

# **TWO RABBIS**

An Easter Season Drama

by

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**THE CAST**  
(in order of appearance)

The Rabbi, Uncle of Jacob and Miriam

Jacob, teenage nephew

Miriam, young teenage niece

Joseph, a Rabbi

Scene: Jerusalem,

Summer 29 A.D. to Spring 33 A.D.

## EPISODE 1

*Scene. Home of the Rabbi in Jerusalem. He is sitting at a desk with three chairs. He is dressed in a white robe with blue fringe. He is looking at a scroll. Jacob and Miriam enter. They are dressed in traditional robes. It is Summer 29 A.D. (Pentecost 29 A.D.)*

Jacob: Shalom, Uncle.

Miriam: Shalom, Uncle.

*(They approach the rabbi and hug him).*

Rabbi: Oh, shalom, Jacob, Miriam. So good to see you. When did you arrive?

Jacob: Just now.

Miriam: Mother and Father are coming into your street along with the others *(she points to the side of the stage)*. We ran ahead to give our special uncle a big hug.

Rabbi: Thank you. I look forward to your visits. It's been lonely since your aunt died *(he looks sad)* even with these scrolls to console me.

Jacob: We're glad to be here.

Miriam: It's so hot in the city *(she fans herself with her hand)*. We get the summer winds at the lake.

Rabbi: It's usually cool in here. Come, let's sit down.

*(They sit down.)*

Rabbi: Jacob, how's school?

Jacob: Fine, but the rabbis at home don't know the Scriptures like you Uncle.

Rabbi: You're kind, Jacob. How about you, Miriam?

Miriam: Mom says I am learning well. Jacob also tells me about his lessons. And Dad reads to us at night.

Rabbi: Ah, I'm pleased.

Jacob: Uncle.

Rabbi: Yes, Jacob.

Jacob: Have you heard about the young rabbi who has been teaching in Galilee? Many who have come to Capernaum have said he is very knowledgeable in the Scriptures--more than the older rabbis in the local synagogues.

Rabbi: Mmmm, how young?

Miriam: About 30.

Jacob: His name is Jesus.

Rabbi: I don't recall any prominent teacher of that age or name, especially travelling in Galilee. Is he from one of the schools here in Jerusalem?

Jacob: I don't think so. He's from Nazareth ...

Rabbi: Nazareth?! (*Hands in the air*). That's no place for a scholar. There is just a small synagogue there. And the soldiers ...the tramps ...and the kind of women...That's not a place for holiness ...or learning. What's ever come out of there? No prophets. This is crazy.

Miriam: We don't know if he is a prophet. But we have heard he has been with the prophet John ...

Jacob: ...the one who baptizes in the Jordan.

Rabbi: Oh, no, that troublemaker?

Miriam: You know him?

Rabbi: No, but he called some members of the Sanhedrin "a brood of vipers" when they went to listen to him at the Jordan. They said they were there to give him a chance to explain his views. But he makes enemies. Baptize ...Repentance ...I don't understand. We are all Jews, Abraham's people.

*(The Rabbi stands up. Jacob and Miriam stand up.)*

Rabbi: Well, I don't know about this Jesus. John ... he's a problem--not a good influence for your young rabbi.

Miriam: We have heard of healings ...

Rabbi: *(holds his hands up to stop her)* Wait, enough. Have you heard this Jesus yourself or seen what he has done?

Jacob and Miriam: No, no.

Rabbi: Perhaps, before you come again to Jerusalem, he might teach in Capernaum. You should try to hear him. You need to get more information before you judge his knowledge and healings. Many people are talking about such matters these days.

Miriam: Then we could tell you about him.

Rabbi: Sure ...sure, or maybe word will get to the Sanhedrin.

Whatever! *(hands thrown up)*

Jacob: We'll be here in the fall. We come each holiday.

Rabbi: I know. Your father is very observant--especially for one not living in Judea.

*(He directs them toward the door.)*

Miriam: Mom and Dad are probably just outside your door by now.

Rabbi: Ah, yes. Let's greet your parents. We'll talk again. Tonight, I will teach.

Jacob: That will be great, Uncle.

Miriam: Thank you.

*(They exit.)*

End of Episode 1

EPISODE 2

Scene. *The Rabbi's house. He is at the table reading a scroll. Jacob and Miriam enter. He looks up. It is Fall 29 A.D. (Tabernacles)*

Rabbi: Oh, shalom, Miriam. Shalom, Jacob.

Jacob and Miriam: Shalom, Uncle.

Rabbi: Getting cooler at the lake?

Jacob: Yes, especially at night.

Miriam: Oh, Uncle, this is my favorite holiday. I love Tabernacles.

Can we build the booth on your roof and stay there all week?

Rabbi: Of, course. Of, course.

Jacob: We look forward to that every year.

Rabbi: Come, sit with me awhile.

*(They all sit down.)*

Rabbi: And how is the fishing business?

Jacob: Dad is doing well. I am helping with the nets in the larger boats.

Miriam: There is plenty for me to do, also. Mom and I have never seen some many nets needing repair, especially since Jacob started fishing!

Jacob: It's not my fault, I'm careful.

Rabbi: Don't argue, children.

Jacob: Uncle, remember the Rabbi we talked about last visit?

Rabbi: Don't tell me he has affected the fishing business?

*(arrogantly)*

Jacob: Not exactly. But he has come to Capernaum. Two brothers in the fishing business from Bethsaida, Andrew and Simon, have become followers of Jesus.

Miriam: ...So have James and John.

Jacob: They have said that this Jesus is the Messiah.

Rabbi: *(shaking his head)* Children, children *(condescendingly)*.

First you told me--last time--this Jesus was a good teacher ...

Jacob: ...great ...

Rabbi: Alright, alright (*holds hands in front of him*). Then you told me he was associated with John ...

Miriam: ...and was baptized by him.

Rabbi: Mmmm, well. I don't know why he needs that--he is a Jew. And now you tell me that these men--followers--call him the Messiah!

Miriam: Jacob, tell him about the miracles ...the healings...

Rabbi: Wait, children, children. This is ...a little ...much to accept (*almost angry*). How can I believe this?

Jacob: We heard him preach ...

Rabbi: ...and...

Miriam: He is so different. He has wisdom.

Jacob: We have never heard the Scriptures taught with such authority.

Rabbi: We must be careful, my dear children. These are difficult times. Our people have been oppressed for over 500 years. The Assyrians, The Babylonians, then the Greeks--and look what influence the Greeks have had on our youth! There was a brief time of freedom ...

Jacob: ...100 years ...

Rabbi: Right. Then the boot of Rome for the last 90 years. Our people are looking for ...

Miriam: ...the Messiah!

Rabbi: Yes, but there have been--they are those now-- men claiming to have done all kinds of miracles. People can be misled. They need the established priests and teachers to show them what is the truth. Look at the Roman soldiers on every block, especially at holiday time. We all want our freedom (*shakes his fist*).

Jacob: What do the Scriptures say?

Rabbi: Yes, yes. The prophets say one is coming--the anointed one of God--who will save us from ...

Jacob: ...the Romans or ourselves?

Rabbi: *(a nervous laugh)* Mmmm.

Miriam: Is the Messiah coming soon?

Rabbi: Well, Miriam, some think so. But ...certainly not from Nazareth ...in Galilee *(shakes his head and laughs)*.

*(The Rabbi gets up and starts to walk toward the door. Jacob and Miriam rise and walk with him.)*

Jacob: Maybe you could meet Jesus in Capernaum, if you visit. He is staying there now.

Rabbi: Of, course, maybe.

Miriam: Or he might come to Jerusalem next spring for Passover.

Rabbi: Sure, sure. Ah, I see your parents.

*They exit.*

End of Episode 2

### EPISODE 3

*Scene. The Rabbi's house. The Rabbi is sitting, reading the scrolls. Jacob and Miriam enter. It is Spring 30 A.D. (Passover)*

Jacob: Shalom, Uncle.

Miriam: Shalom, Uncle. Ready for dinner?

Rabbi: Oh, shalom, children. Yes, the Passover. I'm ready to go.

*He stands up.*

Miriam: Uncle, did you hear that Jesus is in Jerusalem?

Rabbi: Yes, everyone knows! Your new Rabbi created quite a scene at the temple.

Jacob: Did you see him?

Rabbi: Of course. The whole Sanhedrin was there. He came into the temple area where money is exchanged and animals brought for sacrifice. He must have made a whip out of leather cords. He drove out the animals. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and scattered their coins. Then he said, “How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market?” That’s not the way to make friends of influential people--you know, the Chief Priest, the Sanhedrin. I thought someone said he was meek and mild.

Jacob: But, Uncle. Haven’t many complained for years that the exchange rate at the temple is unfair?

Rabbi: Yes, but ...

Miriam: ...and that the rules for sacrificial animals is so extreme that pilgrims always wind up buying an animal (*Jacob nods*) at the temple ...

Jacob: ...of course ...

Miriam: ...even if they have brought what appears to be a spotless animal from home?

Rabbi: I guess there have been excesses.

Jacob: Isn’t the temple area called Annas’ circus?

Rabbi: Well (*nervous laugh*). I’m not going to say anything critical about our illustrious former Chief Priest--whom many still consider to be in charge. His nephew, Caiaphas, the new Chief Priest, doesn’t seem involved with this ...ah, (*waves his hand*) ...system.

Miriam: Well, it makes it hard ...even for us ...your own family. We don’t get any special deals because we’re from Galilee!

Rabbi: Please don’t be unfair. I haven’t gotten involved with ...anyway (*folds his hands*).

Jacob: You were at the temple, Uncle?

Rabbi: Yes.

Jacob: Did you see the miracles of healing that Jesus did?

Rabbi: (*Sheepishly*) Yes. (*Large sigh*) There were healings. Many of us in the Council witnessed them.

Miriam: What did you think?

Rabbi: Everyone ...thought ...they were real. We can't deny that.

Miriam: And many have become followers of him, even here in Jerusalem.

Rabbi: Yes, I've heard that. I don't know what to make of this. His words ... are penetrating. You cannot walk away from him. He sounds more than a man ...

Miriam: Could he be the Messiah?

Rabbi: Wow (*large sigh*). Most in the Sanhedrin wouldn't want to say that. He may make some enemies--like John has done.

Jacob: Uncle, Jesus was not born in Nazareth.

Rabbi: Oh?

Jacob: He was born in Bethlehem.

Rabbi: Mmmm.

Miriam: Remember what the prophet Micah said?

Rabbi: Yes, Miriam, I've taught you well.

Miriam: And doesn't Isaiah say He would be despised. Doesn't Nazareth mean despised?

Jacob: What about His special birth? Remember Isaiah? You taught us that.

Rabbi: We have heard such about Jesus. It's ...I don't know.

Miriam: And doesn't Daniel say this is the time for the Messiah to come?

Jacob: ...And the signs and miracles?

Rabbi: (*holds his hands to his ears*). Wait, wait, Jacob, Miriam (*tries to slow them down*). You both are excited. We must consider these things slowly ...carefully.

Miriam: But, Uncle. Aren't all things true?

Rabbi: How could I ... deny them? I taught you all of this--You have learned very well. Your new rabbi ...

Jacob: Why don't you meet with him, Uncle. He'll be in Jerusalem for the rest of Passover.

Rabbi: Of course, he will. But I can't go to him. What will people--what will the Sanhedrin--think?

Miriam: You must speak with him.

Rabbi: (*looking at both of them*) I think that you both believe that Jesus is the Messiah.

(*Jacob and Miriam look at each other.*)

Jacob: I think we have come to that.

Miriam: Yes, yes, Uncle.

Rabbi: Mmmm.

Miriam: Please speak with him. You are so highly regarded.

Rabbi: Well (*cocks head*). I should talk with him. These Scriptural passages ...these signs ...his righteousness--I should find out.

Miriam: Oh, yes, Uncle.

Rabbi: Well, we talked a lot. We have probably kept everyone waiting. And since I have to give the blessing, no has been able to start eating. We'd better go.

Miriam: Oh, Uncle, you'll be so glad you have ...(*trails off*).

*They exit.*

EPISODE 4

*Scene. The Rabbi's house. He is sitting, pondering the scroll. He is deep in thought. Jacob and Miriam enter talking. It is the end of Passover week 30 A.D. (Passover)*

Jacob: Shalom, Uncle.

Miriam: Uncle, shalom. we are leaving soon.

Rabbi: Oh, shalom my children. (*He stands up.*) I didn't hear you. I was reading. Are you leaving for Capernaum?

Jacob: Yes, this morning.

Rabbi: Oh (*wearily*).

Miriam: Uncle, did you get to meet Jesus?

Rabbi: Yes (*tentatively*). Yes. Sit down, Jacob, Miriam.

*(All sit down.)*

Rabbi: I did meet with Jesus last night.

Miriam: What happened?

Rabbi: He said I was the teacher of Israel; he was very gracious.

Jacob: You are, Uncle.

Rabbi: Well ... I remarked that we knew he was from God because of the miracles he had done. He thought and said, “No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again”.

*(Jacob and Miriam look at each other puzzled.)*

Miriam: What did he mean?

Rabbi: He said we must be “born of water and the Spirit”. He said, “flesh give birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit”.

Miriam: Mmmm.

Rabbi: It seemed hard to understand but I see it now: the “water” is the first birth--you know, the water in the womb bursting forth at the time of delivery. This is the natural process of becoming a man or woman. But we also need a spiritual birth--the second birth or born again--to see the kingdom of God.

Miriam: How can this happen?

Rabbi: *(holds his hands together in front of him and speaks deliberately)* Listen to what he said, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”.

Jacob: Did Jesus say he is the Son of God?

Rabbi: Yes, the Messiah. And the way to eternal life--heaven--is through him.

Miriam: What about our sins?

Rabbi: He said, “Whoever believes in him is not condemned”.

Miriam: Wow! What about being Jewish or keeping the Law?

Rabbi: I’ve thought about these things. I went back to Moses’ writings. Remember Abraham?

Jacob and Miriam: Of course, of course.

Rabbi: Remember, it wasn't that Abramam was in a certain family. Moses says, "Abraham believed and it was credited to him as righteousness".

Miriam: Oh, Uncle.

Rabbi: Yes, Miriam, it's a staggering thought. It is special to be Jewish--look at the provisions and promises in the Scriptures. But to be a child of God, we must be spiritually born into His family by faith.

Jacob: It's there in Scripture, isn't it?

Rabbi: Yes, Jacob. And you know, while I sitting with Jesus, I thought: I could be in the presence of the living God in the flesh.

Jacob: Immanuel.

Rabbi: You have learned well.

Miriam: What we do?

Rabbi: Well ... Because of what he said, for now and for all time, each person will have to consider Jesus' claim and stake his eternal destiny on that decision.

Miriam: Awesome.

*(The Rabbi nods.)*

Jacob: What about his teachings, his life, his miracles? Do they help with that decision?

Rabbi: They speak for themselves. ...I'm exhausted.

*(The Rabbi stands up, then Jacob and Miriam.)*

Rabbi: Is it time to leave?

Jacob: Yes ...

Miriam: ...but we'll be back in the summer.

Rabbi: Good, we'll talk some more. In the meantime, I need to study these scrolls.

Jacob and Miriam: Shalom, Uncle.

Rabbi: Shalom, children.

*(Jacob and Miriam exit. The Rabbi sits down at the table.)*

End of EPISODE 4

**Please order the script to read the rest.**

