist aren't ya?

John Yes.

Sailor Well, could you get on with it please? I got a christenin' to go to.

John *(Resigned)* Alright. Who's first?

Father We were first.

John Okay, come on up.

*From the back of the crowd come a man with his young son. The boy is holding a covered item.*

John What you got in there, kid?

*The boy removes the cover and reveals a cage with several snakes in it. John takes a step back.*

John Oi! What's that?

Boy They're snakes.

John I can see they're snakes. What do you want me to do with them?

Boy I want you to baptise 'em.

John You want me to baptise your snakes? What sort of snakes are they?

Father *(Proudly)* They're vipers. My boy's been generating them, haven't you, son?

John There is no way I'm gonna baptise a generation of vipers.

*The boy bursts into tears. The crowd is audibly against John.*

Father Hey, settle down, pal. Now you've hurt the kid's feelings.

John Oh, come on, guys. You want me to make a viper a son of God?

Woman 1 Now he's being viperist.

John I am not being viperist!

Man 1 And what's this son of God business? Last week he baptised Wally Cohen. On the way home Wally gets hit by a Roman chariot.

John See. It worked.

Man 3 I say we beat the living shit out of him.

*The crowd agrees and are about to do so when at the sound of angels stops everyone dead in their tracks. They all look around in the direction of the camera. They squint and some shield their eyes as a bright light is shed upon them. As yet we do not see Jesus.*

John *(Falling to his knees)* Oh, my Lord. It's the sacred lamb.

Man 1 That's a lamb?

Man 2 He's speaking metamorphically.

John *(Entranced)* Behold the lamb of God!

Man 3 Oh, so he's God's lamb.

Woman 1 I thought God was a vegetarian.

John Baptise me, oh Lord.

Man 1            You want *him* to baptise *you*? Bugger that for a joke. I'm leavin'.  
This guys a sham.

*The others agree and begin to leave in disgust, audibly scoffing as they go.*

John            *(Coming back to his senses- standing up and calling after them)*  
Hey wait a minute you guys. Let him do me, then I'll do you! ...Guys!  
*(Realising that he has failed)* You ungrateful pagans! That's it! From now on,  
no cut rate baptisms!

Jesus            My son.

*John turns back towards the light and again the choir of angels erupts. John shields his eyes as he speaks.*

John            Excuse me, oh Divine One, but could we lose the lights and  
sound?

*We see Jesus with a stick in his right hand at the top of which is a board upon which are a row of porta-flood lamps. Perched on his left shoulder is a ghetto blaster. Above his head is a halo attached to his head by a piece of wire.*

Jesus            Oh, sorry.

*Jesus begins the cumbersome business of unburdening himself of the props. After a few pathetic attempts he realises that he can't do it alone.*

Jesus            Could I have a hand here please?

*John comes to the rescue.*

Jesus            Thankyou. I can tell you, that's a relief. I've been carrying that  
stuff around since I left the Orient.

John            What do you need all that stuff for?

Jesus            I don't, but it was duty free. I tell ya, with everybody squinting at  
me like that all the time, it was difficult to tell when I left Asia and when I got to  
the Middle East.

John            Was the journey well with you, my Lord?

Jesus            It's not so much how the journey was with me, it's a matter of  
how I was with the journey. Let me tell ya: it was so hot going across the  
Syrian Desert, even the mirages were starting to believe in themselves.

John            *(Falling to his knees again)* Oh great one, will you do as I wish  
and baptise me?

Jesus            Hey hey, wait on a minute there. Get off your knees, Johnny.  
*You're supposed to baptise me.*

John            But I'm not worthy to unloose your shoes.

Jesus            Who said anything about shoes? Just dunk my scone in the river  
and I'll be on my way?

John            Where will you go?

Jesus            I dunno. I thought I might just wander around in the wilderness  
for forty days or so? See what turns up.

John            But, my Lord, it's hell out there.

Jesus            I know. That's why I'm going. I have to be tempted by Satan. So  
if you could just slash a little water on my noggin and I'll be seein' ya.

John            I usually immerse the whole body in the water.

Jesus            Hey, no way, Jack. I can't swim, and besides, there is no way  
I'm gonna wander around for forty days in the desert in wet clothes. You know  
how the sand sticks to you. and everything? I hate that.

John            Very well, oh Messiah, as you wish.

Jesus            *(Glancing around furtively)* Hey, John boy, could ya ease up on  
the Messiah bit? I'm tryin' to remain incognito.

John            Then why are you carrying around lights and a ghetto blaster?

Jesus            Good point. I'll sell 'em to you wholesale. Now, what were you  
saying about cut price baptisms?

*John gets a gourd of water and tips it over Jesus' head.*

Jesus            Hey! Watch out for the halo!

John            Give me the porta floods and the tape deck and we'll call it even.

*The voice of God booms from out of the sky.*

God            Jesus!

*Both men look up.*

Jesus            Yes, father.

God            I wasn't talking to you. I just stubbed my toe on the Pacific again.

Jesus (To John) That's what started the El Nino.

God But since I've got you, I may as well tell you that you are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased.

Jesus Thanks, pop.

*A dead dove falls out of the sky.*

God Here. Eat this. You won't get another bite for forty days.

*The heavens rumble and God is gone. Jesus picks up the dove.*

John How does he do that without clouds?

Jesus Okay. I gotta go. Now don't get put in jail or anything. (To himself) Forty days without food? (He looks at the dove and tosses it away) Oi!

*Montage of Jesus crossing the desert superimposed upon a backdrop of a calender which begins at 'Day 1' and flicks pages towards 'Day 40'. We see Jesus: drinking from a waterhole along with some camels, a wombat and a kangaroo; looking up at the searing sun; passing the skeleton of a dinosaur; building sand castles; looking at an imaginary watch, checking that it is still going. Eventually dark clouds roll across the face of the sun as the calender backdrop reaches 'Day 39'. Lightning jags down from the sky and hits the earth. The smoke clears and reveals the devil. He looks like an aged hippy: head-band, beads etc He is smoking a huge Bob Marley sized joint.*

Devil (Exhaling a huge cloud of smoke) Man, this is the hooch from hell. Want some?

Jesus I haven't eaten for over five weeks and you want to give me the munchies?

Devil This weed is dynamite, man.

Jesus Just what I need, paranoia in the wilderness.

Devil Suit yourself, man. Hey, listen, you're the guy who claims to be the son of God. Am I right?

Jesus Who's asking?

Devil Come on, man. You know me. I'm the Devil.

Jesus I was wondering when you were gonna show up. I'm outa here tomorrow. So, what do you want from me?

Devil I want you to prove you are who you say you are.

Jesus I don't have to prove myself to you.

Devil Hey, chill out bro. Do something easy. Turn those stones there into bread.

Jesus Man does not live by bread alone.

Devil Oh, that's deep, man; that's deep. I have to think about that one. *(Snapping his fingers)* Hey, I just got a cool idea.

*He inhales deeply on his joint and blows it in Jesus' face. The scene whites out from Jesus' POV. When it clears Jesus is on top of a mountain with all of the cities of the world spread out below him.*

Jesus Hey, that *is* good grass.

Devil So, what do you think?

Jesus What do I think? I think it looks like lego.

Devil Aw, come on, man. These are *all* the cities of *all* space and time.

Jesus Does that include neighbouring galaxies?

Devil And they can all be yours. All you gotta do is worship me.

Jesus Are you kiddin' me? If I want building blocks I'll go to Toys R Us. What's that crummy lookin' one over there supposed to be?

Devil Melbourne

Jesus Listen, pal, my old man says no go. Sorry, but I will not be tempted. Besides what am I gonna do with *all* the cities of *all* space and time? Although they would look nice in a hutch with stained glass and ...

*Once again the Devil blows smoke into Jesus' face. He finds himself perched somewhat precariously on the pinnacle of a temple above Jerusalem.*

Jesus Oi! Will you stop doing that? Now where am I?

Devil This is the Holy City of Jerusalem.

Jesus Oh yeah. I can see Rabbi Goldstein's house. *(Squinting)* When did he have the jacuzzi put in?

Devil Alright, man, if you're the son of God, jump and let the angels catch you.

Jesus Listen, Lucifer or Beelzebub or whatever your name is, there is no way known that I am jumping off here to prove a point.

Devil Don't trust the old man, huh?

Jesus Him, I trust, but those angels? Didn't you used to be one of them?

Devil Yeah man but I fell from grace.

Jesus Why was that?

Devil I decided to think for myself.

Jesus Well, it just goes to show, you can't stuff around with the old man. Look, I'll level with you, Satan, no matter what you say or do- one, I ain't jumping off of here, and two, I ain't gonna worship you. Comprendo? And furthermore, God told me to tell you (*He gets out a scrap of paper*): 'Get thee behind me. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve'.

Devil Hey, man, does this guy want a worshipper or a waiter?

Jesus Hey, pork-chop- enough banter. I gotta get back to Galilee. I have lepers to blind ... or something like that.

Devil Very well, man, you win for now, but I'll be seeing you real soon. Don't get cross on the cross now, ya hear?

*The Devil laughs and disappears in a marijuana haze.*

Jesus Now what the hell did he mean by that? I think that too much smoking the lawn has fried his brain.

*Several high-pitched voices are heard.*

Angels Jesus.

Jesus What? Who said that? Sounds like Michael Jackson on helium.

*Half a dozen tiny angels flutter around Jesus' face.*

Angels We are the angels of God. We are here to minister you.

Jesus You little guys were gonna catch me if I jumped from the tower? Thank God I never took Satan up on that one.

Angels We must minister you.

Jesus            Hey, wait a minute. What is this minister thing? It's not like circumcision is it? Cos I ain't goin' through that again for no-one- not even God Almighty.

*There is a clap of thunder.*

Jesus            *(Looking up)* Sorry, pop.

Angels           We must give you the word of God.

Jesus            Yeah, okay, but make it snappy, will ya? If I don't get a quarter pounder and some fries soon, I'll be talking to him directly. So do your stuff, boys, and it's on to Galilee.

*The Sea of Galilee. Simon, and Andrew are casting nets into the water. In the background is a ship on the water. On this, various black servants scurry around in tuxedos. Near the bow sit three men: James, John and their father, Mr Zebedee. They are fixing nets. Simon, in the foreground, has just cast a net into the water and is smiling and waving to the men on the boat who smile and wave back. Simon returns to his brother and sits.*

Simon            You see those two boys out there?

Andrew          What, the Zebedee brothers?

Simon            Yeah, Jimmy and Johnny.

Andrew          What of 'em?

Simon            *(Quietly)* Well, I guess I shouldn't say this too loud, seein' how sound travels pretty good over water n' all ...

Andrew          *(Intrigued and moving closer)* I can hear ya.

Simon            *(Whispering)* But I heard on the net that old Mister Zebedee over there is gonna lose the help of his sons pretty soon. He's gonna have to rely on his hired hands. Lucky for him he's not a poor man.

*Simon smiles and waves again to the men in the ship who return the smile and wave once again. On the beach, in the far background, is Jesus walking towards Simon and Andrew from behind. During the next dialogue he becomes more and more visible as he gradually approaches them.*

Andrew          What d'ya mean by that?

Simon            Oh nothin'. It's just that a little fish told me Jimmy and Johnny Zebedee are soon to leave their father's employ, that's all.

Andrew          Who told ya that?

Simon        The local soothsayer. You see, it seems that old Mister Zebedee plans to take a new wife and the boys don't exactly approve.

Andrew      What's wrong with their old man takin' on a new wife?

Simon        Maybe you should ask his current wife.

Andrew      Will you get outa here? He ain't got no current wife.

Simon        That's not what his current wife thinks.

Andrew      You don't mean ...?

Simon        Exactly. He's goin' for Polygamy.

Andrew      Oi! One is enough.

Simon        But It gets worse.

Andrew      It gets worse?

Simon        And that's the real reason the boys are leavin'- her last name. She won't change it. She wants to hyphenate, it for Moses' sake.

Andrew      What's her last name?

Simon        Her name is Rachel. Rachel Doodah.

Andrew      So that would make them ...

Simon        That's right. The Zeberdeedoodahs.

Andrew      I don't blame them for leaving.

Simon        I could never do it though.

Andrew      What's that- change your name?

Simon        No. No I could never give up fishin'.

Andrew      *(Impressed)* Really?

Simon        No way. I love fishing. The smell of the salt. The rub of the brine- whatever that is. The coarseness of the net and the thrill of the haul. No, I could never give that up.

*Jesus passes behind them.*

Jesus        Come with me forever.

*The two men automatically stand and follow.*

Simon        Sure.

Andrew      Yeah, why not.

Jesus        *(To Jimmy and Johnny)* You too.

*Jimmy and Johnny throw their nets with abandon into the air and yippee and yahoo like a couple of southern good ol' boys.*

Mr Zebedee   Hey! John boy, Jamie, now you two boys get back here, ya hear!

John         Sorry pop. But we done just found Jesus!

Zebedee      That old dog? Why I ain't seen him this past year. I'll be danged! *(Happily)* Bring him on home, boys and we'll have a real hum dinger of a party to welcome that ol' canine home! *(To himself)* Well, I'll be danged, old Jesus come back home. Well, well, well. Wait 'til I tell my current wife.

*With the four men following, Jesus walks towards a stage set up on the beach. Upon the stage is a great deal of musical equipment. Arab roadies with tattoos, bikie boots and bandannas scuttle about the place carrying amplifiers etc. In front of the stage stand four men: Phillip; Batholomew; Mathew and Thomas. They are dressed as Arab rock stars. They are snorting sand off the hump of a sitting camel as Jesus approaches. Phillip comes up sniffing and wiping the sand from under his nose. They speak like east end of London boys. Simon, Andrew and James and John Zebedee stand back.*

Phillip        This is good sand , man.

Batholomew   I told you it was good.

Mathew        Where'd you score it, Bart?

Batholomew   Some geeza called Saturn. Have some, Tommy.

Thomas        Cool.

*Thomas is about to have a snort when Jesus approaches them.*

Jesus         Follow me. You are to become my disciples.

Phillip        Hang about, Gov. We got a gig to do

Jesus         God has chosen you to help me carry out the word of God.

Batholomew   Sorry, man but this is a huge gig. This beach'll be full tonight.

Mathew        Yeah, sand stock, right guys?

*The rest of the band agree.*

Thomas      That's it and it's a big payer too. What can you offer us to give it up?

Jesus        I am Jesus Christ, the son of God. I offer you eternal salvation and historical significance. People all over the world will still know of you in two thousand years from now.

Thomas      Two thousand years? Man, that *is* big. What do you think, boys.

*They go into a huddle. Eventually they break.*

Phillip      Alright, gov, we've had a bit of a chin wag and we're with you, provided our managers agree.

Jesus        Who are they and where can I find them?

Phillip      They're the biggest in the business, mate and they don't mess about.

Batholomew That's it. They're the Alphaeus brothers, James and Thaddeus, and it looks like they've found you.

*James and Thaddeus arrive. Both are impeccably dressed in dinner suits. They both smoke cigars and speak with terribly posh British accents.*

James       Well, well, Thaddeus, what have we here?

Thaddeus    An Arab with a halo by all accounts, James.

James       Extraordinary looking fellow, wouldn't you say, Thaddeus?

Thaddeus    Quite fantastic the clothes the young people of today are wearing.

James       Quite so. I say, gentlemen, is this fan bothering you?

Phillip      He says his name's Jesus Christ. He wants us to blow out the gig and follow him in return for eternal salvation.

James       Is this so, Mr ... Christ? Are you trying to influence the career of my band?

Jesus        I am God's only son.

James       I sympathise with you, old boy, I really do. It must be quite lonely being an only child. Thaddeus and I shared a bedroom until our teenage years.

Thaddeus Quite so. Damn good arrangement too.

James I only eventually moved out when I was sixteen and Thaddeus fourteen because at about that time, every night Thaddeus would keep me awake by ...

Thaddeus I think we could leave it there. Don't you think, old boy?

James Yes, quite.

Mathew He says we'll all be remembered in two thousand years.

James Is that so, Mr Christ?

Jesus It's true and you two can be part of the deal. All you have to do is come with me right now.

Thaddeus I say, James, this does bear some thinking, what?.

James Quite so. I say, how many people are you looking for?

Jesus I need twelve apostles. Twelve shall be the number and the number shall be twelve. God always repeats himself like that. I just need two more and I can start showing off.

Thomas What about Simon the Zealous, Mr Alphaeus?

Batholomew Yeah and of course we can't go without Judas.

*The other band members nod their heads in agreement.*

Jesus Well, I guess I do need two more guys. Can these boys be trusted? They gotta be honest, morally sound and hard working.

James Goodness me, you wouldn't find a better man than Simon the Zealous. He's the most industrious employee we have.

Jesus Yeah? What does he do?

Thaddeus My dear fellow, he does everything from general goffer, to roadie, to sound engineer. He really is remarkable.

James And the best thing about him is that he's always keen, always enthusiastic.

Phillip That's why we call him Simon the Zealous.

James *(Calling out)* I say, Simon, could you come here for a minute. There's a good boy.

*A small, skinny young man runs in rather recklessly. He has a youthful face with bright eyes and he moves like a live wire.*

Simon            Something I can do for you Mr Alphaeus?

James            Yes, Simon. Tell this gentleman why you should have eternal salvation.

Simon            Sorry, but I don't know what that is, Mr Alphaeus.

James            Very well, describe part of your work for Mr Jesus then. Show him why it is you are invaluable to us.

*Simon thinks for a moment, then clicks his fingers as if he has just thought of something. He jumps up onto the stage and stands in front of a microphone.*

Simon            Testing one two! Testing one, two! One! One! Two! Two!

*Some Arabs in Akubra hats passing by yell back 'Three four!' and laugh as they walk past.*

Thaddeus        *(Looking at the passing Arabs)* It's amazing how people think that's funny.

James            So what do you say?

Jesus            Yeah, sure, why not? At least he's had an education. So what about the last guy. What's his name?

James            Judas. *(To Simon)* Simon, do be a love and fetch Judas from his bunker, would you?

Simon            Sure thing Mr Alphaeus.

*Simon runs off at a frantic pace.*

Jesus            So what's this guy Judas like?

*The Alphaeus brothers and the band members look at each other as if to say 'Are you gonna tell him or should I?'*

Thaddeus        Let us just say that he is ... unconventional.

Jesus            Unconventional? What does that mean? He believes only in nuclear weapons?

James            *(Putting his arm around Jesus and taking him aside)* In a manner of speaking, yes. You see Judas is our lead singer.

Jesus            Say no more.

James           Well, actually, it's a little worse than that. Judas is what might be termed a paranoid schizophrenic with an incredible sadistic streak. He is totally amoral and without any redeeming features what so ever.

Jesus            So why should I make him an apostle?

James           He's absolutely fantastic on stage and the media just love him. He's be a real asset on one of those Sunday morning Sing Along with God shows. And to be quite honest with you, I'm fairly certain that none of the band or crew would join you without him. He's our biggest draw-card.

Jesus            Okay. Okay. I get the picture. Where is he anyway?

James           Ah, here he is now.

*James stretches his arms out wide and walks towards the advancing Judas. He is about to give Judas the Hollywood hug but Judas pushes past him and stands directly in front of Jesus. He contemptuously looks Jesus up and down. Judas is Adolf Hitler with long hair.*

Judas            *(Stridently)* Who is zis?

Thaddeus       This is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, Judas Iscariot; Judas Iscariot, Jesus Christ.

Judas            Why has he got a halo on his head?

James           He's the son of God, old bean. He wants to make us all famous.

Mathew          Yeah, Judas. In two thousand years people will still remember us.

Judas            *(to himself)* A double Reich.

James           He's offering you your own TV show, Judas.

*Everyone looks hopefully at Judas. Once again, he looks with great contempt at Jesus, then he looks around at all the expectant faces.*

Judas            *(Clicking his heels)* I vill join!

*As everyone rejoices, Judas zigheils and goosesteps away.*

James           So what do you think?

Jesus            What do I think? I think the guys one tank short of the blitzkrieg. But if it means I got the rest of you guys, okay. You're on.

*Once again everyone rejoices.*

Jesus        You fisher guys, get yourselves acquainted with these muso types. I'll go check out the action in the local synagogues. We got a lot of work to do, boys.

*The disciples shake hands and introduce themselves to one another as Jesus leaves.*

*Jesus stands before a crowd in a synagogue. The disciples are present. All the others are dressed as Aussie- Arabs. One or two Roman soldiers sit at the rear looking rather disinterested.*

Jesus        So all I'm saying is that I'm God's son and I have authority to teach you guys.

Doubter     Bullshit!

Jesus        What was that?

Doubter     I said it's bullshit! Listen pal, I've been coming here every Sabbath for thirty years. In that time I've listened to six Rabbis give instruction on the Talmud and let me set you straight, Monty Christo, or whatever your name is, what you just said has got nothin' whatsoever to do with those teachings!

Jesus        Behold an unclean spirit.

Doubter     Oh, that's bloody convenient, isn't it? One and a half thousand years of religious dogma out the window coz this blokes got an ego problem and I'm the one with the unclean spirit!

Jesus        *(Raising his arms)* Out, unclean spirit!

*Suddenly the man begins convulsing violently.*

Doubter     Bloody 'ell!

*At first he looks like he is having an epileptic fit but after a while his whole body begins to levitate. Jesus still stands with his arms raised as the man begins to bounce off the walls of the synagogue like a ping pong ball. The disciples look at each other in amazement. Judas watches with interest. The two Roman soldiers can't believe their eyes.*

Doubter     Aah! Shit! Help! Doreen!

*Finally the episode is over and the man is a crumpled mess in front of Jesus' feet. The man picks himself up and shakes his head as if to clear his thoughts.*

Doubter     Christ!

Jesus Exactly. Now what do you say?

Doubter *(Thinks about it)* Hey, you know what? That feels better. I'll be buggered. That actually does feel better! *(Shaking Jesus' hand)* Good on ya', son. This is the cleanest I've felt in months. Hey, Doreen, I think he's fixed me plumbin' problem.

Doreen You lil' beauty.

*Doreen gets up and leaves the synagogue in a hurry hand in hand with the doubter. The doubter shouts over his shoulder as he leaves.*

Doubter Let me know if there's anything I can do for you, Mr Christ!

Jesus *(Shouting)* Yeah. Don't tell anyone!

*The doubter gives Jesus the thumbs up as he hurries from the synagogue. We hear his voice boom from outside.*

V/O Hey, guys! Guess what!

Jesus Let's get out of here.

*The noise of the crowd swells up as Jesus leaves. They are obviously all impressed but none approach him. All eyes watch him as he departs. Judas is absorbed in thought. One of the Roman soldiers motions to the other to leave.*

*A sign on a house reads: Simon's Place. Jesus and his disciples file into it. There are fishing trophies on the mantelpiece; photographs of Simon and Andrew holding up large fish all over the walls, fish-like nick-knacks everywhere and an enormous aquarium occupying one whole wall containing: sharks, platypuses, stingrays, penguins, killer whales, marlins, an emu in scuba gear and various fish. They come to the bed-side of a woman. A fishing net is hanging around her in place of a mosquito net. Jesus looks at the net as it is drawn away.*

Jesus Does this thing keep out the mosquitoes?

Simon No, but it keeps out the fish.

*Simon's mother in law is in the bed. She is sick with a bad fever.*

Jesus Who is this woman?

Simon She's my mother in law.

Jesus How long has she been sick.

Simon Almost a week. I'm afraid if this continues we may lose her.

*Simon turns to the others, winks, laughs silently and gives them the thumbs up. They respond like a bunch of schoolboys in a situation where they cannot laugh but really want to. Judas remains poker-faced. Jesus touches the woman on the forehead and immediately she stands up. She is obviously completely cured. The disciples stand agog.*

Mother        Oh, thankyou, thankyou Mister ...?

Jesus           Christ. *(Like James Bond)* Jesus Christ.

Mother        Oh thankyou, Mr Christ. I feel so much better. Boys, I am cured!

Simon          That's great. *(To himself)* Shit.

Mother        What was that, Simon?

Simon          Hmm? Oh, nothing.

Mother        Are you swearing again?

Simon          No I was just ...

Mother        Always you swear. What is it with you and the swearing? I tell my daughter a thousand times not to marry a fisherman. They work too hard; they drink too hard; they swear too hard.

Simon          I didn't ...

*She grabs him by the ear and he screams.*

Mother        Don't talk back at me you cheeky boy. My daughter could have done so much better than you. I told her to marry that nice tax collector, but would she listen to me? Now you come with me and we'll fix your friends some food and wine.

*She leads him by the ear out of the room. He is still audibly protesting.*

Mother        Why can't you be more like Andrew? He's a good boy. He doesn't swear. He doesn't gossip ...

*They exit.*

Jesus           I think I preferred her when she was sick.

*Outside Simon's house some time later. Simon has his ear bandaged*

Jesus           *(To Simon)* Here, let me see that.

*He touches Simon's ear and the bandage falls off.*

Simon        Thanks.

*A leper comes up to them.*

James        Look out, lads. Leper at six o'clock.

*The group, except for Jesus recoil away from the leper.*

Leper        Hey, mate, a friend of mine with a plumbin' problem told me that you could help me out.

*The leper's nose drops off.*

Jesus        Who can you trust? I told him not to tell anyone about that.

Leper        *(Nasally)* Be a good sport and fix us up, will ya. I won't tell no-one.

*The lepers ear falls off.*

Jesus        Do you promise not to tell anyone?

Leper        *(Loudly and nasally)* Oh, struth no. Scout's honour.

*The leper holds his fingers up in a scout's salute and both his fingers drop off. The disciples react with revulsion.*

Jesus        Yeah. Okay. I guess you're cool.

*He touches the leper.*

Jesus        There you go. You're cured.

*The leper is transformed into a incredibly strong bodied, good looking young man, his garments torn provocatively upon his body. He looks at himself in a hand held mirror.*

Leper        Hey. Cool.

*Three or four good looking girls in bikinis suddenly surround the man and drape themselves suggestively around him.*

Jesus        Now remember, you promised not to tell anyone.

Leper        Jesus, your secret's safe with me.

*The man saunters away with the girls hanging off him. He moves toward a crowd outside a synagogue. We see them from a distance. At first they are surprised by the leper's new appearance, then they are obviously asking him*

*questions. He points towards Jesus and the disciples and the crowd gushes in one rowdy accord in disciple's direction.*

Jesus           *(Looking at Judas)* Who can you trust?

*Judas remains unmoved. The crowd is now thronging about them. Jesus is trying to quell the noise*

Jesus           Hold it! Hold it! Will you stop thronging already? Always they throng. I refuse to cure throngers! No throngers will be cured!

*The crowd quietens down.*

Jesus           That's better. You should be ashamed of yourselves, thronging like that. Now, who was first?

Thronger 1    Er, yeah, that'd be me.

Jesus           Well?

Thronger 1    Well what?

Jesus           Well, what's wrong with you?

Thronger 1    Oh, nothin'.

Jesus           So why are we having this conversation?

Thronger 1    *(Motioning towards the leper)* I just wanna look like him.

Jesus           Will you get outa here? Sick people only.

*Two people in full scuba gear approach Jesus.*

Jesus           Yes?

*One of the two begins to speak but it is inaudible because they have a mouthpiece in their mouth.*

Jesus           Hold it! Will you knock it off. What's wrong with you too?

Diver           *(Taking out the mouthpiece)* We have diver's disease.

Jesus           Next!

*The divers stand back. A man steps forward. He is painted green and is wearing little Martian antennas on his head.*

Martian        I've come to see you about my brother.

Jesus           Stand back. Go on, get back all of you.

*The Martian steps back into the crowd.*

Jesus           Let me just ask you all one simple question. Is there anyone here today who is actually sick that I can cure?

*The members of the crowd look at each other. Obviously no-one is actually sick. They all look at Jesus and shake their heads.*

Thronger 2    I think I might be getting a cold.

Thronger 3    Is there some way we could all get a credit?

Jesus           A what?

Thronger 4    Yeah, sort of like a cure in advance so that next time we get sick we could use it then.

*The crowd's noise rises in agreement.*

James           I say, old man, could we lose this lot. I could do with a stiff brandy. It's been quite a day you know.

Jesus           Good thinking. I have an idea.

*He holds up his hands again to quell the noise.*

Jesus           Okay! Okay! Settle down! Settle down!

*The crowd settles.*

Jesus           Boy have I done a lot of quelling today. Okay, so here's the deal. I haven't got time to do everybody right now, but I can offer you all one cure, in credit, as a group. think of it as a group cure. What do you say.

*The crowd goes into a huddle to discuss the proposition. Eventually they push one of the members forward.*

Jesus           So, what's the latest?

Thronger 5    As union delegate I know that I speak on behalf of all my members when I say that if we are to accept a group cure, as opposed to individualised treatment, we will in return accept nothing less than three cures in credit and we all want to wake up tomorrow morning being incredibly good looking.

Jesus           What?

Thronger 5    Anything less will inevitably result in strong union action.

Jesus            Union action? Why you ungrateful ...

Thaddeus      Listen Jesus, old fruit, why don't you just give them what they want so we can get out of here.

Jesus            My friend has prevailed upon me against my better judgement. Very well. Three cures in credit and you'll all be good looking tomorrow.

*The crowd erupts in glee. They throw their akubras into the air and yell out stuff like: 'You beauty' and 'You little ripper' as they disperse patting each other on the backs.*

Jesus            But don't tell anyone!

*The crowd reply with: 'No worries' and 'She'll be right' and 'Mum's the word' but as they head off down the street they are obviously telling everyone in sight.*

Jesus            This is gonna be tougher than I thought.

Judas          Ve vill go!

*Judas goosesteps away. The other disciples follow him.*

James          Come along, Mr Christ. I suggest we get away before we are once again besieged. I have some friends in low places where we can escape for the time being. Shall we?

Jesus            I gotta come up with a plan, Jimmy. I'm exhausted already and I only just started.

James          Never mind, old boy, you'll think of something. Now, come meet my acquaintances.