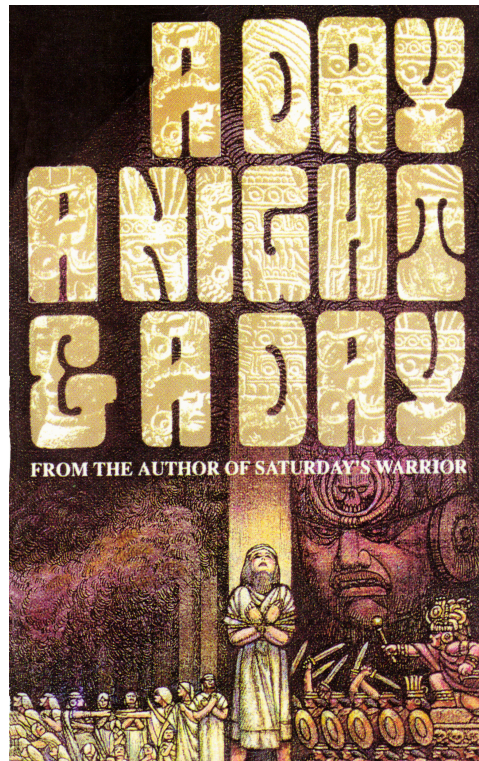


PERUSAL SCRIPT



Book & Lyrics by
Doug Stewart

Music by
William Marsden



Salt Lake City

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A DAY, A NIGHT AND A DAY (Musical)

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CAST OF CHARACTERS -- 12M 2W 1TG 2B 2G + ensemble

SAMUEL -- the Lamanite Prophet

NEPHI -- The Prophet

ESTHER -- his wife

ASHNA -- his daughter (16)

KIB -- his son (9)

SARAH -- his daughter (6)

TIMOTHY -- Assistant to Nephi

ISABEL -- his wife

DEBORAH -- his daughter (10)

JOSEPH -- his son (8)

LACHONEUS -- a Chief Judge

EMRON -- a Judge

PAANCHI -- a Judge

HELAM -- a Judge

ASHRON -- a Judge

PAHOR -- aide to Lachoneus

JACOB -- friend to Nephi

ZELOM -- nephew to Nephi

JARED -- Captain

OTHER MEN, WOMEN & CHILDREN (BELIEVERS & NON-BELIEVERS)

SEVERAL GUARDS

FIRST GIRL, FIRST BOY, SECOND BOY, THIRD BOY

YOUNG FATHER, YOUNG MOTHER

ELDERLY MAN

LAME WOMAN

BOY FRIEND, GIRL FRIEND

AUTHOR BIO

Doug Stewart lives in St. George, Utah. One of the most influential writers in the history of Latter-day drama, Stewart was the playwright and lyricist of the groundbreaking Latter-day Saint-themed musical *Saturday's Warrior* (1974), a project staged by California college students independent of institutional Church sponsorship. He followed this up with a sequel, the musical *Star Child*. "Saturday's Warrior" was adapted to a direct-to-video feature film in 1989 by director Bob Williams and producer David West, and has been widely seen by Church members. A "Star Child" video was released in 1999. Stewart also wrote the screenplay for the major Church-produced film "The Lost Manuscript" (1974), which was directed by Wetzel O. Whitaker. He wrote the screenplay for the independent family film "Where the Red Fern Grows" (1974), produced by Lyman Dayton. Doug brings with him a distinguished career in stage and film. He received his MA degree from BYU in 1968. He went on to become the associate producer of the film, *The Fearmaker*. In 1973 Doug won first place in the Utah Playwriting Contest for his book and lyrics to *Saturday's Warrior*. He also wrote the screenplay for *Where the Red Fern Grows*, which starred James Whitmore and Beverly Garland and won the Blue Ribbon Box Office Award, parent's Magazine Citation, and awards from McCall's and the Motion Picture Association. He also wrote the screenplays *Seven Alone* and *Against a Crooked Sky*, which starred Richard Boone. In 1976, he was commissioned by the LDS Church to write the book and lyrics for the Bicentennial Musical, *Threads of Glory*, part of which was performed at Ronald Reagan's Inauguration in 1981. In 1978 he formed his own production company which toured shows throughout the nation, and continues to license shows world-wide. In 1983 and 84, he co-produced the films *Solo* and *The Red Fury*. Other musicals to his credit include *Latter-Day Ruth*, *Star Child*, *A Day, A Night & A Day*, *Dream Street* and *Almost Perfect*. In 1991 Doug first shared his dream of producing the outdoor musical *UTAH!* The magnificent Tuachan Amphitheater and Center for the Arts are the result of that dream. Doug and His wife Mary are the parents of eight children, and reside in St. George, Utah.

A DAY, A NIGHT AND A DAY A Book of Mormon Drama Book and Lyrics by Doug Stewart. Music by William Marsden. 12M 2W 1TG 2B 2G + ensemble. About 2 hours. Several Locations or one Unit Setting. *(Can be produced by Professionals, LDS Church Groups, Community Groups and College/University Groups.)* The Birth of Christ announced in the New World, to the Nephites and Lamanites. In a society where it was not popular, profitable or safe to be a Believer, The Children of Christ await the signs promised by Samuel, The Lamanite. The leaders have waited five long years to execute and rid themselves of the Believers who await the predicted sign surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, a time when they anticipate "a day, a night and a day" of daylight, with no darkness. Soon, there will be no excuse not to execute the Believers. **ORDER #2063**

A DAY, A NIGHT & A DAY

ACT ONE

INTRO UNDERSCORING

Scene 1: CENTRAL SQUARE -- *Throughout following, ALL enter. First MEN, then WOMEN. Only NEPHI & EMRON are absent.*

SONG: A DAY, A NIGHT & A DAY

MEN:

DAY, A NIGHT, A DAY, PAY-ON-KI
DAY, A NIGHT, A DAY, LA-KO-NI
DAY, A NIGHT, A DAY, SA-RI-HAH.

WOMEN:

DAY, A NIGHT, A DAY, KISH-KUM-RAH.
GOD IS GREAT,

MEN:

CUM-ZA-RA-HEM-NI.

WOMEN:

GOD IS GOOD,

MEN:

KU-MEN-JU-DEE-HAH.

MEN & WOMEN

DAY, A NIGHT, A DAY, LA-MON-I.
DAY, A NIGHT, A DAY, MO-SI-HAH.
GOD IS GREAT, AH-HESH-TA-NE-PHI.
GOD IS GOOD, AH-HESH-TA-LE-HI.

DAY, A NIGHT, DAY, A NIGHT
DAY, A NIGHT, A DAY, A NIGHT AND A...

(LIGHTS UP on SAMUEL standing atop wall, behind scrim.)

SONG: SAMUEL'S PROPHECY

SAMUEL:

BEHOLD...

(ALL on stage turn to face SAMUEL. LIGHTS DIM, leaving BELIEVERS in silhouette during the

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- A Day, a Night and a Day (Musical) by Doug Stewart & William Marsden

following:)

SAMUEL: *(Spoken with energy)* I Samuel, a Lamanite, do speak the words of the Lord: In five years time, cometh the Son of God.

AND BEHOLD, I GIVE UNTO YOU A SIGN, A SIGN TO ANNOUNCE HIS COMING:
ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HE IS BORN, ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HE IS BORN
THERE SHALL BE GREAT LIGHTS... GREAT LIGHTS IN HEAVEN...
ON THE NIGHT WHEN HE IS BORN.

A NIGHT OF BRIGHT CONSOLATION, A NIGHT OF WONDER AND JOY
WHEN GOD REVEALS HIS POWER,
ON THE NIGHT BEFORE HE IS BORN.

AND THE SKY WILL STAY BRIGHT FOR A DAY AND A NIGHT
FOR A DAY, AND A NIGHT, AND A DAY.
AND YOUR HEARTS FILLED WITH JOY SHALL BREAK FORTH INTO SONG
SONGS OF PRAISE:

OH NIGHT, DIVINE, OH GLORIOUS NIGHT
WHEN CHRIST THE LORD SHALL COME.
OH NIGHT, DIVINE, OH GLORIOUS NIGHT
THE NIGHT BEFORE HIS BIRTH.

(LIGHTS OUT on SAMUEL. Exit NON-BELIEVERS, as well as ASHNA, JARED, KIB & SARAH. LIGHTS UP gradually on BELIEVERS, as they move down stage toward audience. ESTHER & ISABEL are prominent. ISABEL'S two children, DEBORAH & JOSEPH stand with her.)

BELIEVERS:

COME LORD JESUS, COME
BRING THY LOVE
BLESSED SAVIOR, SON OF GOD

MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER:

(BELIEVERS look out over audience toward setting sun, with anticipation, hoping that this night the sign may appear. Enter PAHOR & ZELOM.)

PAHOR: Look, it's the sign seekers. And behold Zelom, the Prophet's wife, your dear aunt Esther.

ZELOM: So it is.

PAHOR: Maybe you should tell her the five years are up.

ISABEL: Leave her be.

PAHOR: I do believe her faith actually keeps the sun from setting.

ZELOM: Maybe tonight is the night.

SONG CONTINUES:

(PAHOR & ZELOM mimic BELIEVERS in a disrespectful way, during the following:)

BELIEVERS:

LET THIS BE THE SIGN, LET THIS BE THE NIGHT
WHEN THE SUN GOES OUT OF SIGHT, LET THE SKY STAY BRIGHT
LET THIS BE THE HOUR, PLEASE LORD, BRING THE SIGN
OF THE COMING OF THY SON, THAT WAS PROPHESED.

MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER:

PAHOR: Zelom, I do believe they need our help.

ZELOM: Yes, we must concentrate. We must not let the sun go down.

SONG CONTINUES

PAHOR:

LET THIS BE THE SIGN.
OH, LET IT HAPPEN
LET THE SKY STAY BRIGHT
LET THE SKY STAY BRIGHT
YES, ALL THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT.
OH YES, WE DO BELIEVE IT.
REALLY WE BELIEVE.
HONEST WE BELIEVE TRULY WE
BELIEVE
SURELY WE BELIEVE
SEE HOW I BELIEVE.
YES, LET THIS BE THE NIGHT
WE BELIEVE IT.
WE BELIEVE IT.

ZELOM:

LET THIS BE THE NIGHT
LET THE SKY STAY BRIGHT.
LET THE SKY STAY BRIGHT
LET THE SKY STAY BRIGHT
OH YES, I DO BELIEVE IT.

REALLY WE BELIEVE
HONEST WE BELIEVE
TRULY WE BELIEVE
SURELY WE BELIEVE
LET THIS BE THE NIGHT
LET THIS BE THE NIGHT
WE BELIEVE IT
WE BELIEVE IT.

BELIEVERS:

LET THIS BE
THE SIGN
LET THIS
BE THE
NIGHT
OF THE
COMING
OF
THY
SON
THAT
WAS
PROPHESED.

MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER:

(PAHOR & ZELOM go through all kinds of contortions, trying to hold the sun in it's place.)

PAHOR & ZELOM: *(Ad lib)* It's sinking. No! Oh no, don't go. Please. Stay in the sky.

PAHOR: It's not working. Esther, more faith. More Faith.

ISABEL: You senseless creatures, have you no respect?

ESTHER: No, Isabel.

PAHOR: Ah. Maybe it's Isabel's faith that's lacking.

ISABEL: *(Going at Pahor)* I'll give you a taste of my faith.

(PAHOR, dodges her, laughing. Esther grabs her.)

ZELOM: *(Pointing at sun)* Oh no, the sun's almost gone.

PAHOR: Together, everyone: We Believe. We have faith.

(Joined by Zelom, alternating:)

We believe. We have faith. We believe. We have faith.

(Ad lib)

Ahhhhh.... Ohhhhhhhh... Uhhhhh. Nooo, don't go! Stay!

LIGHTS DIM.

PAHOR & ZELOM: *(Together, deflated)* Ohhhhhhhh.

ZELOM: Such a pity. Night after night, just keeps going down.

(He moves directly to ISABEL.)

PAHOR: But don't lose heart. There's always tomorrow.

(They exit, laughing, as ESTHER restrains ISABEL.)

ISABEL: Esther, how much more does God expect us bear?

BELIEVERS: *(Ad lib)* Yes, tell us. What does Nephi say? How much longer?

ESTHER: We are called to endure. We can't give up now.

ISABEL: Oh, no, we can't give up, not if we're true believers. That's what you keep telling me, Esther, that's what Nephi tells all of us. "Hold on," he says. The sign is at hand. Is it? Is there ever going to be a sign?

BELIEVERS: *(Ad lib)* Yes, tell us... when is the sign coming? etc.

SONG CONTINUES:

ESTHER:

LET YOUR FAITH BE STRONG, SOON IT WILL BE TIME
GOD HAS NOT DESERTED US, HE WILL SEND THE SIGN.

ESTHER:

FILL YOUR SOULS WITH SONG
LIFT YOUR PRAYERS ON HIGH
GATHER STRENGTH, REMEMBERING
WHAT WAS PROPHESED:

BELIEVERS:

COME LORD, JESUS
BRING THY LOVE
BLESSED SAVIOR
SON OF GOD

ISABEL:

I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE, ESTHER, WHERE'S THE SIGN?
HOW MUCH LONGER NOW?

ESTHER:

IT'S JUST AROUND THE CORNER

ISABEL:

SAMUEL SAID FIVE YEARS, NOW THE TIME IS UP
WILL IT EVER COME?

ESTHER:

HAVE FAITH, PERHAPS TOMORROW.

ISABEL:

ESTHER:

ALL I HEAR IS FAITH
ALL I HEAR IS HOPE
HOLD ON BE STRONG, HOLD ON BE STRONG
I CAN'T TAKE MUCH MORE
ESTHER WHERE'S THE SIGN?
HOW MUCH LONGER NOW?
SAMUEL SAID FIVE YEARS
NOW THE TIME IS UP
WILL IT EVER COME?
I HAVE NO MORE PATIENCE TO ENDURE,
THIS.

GATHER ALL YOUR FAITH
GATHER ALL YOUR HOPE
REMEMBERING THAT
THE SKY WILL STAY
BRIGHT
FOR A DAY
AND A NIGHT
FOR A DAY,
AND A
NIGHT,
AND A DAY.

ESTHER:
AND OUR HEARTS
FILLED WITH JOY
SHALL BREAK
FORTH INTO SONG
SONGS OF PRAISE:
REJOICING ON
THAT NIGHT
LOOK
FORWARD TO
THAT NIGHT, AND
DAY AND NIGHT,
OH
NIGHT,
DIVINE
OH
GLORIOUS
NIGHT
WHEN CHRIST
THE
LORD
SHALL
COME

ISABEL:
ALL I HEAR IS FAITH
ALL I HEAR IS HOPE
ESTHER WHY ARE WE
SUBJECT TO THIS SHAME
WHY CAN'T THEY JUST LEAVE US ALONE.
WHY THE CONSTANT HATRED
AND SCORN?
WHY THE PERSECUTION
AND SPITE.
I WISH IT ALL WOULD
FINALLY END
IF I ONLY KNEW THAT THE
SIGN WOULD COME,
I WOULD BE AS FAITHFUL AS
ANYONE
ALL THIS SUFFERING, WHAT'S IT
ALL ABOUT?
IT'S A TERRIBLE FEELING, ALL
THIS DOUBT. HOW I NEED
YOUR FAITH, HOW I NEED
YOUR STRENGTH
ESTHER, HELP ME.

BELIEVERS:
LET THIS BE THE-
LET THIS BE
THE NIGHT
LET THIS BE
THE NIGHT
LET THIS BE
THE NIGHT
LET THIS BE
THE NIGHT
THE COMING
OF THE SAVIOR
LET THIS BE
THE NIGHT
LET THIS
BE
THE
SIGN
LET THIS BE
THE NIGHT,
THE SIGN, OH
LET IT
LET IT BE THE...

ALL

LET IT BE THE NIGHT, LET IT BE THE NIGHT, LET IT BE THE NIGHT, ETC.

MUSIC OUT

LIGHTS OUT

MUSIC CUE: SCENE CHANGE

Scene 2: JUDGMENT SEAT. *EMRON dominates the scene. LACHONEUS sits on his throne, NEPHI & JACOB before him. PAANCHI, ASHRON & HELAM are present.*

NEPHI: That question. Will your lips never tire of it? Days and weeks you have hammered it, and from every witness appearing before this bar, the answer has been the same. And still you would have me repeat it? If I, Nephi, rejoin, will your ears be more receptive?

PAANCHI: You are not here to interrogate this council. Answer as you are instructed.

EMRON: Answer the Chief Judge. What gives you privilege to defy the Privacy Law?

NEPHI: It is not law. It is oppression: Forbidding us to speak—to publicly bear witness of Christ.

EMRON: You proud, insolent people.

JACOB: Yes, we are a proud people, Emron. And also God fearing. It is you who have rejected God's Prophet... Turned from God's love!

EMRON: (*Lashing out*) You dare judge my love for God. You, who have made a mockery of the Law of Moses, preaching this myth you call Christ!

JACOB: Christ is not a myth!

EMRON: He is Heresy! And God will hold you accountable-- Turning this people from His true way.

LACHONEUS: Enough! We are not here to argue Theology! The issue is freedom. Whether we subscribe to it, or we don't.

EMRON: Freedom within the law!

NEPHI: Freedom to proclaim God's word! The Privacy Act must be removed... stricken from the Chronicles of this free land! We have a right to speak, a commandment to bear witness, and we shall continue to warn this nation!

EMRON: You will obey, or suffer the consequence!

NEPHI: Lachoneus, give heed to my words. He comes. The prophecy of Samuel must be fulfilled. Repent of this evil. Look to the coming of Christ, and the great sign...

LACHONEUS: This is not the place, Nephi...

NEPHI: Look to the sign!

UNDERSCORING

EMRON: And the preaching never ends.

JACOB: Scoff if you will, Emron, but the Prophecy of Samuel will be fulfilled.

EMRON: The five years are up, Jacob.

ASHRON: So where is this sign?

ALL JUDGES: (*Minus Lachoneus; Ad lib*) Yes, where? Where is it? Where? Where is the sign?

SONG: WHERE IS THE SIGN?

EMRON:

IF YOU USE LOGIC AND REASON YOU'LL

HAVE TO ADMIT THAT IT'S TREASON TO
THINK THAT A SIGN FROM THE HEAVENS IS NIGH

JUDGE (TENOR)

SUCH THINGS ARE HIGHLY IMPROBABLE,
YOU MUST ADMIT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE,
A DAY, A NIGHT AND A DAY OF BLUE SKY.

JUDGES

WHERE IS THE SIGN YOU SEEK, WHERE IS THE SIGN YOU NEED
STOPPING THE SCORN AND THE SHAME?
SAMUEL THE LAMANITE, COULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO RIGHT
IF YOU'RE STILL WAITING IN VAIN.

WHERE IS THE SIGN? WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN? WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN? WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN? WHERE IS THE SIGN?

NEPHI & JACOB:

WHAT GOD HAS SAID, WILL SURELY BE, HE BRINGS TO PASS, ALL PROPHECY.

JACOB:

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE US

NEPHI:

THEN WE WON'T FORCE YOU TO BELIEVE US

JACOB:

BUT WHY CAN'T YOU

NEPHI:

WHY WON'T YOU

NEPHI & JACOB:

WHY CAN'T YOU LEAVE US ALONE?

LACHONEUS:

NEPHI, YOU KNOW I WOULD HELP YOU, IF
THERE WERE A WAY I COULD HELP YOU, BUT
FIRST YOU MUST MAKE ME BELIEVE IN THE SIGN

PAANCHI & EMRON:

WE SEE NO LOGICAL EVIDENCE,
NO RHYME OR REASON OR PRECEDENCE,
A SIGN TO HERALD IN GOD'S HOLY SON.

JUDGES

WHERE IS THE SIGN YOU SEEK , WHERE IS THE SIGN YOU NEED
STOPPING THE SCORN AND THE SHAME?
SAMUEL THE LAMANITE, COULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO RIGHT
IF YOU'RE STILL WAITING IN VAIN.

WHERE IS THE SIGN? WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN? WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN? WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN? WHERE IS THE SIGN?

JUDGES

WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?

NEPHI & JACOB:

WHAT GOD HAS SAID,
WILL SURELY BE
HE BRINGS TO PASS,
ALL PROPHECY

JACOB:

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE US

NEPHI:

THEN WE WON'T FORCE YOU TO BELIEVE US

JACOB:

BUT WHY CAN'T YOU

JUDGES:

WHERE IS IT?

NEPHI:

WHY WON'T YOU

JUDGES

WHERE IS IT?

JUDGES

WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN YOU SEEK
WHERE IS THE SIGN YOU NEED
STOPPING THE SCORN AND THE SHAME?
SAMUEL THE LAMANITE, COULDN'T HAVE
BEEN SO RIGHT
IF YOU'RE STILL WAITING IN VAIN.
WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?
WHERE IS THE SIGN?

NEPHI & JACOB:

WHY CAN'T YOU LEAVE US ALONE?
LEAVE US ALONE.
LEAVE US ALONE.
LEAVE US ALONE.
LEAVE US ALONE.
LEAVE US ALONE.
LEAVE US ALONE.
LEAVE US ALONE.
LEAVE US
ALONE
LEAVE US A-
LEAVE US
ALONE.

MUSIC OUT.

LACHONEUS: Nephi... I am sympathetic to your cause. But I am only one voice in this council. My three votes won't make a difference,

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(Looking toward Paanchi)

unless someone stands with me. We will give it due consideration. Now go.

(NEPHI momentarily holds his ground.)

EMRON: You heard the Chief Judge, Get out!

(After a sharp visual exchange between NEPHI and EMRON, JACOB and NEPHI exit.)

Your Excellency, how much do they expect us to bear? Day after day, catechized and preached at by these religious... religious fanatics!

LACHONEUS: Please, Emron...

EMRON: You need to be shaken! Aroused! All of you. Or have you not heard? Because of these fanatics we have become the great jest of Zarahemla!

PAANCHI: He makes a good point, Lachoneus. There's even talk that...

(Uneasy laughter)

That we're afraid of them.

ASHRON: Afraid to enforce the Privacy Law.

HELAM: Afraid of their numbers and their resistance.

EMRON: Afraid to do anything, except hold hearings, and more hearings, and if we hold any more...

(Toward Lachoneus)

Some of us might be converted.

LACHONEUS: Or make bigger fools of ourselves?

(Enter JARED.)

JARED: Father, I must speak with you.

EMRON: Not now, Jared.

JARED: Please, it's important...

EMRON: Lachoneus... My son, Jared... To whom I've given the task of quelling the growing hatred among Nimrod's followers.

JARED: But with little success, your Excellency. Violence is everywhere. Mobs are roaming the streets. And all because of the Privacy law. Please, sir, there must be something...

EMRON: Jared, the Chief Judge is sworn to uphold the law.

(Leading him out of the Judge's hearing)

Now, we are engaged in pressing matters...

JARED: Father, I fear for Ashna.

(EMRON pulls him toward the door, speaking aside.)

EMRON: We'll discuss it later.

JARED: I must know that she will be protected.

EMRON: All right. You have my word, she will not be harmed. Now leave us.

(JARED leaves.)

PAANCHI: *(Amused)* Did he say Ashna? Nephi's daughter?

EMRON: A youthful indiscretion, Paanchi.

LACHONEUS: As once was your allegiance to Nephi, Emron? Before he cast you out of his Church.

EMRON: I was not cast out. I left the Church.

PAANCHI: Some would question that.

EMRON: My only allegiance is to the Law of Moses, and to this nation! Whose very foundation stands in

peril. Lachoneus, we must act now, if we are to avert a great calamity!

LACHONEUS: Then I say, repeal the Privacy Law!

EMRON: No! Strict Enforcement!

HELAM: Aye, Enforcement.

ASHRON: Aye.

LACHONEUS: What say you, Paanchi? Will you stand with me? These people have done nothing to merit its inequity.

EMRON: Are you blind? They preach from door to door and in the streets. They slander good and virtuous people, calling them liars, sinners, adulterers! You call that nothing?

PAANCHI: In all fairness, Emron, many are Nimrod's followers, posing as Believers!

EMRON: Damn, Nimrod! Our citizens must have their privacy!

LACHONEUS: (*Topping him*) Privacy, yes! Freedom, no! Is that what you're saying?

(*Long pause. EMRON softens, but the frustration comes through.*)

EMRON: Lachoneus... There's more. What I'm about to tell you... I hoped it might not be true. But the evidence... the evidence is overpowering.

LACHONEUS: What evidence?

EMRON: There can be no doubt now. Its tragic dimensions are fixed. In ugly horror it looms above us!

LACHONEUS: Emron, what are you talking about?

EMRON: I'm talking about Christ. I'm talking about treason, insurrection, murder.

LACHONEUS: Murder.

EMRON: This government is to be overthrown. We are to be slain.

LACHONEUS: Nephi's people-- these Christians are not capable of treason!

HELAM: By whose word does this come?

PAANCHI: Explain yourself, Emron.

EMRON: A devious plot... to make Nephi King.

PAANCHI: King?

LACHONEUS: That's absurd!

EMRON: You've heard him expound. He declares that a God will come down from heaven and walk among men. But it does not end there. He speaks of a kingdom, a kingdom that will topple all governments.

(*Unrolls parchment*)

And I quote: "We his people, shall be heirs to that kingdom."

PAANCHI: A spiritual kingdom... Surely it can mean nothing more.

EMRON: (*Quoting again*) "And it shall conquer nations, kingdoms, and principalities?"

PAANCHI: One quotation is not sufficient evidence for treason.

EMRON: In the name of sound judgment, Paanchi, open your ears to the truth.

LACHONEUS: But sedition, Emron?

EMRON: I have witnesses. Let them speak.

(*Suddenly PAHOR enters. The sounds of angry mob can be heard outside, chanting: "Justice... We demand justice." etc.*)

PAHOR: Your Excellency...

LACHONEUS: What is it?

PAHOR: Nimrod, sir...

LACHONEUS: Well?

PAHOR: He demands to be heard at once.

LACHONEUS: This is a closed session!

VOICE: *(Off stage)* Is this a land of law, or a wilderness of anarchy?

ANOTHER VOICE: Let Nimrod speak!

(Again, the CROWD begins to chant: "Justice! Justice! We demand Justice!")

EMRON: He wields a great influence...

LACHONEUS: Yes, I hear his wolves howling.

PAHOR: He demands that Nephi and his people be punished for breaking the law... the Privacy Law.

LACHONEUS: I will not have Nimrod dictating to me in matters of law!

PAHOR: He threatens to take the matter into his own hands unless...

LACHONEUS: *(Shouting)* I will not see Nimrod now!

PAHOR: *(Bowing out)* Yes, your Excellency.

(The sounds of CROWD are shut out, as PAHOR exits. LACHONEUS appears somewhat disturbed. He turns to EMRON.)

LACHONEUS: You spoke of witnesses.

EMRON: In the adjoining chamber-- many of them defectors from Nephi's Church. Men who know the Prophet well.

PAANCHI: And if evidence is sufficient to prove treason?

LACHONEUS: Impossible!

EMRON: If evidence is sufficient, there is but one course.

(Pause)

The Anti-Christ Ultimatum!

LACHONEUS: You're insane! That insufferably grotesque act has been thrown out twice before. It is beneath our dignity to speak of it, let alone reconsider it!

EMRON: I marvel at your blindness, Lachoneus.

PAANCHI: I too must agree, Emron, the severity.

ASHRON: And the danger.

HELAM: It is a harsh course.

EMRON: This government is about to be overthrown, and we are about to be murdered. I have absolute proof of it. Let my witnesses speak before you condemn this Ultimatum, "insufferably grotesque." Let their testimonies ring in your ears before you speak of severity. Give ear to the stark siren of truth, and in the next hour you will cry out for the Anti-Christ Ultimatum!

(PAHOR comes rushing in again. The sounds of the CROWD are louder: "Punishment to Believers! The Law must be enforced!" etc.)

PAHOR: Your Excellency, Nimrod...

LACHONEUS: I told you what to tell Nimrod! Now...

VOICE: *(Off stage)* Has Lachoneus lost his power?

ANOTHER VOICE: Where is the voice of judgment?

ANOTHER VOICE: It trembles and quails before the voice of Nephi.

(CROWD laughs and taunts.)

LACHONEUS: Get out!

PAHOR: But...

LACHONEUS: Get out!

(PAHOR exits, shutting out noise of the CROWD. There are several beats of silence. All Judges look toward LACHONEUS. After a pause:)

LACHONEUS: Bring in the witnesses.

BLACKOUT

MUSIC CUE: SCENE CHANGE

Scene 3 : CENTRAL SQUARE. *NON-BELIEVERS talk and laugh by a well. ESTHER, ISABEL & ASHNA enter carrying water jugs.*

FIRST GIRL: Hey, it's the sign seekers.

FIRST BOY: Ah ha.

(SECOND BOY rushes in front of ISABEL, cutting her off from the well.)

SECOND BOY: Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes...

SECOND GIRL: *(Touching Ashna's face)* Such pretty people.

(CROWD laughs. ISABEL breaks away from the SECOND BOY and starts for the well. THIRD BOY lunges in front of her, making face and mocking gestures.)

THIRD BOY: Grrrrrrrr.

(CROWD laughter. ISABEL retreats.)

See her run from the awful demon.

FIRST BOY: *(Going to Esther)* Any visions lately?

THIRD BOY: Angels?

SECOND BOY: Dreams?

(More laughter as several dance around the three women, making rude sounds: "ch ch ch ch ch" etc. The UNBELIEVERS drift off to the background. ISABEL tenses, ready to go after them.)

ISABEL: I can't stand it!

ESTHER: *(Grabbing her)* Patience, Isabel.

ISABEL: *(Sarcastically)* Patience? Oh yes, of course... we must be patient. What would the people think if Isabel, wife to the Prophet's brother were anything less than saintly.

ESTHER: We will get through this.

(Enter PAHOR & ZELOM.)

ASHNA: Mother, it's Zelom.

ISABEL: And look who's with him.

PAHOR: Zelom, behold-- Your pretty cousin, Ashna.

(ZELOM would rather avoid the three women.)

PAHOR: Poor girl, she has yet to learn of her father's derangement.

ISABEL: Leave the child alone. Be on your way.

PAHOR: Is this your nurse-maid, Ashna?

ISABEL: Hush your mouth, you vile...

ESTHER: It does no good, Isabel, ignore him.

PAHOR: Well, I see that Isabel has a nurse-maid, too. But then It's only right for the Prophet's wife to give orders. Aren't all the holy people taking orders from the Prophet and his wife? Oh, it's a shame, a real shame people can't think for themselves. Shall I tell you what you are? Sheep! Foolishly following the fancy of a lunatic shepherd. Isn't that right, Zelom?

ZELOM: Yes, a false prophet.

ASHNA: Oh, Zelom.

PAHOR: Ashna, Ashna, did we hurt your feelings? We're so sorry.

(She turns away)

Oh, but surely a believer in Christ would not turn her back on two sinners desperately in need of conversion. Unless you teach us, how will we come to believe? You do want everyone to believe, don't you? In Christ, and the great sign-- the one that's coming any day?

(He forces a kiss on her. ISABEL lunges toward PAHOR. ESTHER is quick to pull her back.)

ISABEL: I won't stand for this! She's not one of your strumpets, and I won't let you abuse her.

(ESTHER speaks directly and firmly to PAHOR.)

ESTHER: You will not touch her again.

PAHOR: Behold the prophetess in her ire.

ISABEL: And you Zelom, partner to all this serpent. You are worse than Pahor, for you taunt and persecute your own.

ZELOM: Shut up!

ISABEL: Even Ashna, your own cousin have you turned upon... Your mother and father, brothers and sisters, like a wild animal turning upon its young. You are putty, Zelom. Nothing but putty in the hands of this heathen.

(ZELOM slaps ISABEL's face.)

ISABEL: You prove my point with the dignity of a swine.

ZELOM: You are the putty, all of you. I'm the only one in the family with courage enough to think for myself... To recognize blind faith for what it is-- a thief. A thief of reason, and logic. you call me putty. Who is being molded, manipulated, blindly led? You say you worship a God in heaven. That's a lie. You worship Samuel and Nephi, them and their fairy tales. They are your gods. I am free, my own keeper, my own god.

ESTHER: *(Quietly, sadly)* Yes, Zelom, you have become your own god.

ASHNA: Zelom, listen to me. It's not too late. You can still come back. You haven't forgotten so quickly? The sign is coming, and Christ...

ZELOM: Don't speak to me of Christ. There is no Christ. Don't fall for those lies preached by your father.

ASHNA: He does not lie.

ISABEL: It's no use, Ashna. he's hardened to the core.

PAHOR: You blind fools. You wait so patiently for a great supernatural sign to announce the birth of a being that doesn't exist. Well, sit here then, waiting and praying. Yes, wait for a hundred years, but never, never will that sign appear. "A day, a night & a day without darkness. Ha.

ASHNA: You laugh now, Pahor, and you scoff at us Zelom. But I know what we believe is true. Father is a Prophet, and so was Samuel, and just as he prophesied, there will be a night, just as bright as this day. And Christ will come. He will.

PAHOR: Ha, foolish girl.

ASHNA: Zelom, you do believe; I know you do. Please come and talk to father.

ZELOM: (*Nervously*) No, no, leave me alone.

ASHNA: Then talk to Jared. He was once your friend.

PAHOR: (*Laughing*) Jared? She says talk to Jared?

ASHNA: He still believes, I know he does.

PAHOR: And that's why he was at Nimrod's rally?

ASHNA: That's a lie. He would never associate with Nimrod.

PAHOR: (*Into her ear*) Ask him yourself. Here he comes now.

(Enter JARED, seeing ASHNA pull away from PAHOR, repulsed.)

JARED: What's going on?

ASHNA: Jared.

PAHOR: Come Zelom, before their light blinds our eyes.

ZELOM: Foolish believers. There is no Christ. Christ is a myth!

JARED: Ashna, what happened?

ESTHER: Pahor forced himself on her.

ISABEL: Monster. Kissing her, right here in the square.

JARED: What? I'll kill... Just let me get my hands on him.

ASHNA: He said you were at Nimrod's rally.

JARED: Nimrod's rally?

ASHNA: Were you?

(All eyes are on him. He leads ASHNA apart from ESTHER & ISABEL, who remain the background, during the following:)

JARED: Ashna... It's not what it seems.

ASHNA: Then you were there.

JARED: Yes. But only because...

ASHNA: Jared. Nimrod seeks to destroy my father.

JARED: You've got to believe what I'm doing is for you.

ASHNA: Just answer me. Do you still believe in Christ?

JARED: (*After pause*) I... I thought I did once... but...

INTRO UNDERSCORING

ASHNA: Jared.

JARED: My love for you hasn't changed. Why must everyone take sides? What difference does it make, who's right or wrong. If the sign comes, if there is a Christ, I'll be glad. If he doesn't come, I won't love you any less. That's what I really care about, is us.

ASHNA: Father was right. You're not the same person.

SONG: WHAT HAPPENED?

ASHNA:

WHAT HAPPENED?

THE MAN I LOVED WAS FILLED WITH FAITH, HE HAD SUCH VISION.
I MISS HIM. WHAT HAPPENED?
WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU VOWED TO ALWAYS FOLLOW CHRIST, WITH SUCH DEVOTION.
YOU LOVED HIM. WHAT HAPPENED?

JARED:

IT'S NOT SO MUCH THAT THINGS HAVE CHANGED IT'S JUST THE WAY THINGS ARE.
WHAT BROUGHT THESE DOUBTS AND FEELINGS NOW I REALLY CAN'T RECALL.
BUT SOMETHING THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE IS WHAT I FEEL FOR YOU.
YOU SAID YOU FELT THE SAME ABOUT ME, NOW YOU LOOK WITH SHAME UPON ME...
ASHNA, ASHNA... WHAT HAPPENED?

ASHNA:

WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU HAD SUCH FAITH YOU SPOKE OF CHRIST AS IF YOU KNEW HIM,
THAT THROUGH HIM YOU WOULD BE FREE.

JARED:

WHAT HAPPENED?
YOU SAID THAT NOTHING IN THIS WORLD WOULD COME BETWEEN US.
YOU PROMISED. WHAT HAPPENED? YOU SAID YOU LOVED ME.

ASHNA:

YOU'D FOLLOW JESUS.

JARED & ASHNA:

YOU LOVED ME (HIM)
WHAT HAPPENED? OH ASHNA (JARED)
WHAT HAPPENED TO US.

MUSIC TRAILS AWAY

JARED: I'm just confused, is that a sin? I hear your father speak with such power, and I admit, I feel something, deeply. But my father's arguments are just as convincing. They both quote the scriptures. They both claim to be servants of God.

ASHNA: But they both can't be right. What are we going to do?

MUSIC OUT

(JACOB enters, carrying Ultimatum in hand, being pursued by anxious BELIEVERS, PAHOR, ZELOM & GUARDS. They shout: "What does it say, Jacob?" Just before posting the Ultimatum, Esther stops him.)

ESTHER: Jacob, What is the meaning of this?

PAHOR: From our great and noble Council of Judges, Esther-- an Ultimatum!

(JACOB breaks from ESTHER, and goes to post the Ultimatum.)

ISABEL: Ultimatum? What Ultimatum?

ESTHER: Jacob, what does it say?

BELIEVER: Yes, tell us!

ANOTHER BELIEVER: Are they sending us to prison?

PAHOR: Prison? You should be so lucky.

(ISABEL & JARED read the Ultimatum.)

ASHNA: Jared, what does it say?

(ISABEL goes rigid, then slowly back away from the ultimatum.)

ISABEL: No. No, it can't be!

(She rushes from the Square. JARED turns from reading Ultimatum.)

JARED: It's what my father and I have been fighting...

(Grabbing Pahor, Face to face:)

But how do you talk reason to animals.

(JARED cuffs, then slugs PAHOR, knocking him to the ground.)

PAHOR: *(Getting up)* You're a Christian, after all. I should have guessed it.

UNDERSCORING

PAHOR: But not so stupid as to admit it now, huh Jared?

(Cuffing him back)

Having read the Ultimatum.

(More cuffing; He moves to Ashna)

How about you, pretty one? Are you still willing to admit your belief in Christ, knowing that it means death?

(YOUNG MOTHER & YOUNG FATHER, hurry to the posting board to read.)

ESTHER: Death?

ASHNA: Mother...

YOUNG FATHER: *(At posting board)* It does say death.

YOUNG MOTHER: They can't really mean it.

(The BELIEVERS react with growing hysteria.)

PAHOR: Of course unless the sign comes in two days. Or unless you have the good sense to deny.

(Jumping to high place, shouting)

At long last the myth of Christ is dead! Death to Believers!

(ZELOM & GUARDS join in the chant: "Death to Believers... Death to Believers!" They exit with their chant. JARED pulls ASHNA off. JACOB tries to avoid ESTHER. She goes after him.)

ESTHER: Jacob!

(He stops.)

INTRO UNDERSCORING

ESTHER: What have you done?

(No response; forceful)

Answer me.

JACOB: (*Uneasy*) It's not what we say, Esther... but.. how we feel inside... is that not most important?

ESTHER: No, not you. Please, tell me you didn't...

JACOB: I had to for the sake of the Church.

ESTHER: You have denied?

JACOB: I only want to carry on God's work, believe me...

ESTHER: (*With strength*) You have denied God's son?!

SONG: ONLY WORDS

JACOB:

WHAT I SAY, WHAT I SPEAK, DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T BELIEVE
ESTHER, DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY.
IF WE DON'T GO ALONG, THEY WILL KILL US, EVERY ONE
IT WILL COME, LIKE THE JUDGMENT DAY.

YOU MUST UNDERSTAND, I'M ONLY A MAN
WITH A GOD GIVEN PASSION TO SURVIVE.
SO I MUST QUESTION WHY, IS IT WORTH IT TO DIE--
AND TO MAKE SUCH A SACRIFICE.

CAN'T YOU SEE, IT'S ONLY WORDS
GOD KNOWS THAT I STILL BELIEVE, IT'S ONLY WORDS
CAN'T YOU SEE IT'S ONLY FLESH.
CAN'T YOU SEE IT'S ONLY WORDS.

MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER:

ESTHER: Only words, flesh? Oh Jacob.

(Music softens)

What is life, but flesh? And soul, but words? And every act and breath, but what we are? Every word, the
sinew of our souls.

*(Other BELIEVERS enter during the following, and show shock, as they are informed of
JACOB'S denial.)*

SONG CONTINUES:

ESTHER:

FAITHFUL, WE MUST BE FAITHFUL, AND CHRIST OUR SAVIOR WE MUST DEFEND
FAITHFUL, WE MUST BE FAITHFUL, AND WE SHALL TRIUMPH IN THE END.
FAITHFUL, HIS PROMISE BRIGHT AND TRUE. FAITHFUL, AND HEARTS ARE BORN ANEW
FAITHFUL, WE MUST BE FAITHFUL, WE MUST BE FAITHFUL...

(ESTHER reaches to take JACOB's hand. He jerks away. He turns to go, but is stopped, coming

face to face with the BELIEVERS.)

MEN:

HEAR THIS MAN, HE'S DENIED. TO HIS PEOPLE HE HAS LIED.
WHILE HE CLAIMED TO HOLD FAST TO THE ROD.

WOMEN:

HOW COULD ONE SUCH AS HE, SET APART AND CALLED TO LEAD
TURN HIS BACK ON THE SON OF GOD?

WOMEN:

HE STILL CLAIMS IN HIS
HEART HE BELIEVES.

JACOB:

ALL OF YOU ARE JUDGING ME
BUT YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, IN MY HEART
I STILL BELIEVE GOD KNOWS ME FOR WHO I AM.

MEN

SEE THIS MAN,
WHO HAS DENIED.
HEAR THIS MAN,
TO US HE LIED.

SEE THIS MAN,
WHO HAS DENIED.
HEAR THIS MAN,
TO US HE LIED.

ESTHER:

JACOB, WE MUST BE FAITHFUL,
WE MUST BE FAITHFUL TO THE END.
FAITHFUL, WE MUST BE FAITHFUL,
AND CHRIST OUR SAVIOR, WE'LL DEFEND.
FAITHFUL, WE MUST BE FAITHFUL,
AND WE SHALL TRIUMPH IN THE END.

JACOB:

CAN'T YOU SEE IT'S ONLY WORDS. GOD
KNOWS THAT I STILL BELIEVE, IT'S ONLY WORDS.
CAN'T YOU SEE IT'S ONLY FLESH. CAN'T YOU
SEE IT'S ONLY WORDS.

MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER

ESTHER: Jacob. In all this world is there nothing you stand for? No person... or principle... you would die for?

(With bowed head, he exits. ESTHER & BELIEVERS exit. ASHNA and JARED are left alone.)

JARED: You're not going to die, Ashna. I won't let you.

ASHNA: I could never deny Christ.

JARED: You won't have to. There's another way. Come.

(He leads her off. LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.)

MUSIC CONTINUES, SCENE CHANGE

Scene 4: NEPHI'S HOUSE. KIB & SARAH work on a puzzle. SARAH hardly takes a breath, as she rambles on.

SARAH: Kib, that piece doesn't go there. (giggles) Look how funny it looks-- a tail growing out of his head. Here, try this one. He sure looks better with an ear. You're not very good with puzzles, are you?

KIB: Who cares about this old puzzle anyway.

SARAH: I'm hungry. When is Mother coming home? Why didn't she let us go with her? We never get to go out any more. (Gasping) What if robbers came? Two of them tied up Rebecca and her mother and took all their gold, and Rebecca's mother is a big person. I think we're too little to be left home alone, Kib. Ashna says if we keep the doors locked and shout out with a mean voice, no one will harm us. But I think we're too young. Do you think we're too young?

KIB: I think you talk too much, Sarah.

SARAH: At school, Kelna threw dirt in my hair, and everybody laughed. Did I tell you that? All the unbelievers, always make fun of me, and they say rude things about father. They say, "How's the Prophet?", only they say it meaner. Why do they do that, Kib?

KIB: Because they think he's crazy, just like they think we are?

SARAH: But we're not crazy? Just because we believe in Jesus, and the great sign, and in angels?

(Off stage we hear angry voices: "Deny the sign & live. Deny the sign and live. One more day before it's too late! One more day! etc." A small object of pottery is thrown in, shattering on the floor.)

SARAH: Oh Kib, I'm scared.

(KIB picks up a small roll of parchment that lies next to the broken pottery. The chanting fades.)

What does it say?

KIB: *(Reading)* Would a true prophet... lead thousands to their deaths? Deny the sign and live.

SARAH: What does that mean, Kib?

KIB: It's just a prank. A mean old prank.

(SARAH starts to cry.)

SARAH: I want mother. When is mother coming home?

KIB: Stop it. I thought you were a big girl.

SARAH: No, I'm not. I'm the littlest one in the family.

(SARAH cries all the more. KIB puts his arm around her, and draws her close.)

KIB: Hush now, it's going to be all right. There's no need to be frightened, Sarah. Not if we believe in Jesus.

SARAH: Yes, but when is Jesus coming?

KIB: I don't know. But I hope it's soon.

INTRO UNDERSCORING

SARAH: I wish God would send an angel to tell us. Wouldn't that be wonderful? I wouldn't be afraid if I could see an angel. Have you ever seen an angel, Kib?

KIB: Of course not. You have to be a prophet to see one.

SARAH: Like father. I'm sure he's seen one. Don't you think so?

KIB: I don't know. Maybe.

SARAH: I wish I could see one. Oh, how I wish.

SONG: IF I COULD SEE AN ANGEL

SARAH:

IF I COULD SEE AN ANGEL THIS VERY NIGHT.
A BRIGHT AND SHINY ANGEL, WITH HEAVEN'S LIGHT.
MY FEARS WOULD QUICKLY FLOAT AWAY
COMPLETELY OUT OF SIGHT
IF AN ANGEL CAME TO ME THIS VERY NIGHT.

IF I COULD SEE AN ANGEL, I WOULD BE STRONG
I'D SMILE AND BE SO HAPPY, THE WHOLE DAY LONG.
THE SKIES WOULD BE LIKE RAINBOWS
AND THINGS WOULD BE ALL RIGHT
IF AN ANGEL CAME TO ME THIS VERY NIGHT.

IF I PRAY WITH ALL MY HEART FOR A MIRACLE
IS THAT ALL I HAVE TO DO?
IF A PERSON HAS THE FAITH FOR A MIRACLE
WILL A MIRACLE COME TRUE?

IF I COULD SEE AN ANGEL, THIS VERY NIGHT
A BRIGHT AND SHINY ANGEL, WITH HEAVEN'S LIGHT.
MY FEARS WOULD QUICKLY FLOAT AWAY
COMPLETELY OUT OF SIGHT
IF AN ANGEL CAME TO ME
IF AN ANGEL CAME TO ME
IF AN ANGEL CAME TO ME THIS VERY NIGHT.

MUSIC OUT

(Enter ESTHER & ASHNA. SARAH rushes to her.)

SARAH: Mother.

ESTHER: What's wrong, Sarah?

(Seeing shattered pottery)

What happened?

KIB: *(Handing her note)* This was thrown in through the window.

SARAH: It says father is going to kill people.

KIB: What does it mean, Mother? Why would they say such terrible things?

(ESTHER hands message to ASHNA.)

KIB: It's something bad, isn't it? I can tell because Ashna's been crying.

ESTHER: It's your father's place to tell you, Kib. I'm sure he'll be here soon.

ASHNA: *(Trying to be cheery)* Well, what's my little sister been doing today?

SARAH: Oh, we've been playing, and guess what? We put half the puzzle together.

ESTHER: *(To Ashna)* Come, we better start supper.

(They turn to exit, just as NEPHI enters. SARAH & KIB rush into NEPHI's arms.)

SARAH & KIB: Father.

NEPHI: Esther, I do believe there are no finer children in all of Zarahemla.

(Going to Ashna)

And this one is no exception. And I know for a fact, there is no greater woman in all the land, than my beloved.

(ESTHER turns away, overcome with emotion.)

NEPHI: You've heard?

(Esther nods)

And the children?

KIB: Father, Mother said you'd tell us.

(Handing him note)

It has something to do with this, doesn't it?

SARAH: Some mean people threw it in. And they were shouting bad things about you.

NEPHI: *(Reading)* Would a true prophet...

SARAH: You wouldn't kill people, would you, father?

(He crumples the message and walks apart, ESTHER following, out of hearing range of KIB & SARAH.)

ESTHER: Nephi, we can't let them harm the children.

NEPHI: Even if it means taking up arms to defend them?

ESTHER: I would do anything to protect them. Anything.

NEPHI: Let us pray that is what the Lord wants.

(Enter TIMOTHY and a very distraught ISABEL, with their children, DEBORAH & JOSEPH.)

ISABEL: We shouldn't be here, it isn't right.

TIMOTHY: Just speak to him. You promised.

NEPHI: Timothy, what is it?

ISABEL: *(Holding back; to Timothy)* Nothing Nephi says is going to change my mind.

JOSEPH: *(This kid has spunk)* Don't be afraid mother. No matter what's wrong, I'll protect you. Even if I have to fight all the Gadianton Robbers single-handed!

DEBORAH: Will someone tell us what's going on?

KIB: Father, please tell us.

NEPHI: Yes, Kib. You have a right to know. Children...

(Gathering them close)

Today the Judges of our land did a terrible thing...

ISABEL: I can't bear to listen.

NEPHI: They signed into law a decree... That unless God sends the sign in two days... all those who believe in Jesus...

(Pause)

... must die.

KIB: What?

JOSEPH: No!

DEBORAH: Would they really do that, Father?

TIMOTHY: Yes, Deborah.

KIB: *(With frustration)* But you promised I'd live to see the sign, don't you remember? On the day Samuel prophesied.

NEPHI: The sign will come only when Christ is born.

KIB: But you promised!

ESTHER: Kib, your father will do all he can to protect you. To protect all the children.

ISABEL: Do you mean that, Esther?

DEBORAH: No, mother. We should all be treated the same.

ISABEL: You're innocent. You've done nothing worthy of death.

DEBORAH: Neither have you and father.

JOSEPH: *(Angry)* Why don't we just kill them first. That's what Ammon and Moroni would do. That's what Helaman and his stripling warriors would do.

TIMOTHY: No son, the answer is not taking up the sword against our brothers.

JOSEPH: They're not my brothers!

(JOSEPH, all huffy, goes off by himself.)

KIB: Well, I agree with Deborah. I don't want to be treated any different from you, Father. I believe in Jesus just as much.

SARAH: Me too.

DEBORAH: We should each be given the chance to make our own decision.

ISABEL: Timothy, please...

ESTHER: There is another way. We have friends in Bountiful. Non-believers, but good people. I'm sure, if we ask, they'll hide the children, both yours and ours.

ISABEL: Yes, of course.

ESTHER: Ashna, you could take them...

ASHNA: Jared and I have already talked about it. And he thinks he can get his father to provide us safe passage out of the city...

NEPHI: That's not the answer.

ESTHER: But Nephi, surely the Lord...

NEPHI: I believe the Lord has spoken to us, Esther... Through these children.

DEBORAH: Then, you'll let us choose, father?

TIMOTHY: *(Looking to Nephi)* If that is what God wishes.

ISABEL: No! I won't permit it!

TIMOTHY: Enough, Isabel.

ISABEL: This is more than I can bear.

(She walks slightly apart.)

NEPHI: Children, this is the greatest test...

INTRO UNDERSCORING

NEPHI: ...God has ever given any people. If you choose to live, you must deny Christ. It's a decision you must each make-- If you love Jesus, enough to die for Him.

(After a beat, SARAH goes into NEPHI'S arms.)

SARAH: I will die. I will die with you and mother.

(KIB goes to ESTHER.)

KIB: Me, too.

DEBORAH: I could never deny Christ.

NEPHI: Ashna?

ASHNA: You already know my answer, father. But that doesn't mean I think it's the best way.

(Her unhappy reaction is obvious to all. Nephi turns to JOSEPH.)

NEPHI: And you, Joseph?

(JOSEPH holds back. All eyes are on him.)

JOSEPH: I don't want to die. But if that's what God wants me to do...

(He starts to cry)

I do love Jesus.

(TIMOTHY is quick to enfold him.)

NEPHI: Oh, dear Father in Heaven, look down upon these little ones in mercy.

SONG: INNOCENT & PURE

NEPHI:

INNOCENT AND PURE
SUCH LOVE WAS NEVER KNOWN BEFORE,
THEY ARE SO INNOCENT AND PURE
WHILE I, THIS MAN SO WEAK
AND I MUST BEAR THIS CROSS ALONE.

TIMOTHY:

INNOCENT AND PURE.

NEPHI & TIMOTHY:

OH LORD, MY SOUL IN ANGUISH BLEEDS FOR THESE, COMFORT THESE

NEPHI:

IF I COULD HAVE THE FAITH OF THESE CHILDREN, LORD

TIMOTHY:

IF I COULD PASS THE TEST AS THESE CHILDREN, LORD

NEPHI:

THIS MAN WHO SPEAKS FOR GOD

TIMOTHY:

THIS MAN SO WEAK OF HEART

NEPHI:

A MAN WHO STRUGGLES DAILY TO ENDURE

TIMOTHY:

SWEET CHILDREN

NEPHI:

SUCH LOVE WAS NEVER KNOWN BEFORE.
THEY ARE SO...

ISABEL: (*Cutting him off*) I can't bear any more of this.

MUSIC OUT.

ISABEL: I'm sorry, Timothy, but no one can change my mind. Come, Deborah... Joseph, we're going.

TIMOTHY: Isabel, no. Nephi...

ESTHER: Please let us help.

ISABEL: You have courage, Esther, but I can't let my children die.

NEPHI: And for their lives you would sign away the Son of Man?

ISABEL: Yes. Read the Ultimatum. Mothers or fathers who deny can save their children. And if it means losing my own salvation, it's a price I'm willing to pay.

(To Timothy)

There, I've told them.

ESTHER: You don't know what you're saying Isabel.

ISABEL: Oh, but I do. And you should do the same, Esther. I can't believe God expects us to make such a sacrifice. God couldn't be so vicious, so cruel.

NEPHI: If there is one truth I know, God is not cruel. And when he parts the veil and looks upon the wickedness of men, to see the horror of their deeds, to see the blood of children spilt, he weeps. Behold your husband, Isabel. Was there ever a kinder, gentler man? Would you call him cruel? And Esther, surely a handmaiden of the Lord. And no father could love his children more than I. Would to God I could avert this calamity that would take their innocent lives. If we are not cruel, what is it then that drives us to do what we must do?

(Softening, taking her by shoulders)

It is love. It is the pure love of Christ.

ISABEL: No. No! Don't talk to me that way!

(To Timothy)

I've kept my promise. Come children.

(She grabs CHILDREN and starts to leave. TIMOTHY tries to stop her.)

TIMOTHY: No, don't do this.

ISABEL: Let go of me.

DEBORAH: Mother, please...

JOSEPH: Father...

ESTHER: (*With power*) Isabel, You don't love your children!

(Isabel stops)

Nor do you love Timothy. What women would desert the man she loved, allowing him to face death alone? What godly woman would dishonor her children by denying Christ, and the power that would bring them eternal life?

ISABEL: I do love them. Don't you tell me I don't love them.

(ASHNA takes KIB, SARAH & JOSEPH off to the side.)

ESTHER: What virtuous woman would desert friends, family and God, to stand in the camp of the enemy, to be one with the wicked?

ISABEL: I'm not wicked!

ESTHER: The Isabel I knew loved God more than self; loved her children and husband more than life. You are no longer that Isabel. You an impostor. Get out of this house!

ISABEL: *(Hysterical, moving to Esther)* No! No, Esther! Please don't hate me for doing this. For saving my children... I do love them. I do.

(ISABEL start to crumble.)

DEBORAH: Mother.

ISABEL: I'm not wicked...

UNDERSCORING

TIMOTHY: Nephi.

(NEPHI quickly joins TIMOTHY, and together they carry ISABEL to a bed, upstage. DEBORAH kneels beside her, assisting ESTHER.)

DEBORAH: She's so warm.

MUSIC OUT

NEPHI: She is a choice woman. And your faith shall yet renew her.

TIMOTHY: My faith? Sometimes I wonder.

NEPHI: You may be my younger brother, Timothy. But I stand in your shadow, when it comes to steadfastness and obedience. There is none so faithful.

(Warm physical exchange. We hear angry voices off stage. Enter GUARD, followed by JACOB, who is pushed into the room by PAHOR.)

NEPHI: Jacob, what is it?

ESTHER: I meant to tell you. In the square today... Jacob, he...

PAHOR: We've come to escort you, Nephi. You're to appear before the Chief Judge at once.

NEPHI: No, not you, Jacob? You of all men could not take Christ so lightly.

JACOB: I didn't want to come. They forced me. Emron...

NEPHI: *(Shouting)* Forced? No one forces Jacob to do anything against his will. I must hear from your own lips. Tell me you have not denied Christ.

JACOB: Please, Nephi. Not here.

NEPHI: Answer me. Have you denied Christ? Have you?

JACOB: *(Crying out)* Yes!

NEPHI: Oh, God in heaven, even the elect?

JACOB: *(Anguished)* Yes, I have denied.

NEPHI: Timothy, I'm going before the Chief Judge. Call the brethren together. Organize yourselves. Administer comfort and relief.

TIMOTHY: I will. Deborah...

DEBORAH: I'll watch over her, father, don't worry.

JOSEPH: *(Protecting her ground)* Anybody comes near her...

(To Pahor, with clenched fists)

Watch out.

(TIMOTHY hugs DEBORAH & JOSEPH, then leaves.)

NEPHI: And now if you don't mind, a moment alone with my family.

PAHOR: *(After pause)* Make it quick.

(PAHOR, GUARD and JACOB leave. JOSEPH joins DEBORAH at ISABEL's side in background. NEPHI crosses to his family.)

INTRO UNDERSCORING

NEPHI: We must not fear. We must remain firm of faith, placing our trust in the Lord.

ESTHER: *(Closing her eyes, earnestly quoting)* May the gates of hell be shut continually before us...

(Joined by Nephi)

Because our hearts are broken, our spirits, contrite.

(Ashna joins them)

We will not be afraid, for the Lord, Jehovah, is our strength and our song.

SONG: THE POWER OF HIS WORD

NEPHI:

BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD, THE DARKNESS FLEES BEFORE US

IF WE TRUST IN HIM, DEPEND ON HIM.

BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD, THERE'S NOTHING THAT CAN HARM US

IF OUR HEARTS ARE PURE, OUR FAITH IS SURE.

NEPHI & ESTHER:

BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD, WE CAN FEEL HIS LOVE

HE'S THERE TO KEEP US SAFE FROM HARM.

ESTHER:

BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD,

NEPHI & ESTHER:

THE POWER OF HIS WORD, WE FEEL HIS LOVE.

(NEPHI crosses to leave, followed by ESTHER. They say their good-byes quietly in background.)

KIB & SARAH: (TO ASHNA)

ON PLATES OF GOLD, HIS VOICE IS HEARD: COME FOLLOW ME.

OUR SOULS ARE STIRRED, THE SPIRIT WHISPERS PEACE TO US...

MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER:

NEPHI: Stay inside and be careful.

(To Esther)

Together in Christ?

(They clasp palms, entwining fingers.)

ESTHER: Together in Christ.

(NEPHI exits. ESTHER turns back to her CHILDREN.)

SARAH: Mother, I'm afraid.

KIB: Sarah, you heard father. We must be brave.

SARAH: I can't help it.

ESTHER: Not another word, my children. As long as I'm here, no one will harm you.

SONG CONTINUES

ESTHER:

I VOWED A VOW, A MOTHER'S VOW
WHEN YOU WERE BORN, WHEN FIRST I HELD YOU
I VOWED WITH ALL MY HEART AND SOUL
WHILE I HAD BREATH, NO ONE WOULD HARM YOU

AND THROUGH THE YEARS, I'VE WATCHED YOU GROW
AND SO MY VOW, GROWS EVEN STRONGER
AND THIS I WANT YOU EACH TO KNOW
I'D GIVE MY LIFE, IF IT WOULD MATTER.

SO WIPE AWAY YOUR TEARS, YOU'RE SAFE HERE IN MY ARMS
AND WHEN OUR SAVIOR COMES, PEACE SHALL REIGN, NO MORE FEAR.

ESTHER:

AND TILL THE BRIGHTNESS OF THAT DAY
KNOW THIS MY CHILD,
MY LOVE WILL BIND YOU
THERE'S NONE TO HARM YOU,
TILL THAT DAY
AND WHEN HE COMES
HIS LOVE WILL FIND YOU.

KIB & SARAH:

ON PLATES OF GOLD,
HIS VOICE IS HEARD:
COME FOLLOW ME.
OUR SOULS
ARE STIRRED,
THE SPIRIT WHISPERS
PEACE TO US

ESTHER:

I VOWED A VOW, A MOTHER'S VOW
WHEN YOU BORN
WHEN FIRST I HELD YOU
I VOWED WITH ALL MY
HEART AND SOUL
WHILE I HAD BREATH
NO ONE WOULD HARM YOU

ASHNA:

BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD,
THE DARKNESS FLEES BEFORE US
IF WE TRUST IN HIM, DEPEND ON HIM.
BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD,
THERE'S NOTHING THAT CAN HARM US
IF OUR HEARTS ARE PURE,
OUR FAITH IS SURE.
BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD,
WE CAN FEEL HIS LOVE
HE'S THERE TO KEEP US
SAFE FROM HARM

KIB & SARAH:

ON PLATES OF GOLD,
HIS VOICE IS HEARD:
COME FOLLOW ME.
OUR SOULS
ARE STIRRED,
THE SPIRIT WHISPERS
PEACE TO US
ON PLATES OF GOLD

HE'S THERE TO KEEP US
SAFE FROM HARM.

HIS VOICE IS HEARD.

THE POWER OF HIS WORD

BY THE POWER OF HIS WORD

ALL:

WE FEEL HIS LOVE.

(Outside we hear angry voices (On soundtrack). ESTHER draws her children close to her.)

LIGHTS FADE.

MUSIC CONTINUES, SCENE CHANGE

Scene 5: JUDGMENT SEAT. *The five JUDGES are in council. LACHONEUS waves a handful of papers.*

LACHONEUS: Look at these reports. In every corner of the city, men, women and children are preparing to die.

(PAANCHI takes the reports to study them.)

EMRON: Have you forgotten Jacob so quickly?

LACHONEUS: These believers are earnest. Christ is their God, and they will not deny Him, not even to preserve their lives. I warned you, Paanchi.

PAANCHI: *(With reports in hand)* Emron, where are the denials? Your plan guaranteed a minimum loss of life...

EMRON: There are no guarantees, Paanchi.

PAANCHI: Those were not your words, when you begged for my deciding vote. When you promised the ultimatum would actually save lives...

EMRON: *(Empassioned)* Do you think I want people to die? I would gladly give my own life to save this nation! Consider human nature. This spirit of unity and devotion is to be expected at first. But as time wears on, as the hour of death approaches, they will come forth by hundreds, the thousands, to deny their foolish belief. Two days hence, your act of bravery, your deciding vote, will have united a divided nation, thrown down treasonistic insurrection, and saved the government.

LACHONEUS: He's insane. Paanchi, please... Risk a little humiliation. Admit it was a mistake, a test, even a joke. Join your vote to my three. We can recall the Ultimatum.

EMRON: No! We must remain firm.

ASHRON: I would agree.

HELAM: Time is on our side.

EMRON: Decide as you must, Paanchi. But first, let us present our proposition to Nephi. Let us examine his true motives. His willingness to sacrifice for his people.

LACHONEUS: He will never agree to it. Never.

PAANCHI: We shall see. And I shall watch the reports closely.

(PAHOR enters.)

PAHOR: Your Excellency, Nephi.

LACHONEUS: Show him in.

EMRON: And Pahor, bring Jacob.

(NEPHI is brought in.)

LACHONEUS: Nephi, would to God I could avert this calamity that hangs over you. And that is why I have called you here...

NEPHI: To view the workings of justice?

LACHONEUS: I beg you, as we present our proposition, listen with an open mind... with a heart of compassion for your people. Put aside any pride...

NEPHI: I will not deny Christ.

EMRON: And for your great devotion, Nephi, how can we all but feel profound admiration. But it's time we put differences aside. It's time we work together to unite this people, as once we were. To walk again as friends and brothers...

NEPHI: Hold your tongue! Your words are brazen with hypocrisy and deceit. Let me repeat myself in bolder terms: Nothing on earth or in the bitter grasp of Hell can make me deny Christ, or require of my brethren that they deny Him.

EMRON: You would send men, women and children to their graves for this insane superstition?

NEPHI: *(Calmly)* I will not deny Christ.

EMRON: Nor his kingdom? The kingdom that you yourself plan to establish? The kingdom that will topple all governments and nations?

NEPHI: Christ shall establish His kingdom, none other.

(JACOB is brought in.)

PAANCHI: Nephi, has the love for your people, your wife and your children waxed cold?

NEPHI: My love for them burns bright. It is the voice of this council that has proclaimed the order for execution. Your deciding vote, Paanchi, that has made it law. And finally it will be your hands that bear the blood of my wife and children.

PAANCHI: *(Nervously rambling)* But they need not die. We don't want them to die, believe me. Deny Christ, and they shall live. Yea, even deny Christ and His Kingdom, and we shall let all your people live.

LACHONEUS: That is our proposition, Nephi. None need deny, but you. Accept our mercy. Behold, Jacob, your trusted friend. He understands. Jacob, come here. Speak to Nephi. Convince him. Save your people.

JACOB: They are no longer my people.

(During the following, PAHOR enters and hands report to HELAM.)

PAANCHI: Make us one. Convince him that he must deny.

JACOB: I cannot.

LACHONEUS: What do you mean? I command you to speak to him.

EMRON: Will you defy the Chief Judge? Speak.

JACOB: *(Crying out)* I cannot speak it. Not to Nephi!

NEPHI: Repent of this evil, Jacob. Return to your people.

JACOB: It's too late.

EMRON: He is as weak as clay.

HELAM: Your Excellency, the reports you've been waiting for. Throughout all of Zarahemla, Believers are beginning to deny. In the northwestern sector over fifty.

(Emron grabs parchment from him)

In the South, one hundred and...

EMRON: *(Ecstatic, as he reads)* Ah, yes. And among them, some of your leaders, Nephi: Kaleb, Jershon, Ammoran. As I told you, Paanchi.

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- A Day, a Night and a Day (Musical) by Doug Stewart & William Marsden

(PAANCHI looks at the reports. NEPHI turns to go.)

LACHONEUS: Where are you going? You have not been dismissed.

NEPHI: Would you deny me these few hours with those I love?

LACHONEUS: But there must be another way. Paanchi, if Nephi guarantees strict obedience to the Privacy Law, with reparations. Will you stand with me?

NEPHI: No, Lachoneus. I can make no such guarantees. Till my dying breath I shall declare Christ! In this Chamber! In the streets! From the rooftops!

LACHONEUS: What? I extend the hand of mercy, and you refuse?

EMRON: His true motives, your Excellency? What have I told you from the beginning.

(NEPHI & EMRON lock in a stern gaze. NEPHI turns to go.)

LACHONEUS: Go then. But remember, Nephi-- Those who must die will know that you could have saved them.

EMRON: Butcher!

(NEPHI turns.)

NEPHI: *(With great power)* Emron! Unless you repent and turn away from this savage course, in two days with the going down of the sun, your body shall lie dead in the streets of Zarahemla!

EMRON: *(Screaming)* You dare threaten me? Get out!

(Exit NEPHI. EMRON is shaken, but quickly regains some composure.)

EMRON: Mark it well. He is after our lives.

LACHONEUS: Our lives are of little value.

(LACHONEUS leaves. JARED enters out of breath. Commotion can be heard off stage.)

JARED: Father... Nephi's followers... On the front steps. They demand an audience.

EMRON: Demand? We will not be dictated to by anyone. Pahor, the guards.

(PAHOR rushes off toward the noise, followed by PAANCHI, ASHRON & HELAM. EMRON & JARED are left alone.)

EMRON: Jared, where have you been? And what is the meaning of this foolishness in the square.

JARED: Foolishness?

EMRON: Attacking Pahor. Taking sides with the Believers. What did I tell you about staying neutral? It is imperative.

JARED: Father, I need your help...

PAANCHI: *(Off stage)* Please, listen to me. We only want what is best...

(BELIEVERS respond with: "We demand justice!", "Repeal the Ultimatum!")

EMRON: Right now I have more pressing matters...

JARED: But it's urgent...

EMRON: Not now.

JARED: But I have to get Ashna away from here, to safety...

EMRON: Ashna?

JARED: Yes. Father, you promised.

EMRON: All right. But I warn you-- Don't cross me.

(PAANCHI suddenly re-enters, totally flustered.)

INTRO UNDERSCORING

PAANCHI: They... won't listen to me.

(The BELIEVERS enter from all sides, pushing their way past the GUARDS & JUDGES. HELAM & ASHRON re-enter.)

BELIEVERS: *(Chanting; ad lib)* We demand justice! Repeal the Ultimatum! Liberty for all!
(Enter NEPHI with ESTHER & CHILDREN, moving to front of BELIEVERS.)

NEPHI: Please, my people! My people, remember who you are!

EMRON: Yes, let there be silence. So "God's Prophet" and his wife, can beg for mercy.

ESTHER: We have not come to beg mercy, Emron... But to lend our voice of support to God's Prophet.

NEPHI: And publicly declare our faith in Samuel's prophecy, in the promised sign, and in Christ, our Lord.
(Support is echoed among the BELIEVERS.)

SONG: ANTHEM OF FAITH

NEPHI:

SING FAITH IN YOUR REDEEMER. SING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

BELIEVERS:

HE IS THE RESURRECTION

HE IS ETERNAL LIFE

ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM, WILL NEVER DIE.

ALL WHO BELIEVE, WILL LIVE FOREVER.

NEPHI:

HE IS RESURRECTION

SHAME

SING FAITH

BELIEVERS:

IN YOUR REDEEMER

SING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

EMRON: *(Spoken)*

Stop at once.

This is treasonous.

Don't you see what he's doing? He's leading you astray. Don't fall for his lies. Where is the proof?

EMRON:

WHERE IS THE SIGN YOU SEEK

WHERE IS THE SIGN YOU NEED

STOPPING THE SCORN AND THE

SAMUEL THE LAMANITE,

COULDN'T HAVE BEEN SO RIGHT

IF YOU'RE STILL WAITING IN...

MUSIC CONTINUES UNDER:

(NEPHI has crossed to JACOB.)

NEPHI: Return to us, Jacob.

JACOB: How can I... after what I've done?

NEPHI: Do you love Christ?

EMRON: What is this, stop at once.

NEPHI: Do you believe He is the Son of God?

EMRON: Do you hear? Stop this foolishness.

NEPHI: Jacob, answer me!

JACOB: *(With emotion, crying out)* Yes! I love Christ. And I do believe He is God's Son!

(After pause, JACOB goes into NEPHI's arms. Other BELIEVERS warmly welcome JACOB back into the fold.)

EMRON: What is this? We ask you to convert Nephi, and he reconverts you.

JACOB: Yes, out of darkness, into light.

BELIEVERS:

COME LORD JESUS, BRING THY LOVE...

(EMRON mumbles his displeasure. ASHNA reaches out toward JARED.)

ASHNA:

SING FAITH IN YOUR REDEEMER

SING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

(During above, JARED looks from his Father to ASHNA, struggling with his decision, then makes it, crossing to BELIEVERS with ASHNA, where he is warmly welcomed.)

EMRON: *(Spoken)*

Jared,

What are you doing?

ASHNA & JARED:

HE IS THE RESURRECTION

HE IS ETERNAL LIFE

EMRON *(Spoken)*

No.

Jared, no.

ASHNA & JARED:

SING FAITH

IN JESUS

HE IS THE RESURRECTION,

HE IS ETERNAL LIFE

ALL

SING FAITH IN YOUR REDEEMER

SING FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

EMRON *(Spoken with energy)* Then sing while you may

For in two days

with the setting of the sun,

you will all

close your eyes

in death,

because of him.

WILL NEVER DIE. ALL WHO

BELIEVE, ALL WHO BELIEVE

ALL WHO BELIEVE

WILL LIVE FOREVER MORE.

(EMRON leaves in rage. PAHOR goes to leave, but ZELOM remains behind, his eyes fixed on BELIEVERS. He has been touched, and hesitates. PAHOR returns to get him, a couple of times, trying to prod him to leave.)

NEPHI:

AND ON THAT NIGHT, THAT GLORIOUS NIGHT

WHEN CHRIST THE LORD SHALL COME.

ALL:

OH, HE IS THE RESURRECTION

HE IS ETERNAL...

(Suddenly, the lights begin to dim, as:)

MUSIC SUSPENDS

PAHOR: *(Looking out)* What's this? The sun sets again? But no cause for worry...

(Directly to Esther, sadistically)

PERUSAL SCRIPT -- A Day, a Night and a Day (Musical) by *Doug Stewart & William Marsden*

There's still two more days!

(PAHOR laughs as he exits. ZELOM is quick to follow.)

MUSIC OUT

(LIGHTS OUT)

(END OF ACT ONE)

30 additional pages in Act Two