

***Son of Man (Jezile): Annotated Transcription based on Subtitles***<sup>1</sup>

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**Temptation**<sup>2</sup>

Jesus, turn these stones into bread (Mt 4.3b, Lk 4.3b)

Throw yourself off, God your father will save you (Mk 4.4.6, Lk 4.9b-11)

I'll give you the world, If you worship me (Mk 4.9b, Lk 4.7)

Get thee behind me Satan! (Lk 4.8)

This is my world!

No, this is my world! (Lk 4.6b)

**Annunciation**<sup>3</sup>

Gabriel:

Hark thou are highly favored, the Lord is with thee (Lk 1.28)

Fear not,<sup>4</sup> thou hast found favour with God

Thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son,

His name shall be Jesus<sup>5</sup> (Lk 1.30b-31)

The Holy Ghost shall overshadow thee and the power of the highest shall bless thee

Therefore that holy thing born of thee shall be called the Son of God (Lk 1.35)<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Biblical quotations in the film are taken largely verbatim from the *King James Version*. Quotations in Red. Paraphrases in Blue. Allusions in Green.

This was originally an appendix to a paper given at the Bible and Film Consultation at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Atlanta, Georgia, USA, 22 November 2010.

<sup>2</sup> The Temptation (Matthew 4.1-11, Luke 4.1-13, Mark 1.13) appears twice in the film. The ordering of the Temptation scene in the film follows Matthew's rather than Luke. The film's primary message, "This is my world!" is more drawn, however, from Luke. The quotation, "Get thee behind me Satan," is present not in the Greek or more recent English version but is present in the KJV. (The phrase, of course, does also occur in Jesus' rebuke of Peter, cf. Mt 16.23, Mk 8.33.) One possible explanation for this is that the Xhosa version is based on the KJV. Jesus' one line in the scene, "This is my world!" is met by a direct quotation from Satan (with fire in the background to boot!), "No, this is my world!" Hence the struggle that frames the whole film, perhaps wrestling with the words of Satan/the tempter in Luke, "for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please." (Lk 4.6b)

<sup>3</sup> The scene has Mary running from vigilante gunfire and taking refuge in an elementary-age classroom. Hiding just inside the doorway, she sees across the room a pile of bloodied bodies of children. Upon hearing the vigilantes coming closer, she "hides" herself in plain sight by laying down next to the bodies. After the character of Satan has come and gone, she stands up and is visited by the angel Gabriel, a young boy seated on what appears to be the school teacher's desk. While there are hints of the "slaughter of the innocents" (Mt 2.16-18) here, the primary focus is on the Annunciation happening in the context of township vigilantism.

<sup>4</sup> Missing "Mary"

<sup>5</sup> Missing "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end." Lk 1.32-33

Mary:

My soul doth magnify the Lord and my spirit has rejoiced in God my savior for he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden and<sup>7</sup> from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. (Lk 1.46b-48) He has brought down the mighty and exalted those of low degree. (Lk 1.52) And holy is His name. (Lk 1.49b) He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich He has sent away empty. (Lk 1.53)

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### **Birth Narrative**

All new arrivals are to register now.

Herode's command. All must register. (Lk 2.1-3)<sup>8</sup>

### **Inn**

This is all I have to offer. You can go in. (Lk 2.7b)

### **Gabriel**

Fear not shepherd. I bring you good tiding of great joy.<sup>9</sup> For unto you is born a savior.<sup>10</sup> (Lk 2.10b-11)

### **Angels/children sing**

The sun will rise in Spring over the mountain. Today we are united, we are one people. The sun will rise in Spring over the mountain. Today we are united, we are one people.<sup>11</sup>

### **Choir (out of view) *in Latin***

*Gloria in excelsis, excelsis deo!*

### **Shepherd boys**

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men. (Lk 2.14)

[Brief shots of magi traveling as the child grows. Also, a shot of Mary hoeing in the field with the child nearby and of Mary holding the child with a paper crown, perhaps from a Christmas "cracker."]

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### **Visitation of the Magi (Mt 2.1-16a)**<sup>12</sup>

#### **Jesus**

Mama, three men are coming to see us.<sup>13</sup>

They are riding and have come a long way.

[Mary hugs the child to protect him.]

Let them through.

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<sup>6</sup> Gabriel's words to Mary continue, "And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." Lk 1.36-37

<sup>7</sup> Missing "For, behold,"

<sup>8</sup> By Luke's text it is a decree of Caesar Augustus that initiates the census, and there is no mention of Herod.

<sup>9</sup> Missing "which shall be to all people"

<sup>10</sup> KJV reads: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (Lk 2.11)

<sup>11</sup> Traditional song?

<sup>12</sup> The magi are figures from another culture in Africa who are seen riding horses and appearing to have been on a long journey and helped to pass a vigilante check-point by an (infant) angel. Mary is outdoors washing the child when they arrive. First she hugs him to protect him and then she turns him toward them.

<sup>13</sup> The child says this to Mary after playing with the angel Gabriel, whom he can see but Mary cannot.

[Magi worship him.] (Mt 2.11)

Be quiet.

### **Death of the Innocents**

#### **Vigilante soldiers (by megaphone)**

Herod's command; all are to register.

All infant males must be registered with the authorities.

All infant males must be registered with the authorities. (Mt 2.16)

[Joseph visited by angel in the night as Satan lurks outside.]

#### **Vigilante soldiers**

Found anyone? They're all gone. Let's move.

#### **Vigilante soldiers<sup>14</sup>**

Boys this side.

#### **Mary**

Aaahhhhh

Why!?!? To the children? [to Gabriel]

#### **Gabriel**

Come.

#### **Jesus**

This is my world.<sup>15</sup>

### **Baptism / Xhosa Male Circumcision Scene<sup>16</sup>**

Do my back.

Nice, hey!

You said you wanted to be a man.

#### **Old Man - Elder**

We will eat together. You are men now.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Villagers are walking along the road escaping the village. Confronted by vigilantes, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus veer off into the bush but watch as the vigilantes cover the boys with blankets and beat them to death with clubs. Mary first shields the child from the scene, but then turns his face toward the violence.

<sup>15</sup> Another pivotal point in the story, where the young child Jesus claims, "This is my world!" At this point, however, it is to Gabriel. Suggests that both Satan and the angels are confused about whose world this is.

<sup>16</sup> Immediately after the child Jesus' claim, "This is my world!," the scene shifts to Jesus the young man washing his face together with brief glimpses into the Xhosa rite of male circumcision. In the midst of these glimpses there is a flashback (?) to the Temptation with Jesus pushing Satan off the sand dune and saying, "Get behind me, Satan!" While, to my knowledge, there is not necessarily a good/evil element of the Xhosa circumcision rite of passage, it is significant that the Jesus' baptism (the beginning of his *formal* ministry) is depicted in this culturally specific way. The Xhosa rite is a one way liminal movement from boyhood into manhood. This includes a change in one's self-perception, one's recognition in/by the larger community, and education in and entrustment with the stories/mysteries of the Xhosa people.

<sup>17</sup> During the Xhosa rite of male circumcision after the foreskin/prepuce is cut and released and after the initiate declares, "Ndiyindoda" (I'm a man!) the *inchibi* (circumciser) declares, "Yithi uyindoda" (You're a man!). Cf. Chris J. van Vuuren & Michael de Jongh, "Rituals of manhood in South Africa: circumcision at the cutting edge of critical intervention," in *South African Journal of Ethnology* 22 (1999) 143.

**Jesus' Ministry**

I'm leaving, mother.

[Jesus, decked-out in gentrified clothing, leaves his mother. What follows is a montage of **the calling of the disciples** (initial gospel stories – Mt 4.18-22; Mk 1.16-20; Lk 5.1-11, 9.1; Jn 1.35-42; for lists cf. Mt 10.2-4, Mk 3.16-19, Lk 6.14 and Acts 1.13<sup>18</sup>), and the “formal” introduction of **Caiaphas and Annas** (Lk 3.2, also Jn 18.13, 24 and Acts 4.6) as they receive a “shipment” of illegal handguns from Judas and drive away in their Mercedes.]

**[News Report in English ]** We've just received confirmation **of the death of Herod, King of Judea** (Mt 2.15, 19). The news came in a statement by the Judean Provisional Government this morning. In the confusion following the monarch's death the army of the Democratic Coalition has taken control after decades of occupation. Talks have begun in the capital between senior members of the former militia, the Elders, and the governor of the Coalition. **Governor of the Democratic Coalition** [news conference *in English*]

In order to assist us in the process of restoring the rule of law, an interim government will be installed. This new government will insure that the genuine wishes of the majority of the people are represented. When these elections are held and peace is restored then my forces and I can withdraw from your country.

[Disciples and Jesus, sitting in a block house, are reacting to political shift in wake of Herod's death.]

**Disciples**<sup>19</sup>

We should not be standing on the side line.

It's true.

It's a waste of time negotiating with these organizations based on bigotry and hatred.

Commitment must govern all our actions!

**Jesus**

The occupiers and elders blame the people for the robbery, unrest, and killing. Unrest is due to poverty, overcrowding, and lack of education. We must prove to them that we are committed to non-violent change. Then negotiations can begin. We must not let ourselves be corrupted, but rather fight poverty, epidemics and thuggery.

[protestations by disciples]

Listen, listen.

Each human life is important. It's our right to protect our beliefs!

**Disciples**

That's what we are trying to do!

**Jesus**

But this never becomes the right to kill<sup>20</sup>

[Jesus sits back, while lively discussion/argument/protestation breaks out among disciples.]

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<sup>18</sup> The calling of the disciples includes the Twelve. In the film, Peter, James, and John have been through the Xhosa circumcision rite with Jesus and together they leave home. Their first stop is a coal mine / processing plant where they invite Thomas and Bartholomew. The scene then shifts to street fighting between plain-clothed, masked fighters armed with handguns and stones and uniformed and well-armed troops. During this the call of James, the younger, Matthew, Simone, and Phillippa. The scene then shifts to a group listening to Jesus as they sit in a meadow. Here Thaddea and Andie are introduced. Finally, Judas (Iscaiot) is introduced as a fireman shoveling coal on a train. The closest list to this is Acts 1.13 (Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James son of Alpheus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James), though the film interprets four disciples as women (Simone, Phillippa, Thaddea, and Andie).

<sup>19</sup> Speaker(s) of initial dialogue difficult to ascertain.

<sup>20</sup> Reminiscent of 4<sup>th</sup> commandment, Exod. 20.13.

**Loudspeaker** [in dusk over the township]<sup>21</sup>

Nonmilitary personnel to clear the streets!

**Disciple** [Jesus and disciples remain in the same house with the implication that they've been meeting along time.]  
They've gone.

[Jesus gets up and shuts the door to the room]

**Jesus**

We don't need weapons to fight his battle.

[Jesus places a synthetic rice (?) sack on a table in the middle of the disciples. The disciples place their weapons into the sack. Judas, when about to place the gun in the sack, experiences (and the viewer as well) a flashback from his childhood. A voice cries out, "Shoot him, shoot him!" A young (11 year old?) boy shoots in the head two figures who are bloodied and tied-up with plastic bags over their heads. The scene then comes back to Judas placing the handgun in the sack in front of Jesus, and then breaks to a figure with a bag over his head who, upon removing it, is revealed to be Satan.]

**Woman Caught in Adultery [John 8.1-11<sup>22</sup>] & The Anointing of Jesus' Feet<sup>23</sup>**

[Harried woman stumbles down street as she tries to escape her pursuers. (Jn 8.3) The character that is also Satan douses her with a liquid fuel (kerosene?) while a crowd gathers around shouting at her and (apparently) urging him on. In prominent view are Annas and Caiaphas. She is crying. As the Satan-character pulls out a lighter, Peter addresses them.]

**Peter**

Leave her alone.

**Satan-character**

This woman is a whore, an adulteress. She spreads disease and corruption!

Surely we have the right to punish her. Do you agree with us, yes or no? (Jn 8.4-5)<sup>24</sup>

[Jesus is shown and present but not speaking.]

**Soldier**

<sup>21</sup> Announcing curfew.

<sup>22</sup> This pericope is widely recognized as being a later addition to John's gospel, cf. any critical commentary. The textual evidence is summarized by Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994) 187-189.

<sup>23</sup> The film dovetails two biblical scenes in this scene. Common to both biblical scenes is the central figure of a woman. In the film's interpretation, however, the two women of the biblical text become one. The first scene is an interpretation of John 8.1-11, and the second is an interpretation of John 12.1-11 with some echoes from parallel stories in the Synoptics (Mt 26.6-13, Mk 14.3-9, and Lk 7.36-50). The most significant dissonance in the film's telling is that the woman caught in adultery (John 8.1-11) in John's narrative is clearly not Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 12.1-11).

<sup>24</sup> In John, the accusers are "scribes and Pharisees" who appeal to "the law Moses commanded" in order to deal with the problem that this woman is. In John the woman's life/trade pose danger to "the law Moses commanded," whereas in *Son of Man* the appeal is to the law of public health. It is an interesting bit of symbolism that the film includes Annas and Caiaphas as central authorities accusing the woman. In Jn 8.9, it says that the elders were the first to walk away, whereas in the film they remain nearly until the end.

Hey, what's going on here?

Disperse! (Jn 8.7-9)<sup>25</sup>

[Much of the crowd disperses, leaving Jesus, disciples, Satan-character, Annas, Caiaphas, and the woman.]

**Satan-character** [to Jesus]

Tell us, should she be punished?

**Jesus** [to the woman]

Where are your accusers? (Jn 8.10)

**Woman** [to Jesus]

They are gone.

**Jesus** [to the woman]

Go then, because I don't accuse you. (Jn 8.11b)<sup>26</sup>

**Woman** [to Jesus]

Thank you, thank you!

**Peter** [handing the woman her jewelry that he had just picked out of the dirt]

Here's your jewelry.

[Woman goes to jewelry buyer to sell what she has of value, her bangles. They give her what appears to be a large sum of money. The scene shifts to her going into a local shop.]

**Woman** [to shopkeeper]

Can I have a bottle of perfume oil, please? (Mt 26.7; Mk 14.3; Lk 7.37; Jn 12.3)<sup>27</sup>

[Scene shifts to Jesus, disciples, and others singing and dancing at a dance.<sup>28</sup> The woman enters the party and moves immediately through the crowd toward Jesus. Her presence causes a disturbance. It appears that the women (whom she first encounters) recognize her. ]

**A female party-goer** [to Judas]

Why does he let her do this?

It's wrong for him to be seen with women like that, it's inappropriate. (Lk 7.38)<sup>29</sup>

**Judas** [to Jesus]

This oil is worth a fortune! Why did you let her waste this? This could have been sold to help some of our people.

Why do you let her corrupt you? Think of our struggle, not yourself. (Jn 12.5; also Mt 26.8b-9, Mk 14.4b-5a)<sup>30</sup>

<sup>25</sup> While the occupying soldier is the disperser in the film, in John's text it is Jesus' words ("Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." v. 7b) that causes the crowd to disperse.

<sup>26</sup> Absent from the film are Jesus' words, "Go your way, and from now on do not sin again." Jn 8.11

<sup>27</sup> None of the texts in the NT provide any detail about the purchase of the perfume.

<sup>28</sup> Possible reference to John 12.2, where Jesus is in Bethany at the home of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha where they have thrown a dinner party for him. While possible, it does not make complete sense because when the woman enters the party in the film she is clearly not part of the group, whereas in John's gospel the woman who anoints Jesus' feet is Mary, the sister of Lazarus at whose home the party is happening.

<sup>29</sup> The biblical reference shifts from John 12 to Luke 7, with the female party-goer representing Simon the Pharisee of Lk 7.39.

<sup>30</sup> In the film, if we can understand the female party-goer to be a type of the Pharisee, then the film incorporates (in a way) all four gospel traditions. Where does the outrage come from in the gospels? In Mark it is "some who were there" (14.4). In Matthew it was the disciples (26.8). In John it is expressly Judas Iscariot (12.6). In Luke, there is no outrage precisely parallel with the concern for the poor, dubious (Jn) or not (Mt and Mk). Rather, the outrage is at the lack of observance and/or care that Jesus shows to the purity. The woman in Luke is a "kind of woman" whose presence and touch make someone unclean. The funds come into Luke's story by way of the little

[Judas steps away and sits at a table.]

**Jesus** [to the female party goer]

You didn't greet me as a guest, not even with water to wash my feet. This woman washed me with her tears and dried me with her hair. (Lk 7.44-46)

[Now to Judas]

And comrade! I let her do this but not for myself. (Mk 14.6b, and also Mt 26.12; Mk 14.8, Jn 12.7<sup>31</sup>)

[to the woman]

So, woman, whatever you have done, it is now passed. Find peace. (Lk 7.48, 50)

### **Woman**

Thank you.

[Other women gather the woman who is crying, sit with her, and begin to sing around her. As the song builds the female party-goer touches the woman and joins in the celebrative song. The camera pans to Jesus and Judas sitting at a table with Jesus looking dejected...

### **Judas' Betrayal / Jesus' Teaching / Healing of the Paralytic<sup>32</sup>**

[...The scene that shifts to the dark of night with party-goers sleeping on the floor. Satan is outside. Judas leaves. Jesus is aware of his leaving.]

#### **Henchman**

Boss! That guy is here.

#### **Annas/Caiaphas**

Let him come up.

[The film here employs a camcorder in the hands of Judas as a means of recording and passing along to the "authorities" what Jesus is saying.]<sup>33</sup>

**Jesus** [via camcorder footage first and then a wider angle]

We are too busy with moral trivialities, as if they are the most important things. If you constantly find fault with yourself, you will lose the struggle against real sin. All authority is not divinely instituted. [Many listening through windows<sup>34</sup>] If you follow me, we will have peace.

parable that Jesus tells about the two debtors, one owing five hundred denarii the other fifty. The culmination of the story in Luke is that the woman is forgiven and that Jesus sends her away saying, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (7.50) Thus, the conclusion of this scene in *Son of Man* most clearly follows the Lukan story.

<sup>31</sup> The clearest possible reference here is to Mk 14.6b, however it is not entirely clear. It is within the realm of probability that this line retains a veiled reference to Jesus' death and burial by way of the anointing of Jesus' body prefigured in the woman's anointing of Jesus' feet with this perfume.

<sup>32</sup> The healing of the paralytic is found at Mt 9.1-8, Mk 2.1-12, and Lk 5.17-20.

<sup>33</sup> The use of the camcorder cinematographically includes a moving back-and-forth between the viewer seeing the camcorder footage (Judas' point of view) to a narrator's point of view wherein we see Judas filming.

<sup>34</sup> The camera here (not the camcorder) clearly draws the viewers' eyes to the fact that it is more than the disciples listening to Jesus as there are a number of young men looking and listening through a window. The allusion here is

[Focus switches two women transporting a boy in a wheelbarrow. Throughout the scene the camera alternates between Jesus' teaching and the two women carrying the ill child across the shanty rooftops. Jesus speech is heard throughout.]

**Woman**

Make way, make way!

**Jesus**

I'm not here to destroy beliefs and traditions, but create them anew.  
We must forgive those who offend us, and those who trample on our comrades.  
Otherwise our hatred will destroy our future.

When those with imperial histories pretend to forget them, and blame Africa's problems on tribalism and corruption while building themselves new economic empires, I say we have been lied to. Evil did not fall. When I hear someone was beaten and tortured in the Middle East, I say we have been lied to. Evil did not fall. When I hear that in Asia, child labour has been legislated for, I say we have been lied to. Evil did not fall. When politicians in Europe and the U.S. defend trade subsidies and help to restrict the use of medicine through commercial patents, I say we have been lied to. Evil did not fall. When you are told, and you will be, that people just "disappear", you must say we have been lied to. And evil will fall.<sup>35</sup>

[As Jesus finishes the speech, a portion of the roof is pulled back.]

**Mother**

Jesus, Help! My child is dying!

[The child is handed down to Jesus, who stands upon a table and receives him. After a moment, the child revives in Jesus' arms.]<sup>36</sup>

[The scene shifts by seeing Jesus and the disciples traveling along highways on straw bales in the back of a lorry. As they are traveling, Jesus sees Annas and Caiaphas' Mercedes pulled over beside the road by occupying soldiers.]

**Jesus' teaching**

[Jesus and disciples are sitting outdoors, and he is teaching]

We must not be a suspicious group.  
We must believe in the inherent goodness of men.  
Together we shall lead ourselves, be it to glory, or to destruction.

to the beginning of the story of the healing of the paralytic, cf. Mk 2.2: "So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in the front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them."

<sup>35</sup> The pattern of speech here, "When you hear... I say...", is not unlike the pattern of Jesus' speech in Mt 5.21-48, "You have heard it said... but I say...."

<sup>36</sup> At this point in the film, one of the major foci is clear – the children matter. While this has been present in the portrayal of both the angels and the shepherds as young children, the interpretation of the healing of the paralytic as the healing of a young boy emphasizes the point. With singing in the background, the camera then shifts to brief scenes of young children around the township. The images are at once sweet and bitter.

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### **Raising of Lazarus (Jn 11)**

[The scene opens with four men carrying a coffin into a house where it appears there are mourners. Jesus and the disciples are then shown walking down the median of a rather large road. The camera returns to regular mourning preparations, and then the camcorder takes over showing **Jesus with his hands on the coffin.** (Jn 11.35)]

**Jesus** [via camcorder]

**Open the coffin.** (Jn 11.39a)

**Mourner**

**Let him rest in peace!** (Jn 11.39b)

**Jesus**

I said, open the coffin!

[Peter undoes the top of the coffin. Weeping can be heard in the background. Jesus places his hands again on the coffin. Something like angelic whispers are heard in the background as Jesus places his right hand on the dead man's face. While the viewer doesn't see the dead man come to life, the change in music indicates it. Also Jesus either (1) stumbles (power left him? Shock?) or (2) he tries to help hold the coffin because the man has come back to life and wants out. The scene then shifts to Peter painting a mural that depicts the resuscitation of the dead man. And in the background the music, however briefly, is the same sung at the resurrection/ascension scene at the end, "The sun in spring will rise over the mountain."<sup>37</sup>]

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### **Jesus heals a child (Mt 17.14-21; Mk 9.14-29; Lk 9.37-42)**

[Jesus and the disciples are shown walking down a country road. Jesus hears (alone?) hears the voice a child.]

**Child**

Leave me alone! Leave me alone!

**Jesus** [turning back on the road]

Comrades! Let's go back.

[Jesus runs ahead of the disciples. The scene shifts to a darkened room in a house.]

**Child**

Leave me alone! Leave me alone!

[As the Jesus is crouched beside the bed of the child, who is convulsing wildly, the viewer sees the camcorder of Judas. The scene then breaks to Judas' video being viewed by Annas and Caiaphas and their henchmen. As the focus goes to Judas' video footage, the child is flailing about, Jesus puts his hands on her, she immediately calms down, he gathers her up and she appears well. The viewer's last look at this footage is Jesus looking rather serenely into Jesus' camera.]

**Annas**

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<sup>37</sup> There is a clear foreshadowing of Jesus' resurrection here.

Turn it off.  
 This proves nothing.  
 It's mumbo jumbo for children.  
 [To Judas] We need proof of his political ambitions!

[The scene concludes with a shot of a mural depicting Jesus' healing of the child showing a "spirit" leaving her body.]

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### **Jesus' teaching**

[Amidst a crowd and the disciples with Judas clearly videotaping, Jesus climbs atop a concrete outhouse (?) in order to speak to the crowd. As the crowd sings, the viewer is shown a military helicopter flying overhead and then two armed soldiers openly watching from nearby.]

My people!  
 We have deliberately chose to operate **openly!** (Jn 18.20)  
 Let us work together because through our collective dialogue we can penetrate the deafest of ears.  
 It feels like we are defeated.  
 We need to act as a movement to ensure each of us is treated with dignity.  
 Let us unite.  
 Solidarity! Unity!

[Dancing<sup>38</sup> and singing. The viewer is then shown armed soldiers of the occupation coming into the area. A soldier speaks through a megaphone.]

### **Soldier**

This gathering is illegal!  
 You have one minute to disperse!<sup>39</sup>

[As the crowds disperse, the camera turns to Peter who picks up a rock to throw at the soldiers.]

### **Jesus [to Peter]**

Don't do it.  
 Put that stone down.

[Peter puts the stone down. Jesus comes down to the ground, stares down the soldiers, and walks away. The scene then changes to camcorder footage of the event.]

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### **Judas' Betrayal**

[The scene begins with Judas running in a long abandoned-looking building toward Annas and Caiaphas.]

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<sup>38</sup> This appears to be joyous dancing, as opposed to the defiant nature of the toyi-toyi underneath the cross toward the end of the film.

<sup>39</sup> There is a parallel here with the crucifixion scene. In both scenes Jesus is up in the frame – here on the concrete structure, on the cross at the crucifixion. In both scenes there is singing and dancing, albeit of a different flavor. In both scenes the soldiers appear to break up the gathering telling the crowd to disperse.

**Judas** [as he hands the camcorder over the Annas and Caiaphas]<sup>40</sup>  
Got him.

[From this exchange, the camera moves to another mural, this one depicting the scene of Jesus' teaching with crowds and Jesus holding his right fist in the air.]

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### **Unrest**

[The scenes are of street fighting between armed soldiers of the occupation and others in street-clothes with rocks. In the background the voice of the Governor comes in **English** over the television.]

### **Governor**

We have watched the situation once again deteriorate. We tried to reason. We have tried threats to no avail. So, reluctantly I have no alternative but to impose martial law. [Begin footage of governor's news conference.] Make no mistake, we will protect ourselves and our friends by whatever means possible. [Camera returns to scenes of street fighting.] In order to protect democracy in the world, we sometimes have to make difficult decisions. To restore order, we must be strong. To establish peace, we must use force.

[The scenes of street fighting transform into its aftermath. With a faucet running water for no apparent reason, there are bodies strewn in the streets as soldiers walk amidst them. The song that comes in slowly and somberly is the resurrection song, "The sun in spring will rise over the mountain." The governor is then seen looking down from a headquarter-like building with glass windows floor to ceiling. On the street below just outside the gates of the headquarters are many women holding infants and young children. The women are wailing and chanting.]

### **Women**

Stop killing our children!

[Under the gaze of the governor, they place the children in the middle of the road. As the children sit there, some crying, Jesus and the disciples walk up. Jesus picks up a child. The disciples (first the females) pick up children and comfort them. Jesus sits down amidst the children holding and comforting a small child.]

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### **Mary's Travel – Part I**

[As she is packing her suitcase, she takes with her a picture of her son, Jesus, placing it with care in her bag.]

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### **Jesus' Triumphal Entry (Mt 21.1-11; Mk 11.1-10; Lk 19.28-38; Jn 12.12-18) and Jesus' Confrontation with the Elders<sup>41</sup> (Lk 22.54-71, Jn 11.45-53)**

[With singing (same song as earlier around Jesus teaching) and people running out of their shanty houses to participate, Jesus is carried along on a cart being pulled by the disciples. His destination is a meeting with Annas

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<sup>40</sup> Judas extends the camcorder to Annas and then withdraws it while offering his other hand in order to receive his payment, cf. Mt 26.15, Mk 14.11a, Lk 22.5.

<sup>41</sup> While there are possible types for this conversation in many (all?) confrontations between Jesus and the religious establishment, the specificity of Jesus' meetings with the high priests which the film portrays limits the possible New Testament referents.

and Caiaphas. The meeting is in a small room. Annas and Caiaphas, both seated, are surrounded by their henchmen and Jesus and the disciples are opposite them.]

**Annas**

They are planning an interim government. You must not destabilize this peace initiative. We have fought with the occupiers for this power sharing.

**Jesus**

Interim government! Ha, it's designed to create a false sense of hope to make people believe something is being done.

**Annas**

You are a tiny minority. Stop messing around.

**Jesus**

Minority or not, we all have a voice.

**Annas**

We have fought for years for this power sharing. We will not allow you to upset it.

**Jesus**

No group possesses the monopoly on truth and intelligence.  
The occupiers need a man like you to ease their conscience.

[Jesus and disciples turn and leave. Elders look both puzzled and vexed. Judas is the last to leave. This is the first time that Hundred comes full into the picture, as he stands arms-crossed, gun tucked in belt behind Annas and Caiaphas.]

**Mary's Travel – II**

[Mary is met at the bus/train station by another woman. The chat briefly and depart into the city, leaving the station at "City Mowbray Salt River," an area of east of Cape Town.]

**Pilate with the Elders**

[Again in Pilate's glassed-in headquarters, Annas and Caiaphas with the Satan-character and Judas are sitting with Pilate viewing the footage of Jesus' teaching atop the concrete outhouse. After Jesus says, "Let us unite. Solidarity! Unity!," Pilate turns off the television and signals for the elders to have the Satan-character and Judas leave.]

**Elder**<sup>42</sup>

You two, get out.

**Pilate** [conversation in **English**]

This isn't evidence, it's tales for children, there is nothing I can do.

<sup>42</sup> Difficult to discern whether its Annas or Caiaphas.

[Pilate gets up from his seat in front of the television. He picks up a pitcher of water and begins to pour as Annas speaks.]

**Annas**

Then let us deal with him!

**Pilate**

It will have nothing to do with me, if he disappears.

[As Pilate says, “if he disappears,” the water overflows the glass. The camera provides a close-up of Pilate drying his hands.<sup>43</sup>]

**Jesus’ final encounter with Mary**

[No words are spoken. As Jesus (together with Peter) passes by his mother in a kitchen while she is doing the washing-up, he (or perhaps the narrator) intones the finality of this encounter by a brief flash-forward to him hanging on the cross. They exchange a knowing. Jesus turns and leaves the scene. It is quite possible that the location of the scene implies that Mary did the cooking for the Last Supper.]

**Last Supper** (Mt 26.17-29; Mk 14.17-26a; Lk 22.14-38, Jn 13.1-38)<sup>44</sup>

[The disciples and Jesus sit in a circle in a room. Jesus takes a drink from a can/cooking vessel, which he then passes to Peter and so on around the circle. As the disciples drink there are flashbacks to dead children, a mother weeping over a dead child, a blood-spattered dead man, and the arm of a dead person. After Judas drinks from the can the flashback is to a front-end loader with (perhaps) a body (bodies?) wrapped in blankets. As Jesus receives the can back, there is a flash-forward to him on the cross. The flashbacks are all filtered with red.]

**Jesus**

**One of you will betray me.** (Mt 26.21, Mk 14.18, Lk 22.21-22, Jn 13.21)

**Disciples**

[**Lively chatter begins around the circle.** (Mt 26.22, Mk 14.19, Lk 22.23<sup>45</sup>) The only one left out of the conversation is Judas to whom no one turns. He then begins to clear the dishes going around the circle. As he comes to Jesus’ plate, Jesus holds on to it and speaks to him.]

**Jesus** [to Judas with Peter overhearing]

**Whatever you plan to do, do it quickly.** (Jn 13.27b)

<sup>43</sup> The clear New Testament referent here is Pilate washing his hands in Mt 27.24. A clear difference between Matthew’s text and that of the film is the connotation that comes with “it will have nothing to do with me, if he disappears,” which implies Pilate’s tacit green light to go ahead with the Elders’ plans to remove Jesus from the picture. This stands in contrast with Matthew’s, “So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing...” The film here makes a judgment that Jesus’ death is at least equally attributable to the Occupiers as to the Elders.

<sup>44</sup> A curious interpretation in the film is the order of the meal and announcement of betrayal, which runs opposite of Matthew, Mark, rather following the narrative sequences of Luke, cf. 22.20f, and John, cf. 13.3b, 21-31a, without the specificity of the cup in John.

<sup>45</sup> After Luke’s announcement of the disciples’ tittering at this news, the fight breaks out among them as to who the greatest is.

[The disciples become quiet. Judas makes a move to leave. Pauses at the door, throws down the plates, and exits. (Jn 13.28-30) Peter gets up to go after him. Jesus grabs his arm and speaks to him.]

**Jesus** [to Peter]

Sit down, very soon you will deny me too. (Mt 26.34, Mk 14.30, Lk 22.34, Jn 13.38)

[The Last Supper scene fades into the Gethsemane scene.]

**Jesus' Disappearance I / Gethsemane** (Mt 26.30-56; Mk 14.32-52; Lk 22.39-53)

[The scene is dark. Satan is seen and immediately after the angel Gabriel is seen, sitting upon a concrete culvert. Jesus and the disciples are seen arriving at this deserted place.]

**Jesus**

Comrades, wait here for me.

[With the exception of Peter, James, and John, the disciples sit down a short distance away.]

**Peter**

What's the matter brother? You are not yourself, what is troubling you.

**Jesus**

Stay here and wait for me. (Mt 26.36)

[Jesus departs Peter, James, and John. They shake their heads. The camera then returns to the figure of Satan, and then moves to Jesus speaking with Gabriel. Jesus can see Gabriel, but the angel is not visible from the vantage of the disciples.]

**Jesus** [to Gabriel<sup>46</sup>]

What is about to happen, if possible, let it pass. (Mt 26.39, Mk 14.35, Lk 22.42)

**Jesus** [to disciples]

Comrades, you are asleep. I beg you, be with me. (Mt 26.40-41, Mk 14.37-38)

[Voices are heard. Gabriel turns toward them. A crowd (more like a mob – Mt 26.47, Mk 14.43) approaches the Satan-character in the lead and Satan himself watching from a hillside. The regular camera breaks into the camcorder view again, indicating that Judas is also at the front of the crowd.]

**Jesus** [to the crowd]

Who are you looking for?

I am he. salvo

[Judas emerges from the crowd with camcorder in hand, and holding it out so as to film the action kisses Jesus. (Mt 26.49, Mk 14.45) Jesus is taken away by Hundred.]

<sup>46</sup> In the New Testament, Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane is addressed to "my Father" or "Abba, Father."

## Jesus' Disappearance II

[Again under the view of the camcorder, Jesus is shown being led through an abandoned, industrial-esque place, eventually to an old railroad car. There we return to the regular camera view to see Jesus beaten severely. With Annas and Caiaphas clearly participating. **Judas exits the car and vomits outside** (Mt 27.3f; ).<sup>47</sup> When the beating stops, Annas, Caiaphas, and others can be seen wiping the blood off their hands with a rag.]

**Annas** [to Jesus]

Join us, we can share power.

**Jesus**

If you really want us to cooperate, it is best to talk to me. It's no good trying to beat me into agreement, it won't work.

[The camera shifts past Hundred to Jesus' severely bloodied face in the light of large torches.]

**Annas**

I'm going to kill you.

**Jesus**

How long will it take you?

[Jesus' beating resumes as the camera looks on from outside. He is placed into the back of a pickup. Satan looks in with a smile. Lightning and thunder.]

**Peter's Denial** (Mt 26.69-75; Mk 14.66-72; Lk 22.54-62; Jn 18.15-18, 25-27)

[Peter is hiding in a concrete culvert. Two occupation soldiers find him.]

**Soldier**

Hey, aren't you one of his followers?

**Peter**

No, no...

[The soldiers look over a sheet of paper, presumably with pictures of Jesus co-insurrectionists.]

**Soldier**

This is you. Take your hat off.

It's you.

**Peter**

No, people look alike.

**Soldier**

It's you!

<sup>47</sup> My student assistant, Seth Nelson, made the careful observation that Judas vomits the Lord's Supper as Jesus is being beaten.

[Soldiers receive a radio communication, which causes them to leave Peter. Peter weeps.]

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### **Jesus' Disappearance III**

[The scene switches back and forth between Satan walking through a vineyard, and the truck in which Jesus is traveling to a rural location. The truck stops. The henchmen, including Hundred, take Jesus to a hole. The scene is interrupted by and interwoven with an television interview conducted in Xhosa with Annas and Caiaphas.]

*Interview with Annas and Caiaphas [in grey Italics]*

#### **Reporter**

*What is your main responsibility as leader of the interim government?*

#### **Annas**

*Our main responsibility is to work closely with the coalition forces to establish a road to democracy. Those elements who won't work with us will be excluded.*

[Jesus is carried on a rug/cloth and thrown into an open hole. One of the henchmen jumps down into the hole and takes off Jesus' boots.]

#### **Henchman 1**

Hey, what are you doing?

#### **Henchman 2**

What does it look like I'm doing? I'm taking his boots!

[He climbs out of the hole. Another henchman shoots Jesus several times with a pistol.]

#### **Reporter**

*What time frame have you set for peace and the withdrawal of the occupiers?*

[Hundred is shown walking back to the truck with shovels in hand. Stopping at the back of the truck, Hundred is shown to be pondering the recent event(s).]

#### **Henchman**

Hey, Hundred, what are you doing?

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[The scene now becomes interwoven with another thread, that of Mary and the disciples realizing that Jesus has "disappeared." The disciples and others are in a portico / entryway. Mary walk through the midst of them and into the house.]

#### **Andie (disciple)**

They say it's nothing to do with them.

#### **Another woman**

But they took him.

#### **Another disciple**

They are denying it.

[Mary emerges from the house with the photo of Jesus which she brought with her. She exchanges a knowing look with those gathered and then departs.]

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[The scene shifts to an interview with the Governor. It is in **English**.]

**Reporter**

Do you accept your occupation in the name of democracy is a failure?

[As the reporter finishes her question, Mary and a host of other women begin pounding on the windows of the room where the interview is being conducted. They are shouting and pressing pictures of Jesus up to the window. The governor is ushered out.]

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[The scene then shifts again to a rally of sorts with Mary, the disciples, and other supporters of Jesus. It is evening. In the middle of the gathering are effigies with the faces of the governor, Annas, and Caiaphas. The gathering is singing.]

**Crowd singing**

They rule by guns! (repeated)  
They are killing our youth!

[Hundred comes to Mary.]

**Hundred**

They killed your son.  
They buried him.

[Mary begins wailing. Other women join her.]

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[The scene fades to sunrise over the city and then moves to the burial site. Present are Hundred, three unnamed women, and Mary, who is sitting beside Jesus' grave. As Hundred and the other women begin to walk away, Mary begins to clear the brush placed atop the grave. She then begins to dig with her hands with the women looking on. The scene shifts to the pick-up returning to the city. Mary is seated in the back holding the body of Jesus. This image clearly invokes Michelangelo's *Pietà*. There is a brief shot of angels at this point prior to the next scene.]

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**Jesus' Crucifixion** (Mt 27.32-56, Mk 15.21-41, Lk 23.26-49, Jn 19.16.37)<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> The order of Jesus' crucifixion and death is a glaring difference between the agreement between the New Testament gospels and *Son of Man*. While it was not completely unheard of for someone to be hung upon a cross after being killed under the Roman authorities, based on mentions of crucifixion in ancient texts it was unusual. One clear example of this as told by Herodotus about the death of Polycrates of Samos at the hand of Oroetes: "But no sooner had Polycrates come to Magnesia than he was horribly murdered in a way unworthy of him and of his aims; for, except for the sovereigns of Syracuse, no sovereign of Greek race is fit to be compared with

Under the cover of night, Jesus' body is carried to a high point on the edge of the city. It is tied to a cross. The scene shifts to morning light with a birds of prey circling. Then the viewer sees for the first time Jesus' body hung upon the cross. This attracts much attention from the city below. People climb the sandy hill. Mary is shown standing beneath the cross flanked by the women and Hundred. She begins to sing.]

**Mary singing**

*The land is covered in darkness.*

*The land is covered in darkness.* (Mt 27.45, Mk 15.33, Lk 23.44 and/or Lk 1.78-79)<sup>49</sup>

[The women and then the crowd join Mary in singing. As the singing builds, the disciples make their way up to the platform beside Mary. The intensity of the singing builds, and the group begins to toyi-toyi, a defiant dance.<sup>50</sup>]

**Peter** [leading a chant while the crowd toyi-toyi]

Comrades unite!

Unite freedom fighters! Strength, comrades!

[As this is happening, the camera shows occupation forces coming to disperse the crowd. Many below the hill run.]

**Commander**

I'm giving you five minutes to disperse!

[Crowd continues to dance and chant.]

**Commander**

You must disperse!

[The commander orders a warning shot. At the sound there is screaming. Mary, the disciples, and others "hit the deck." After a brief moment, Mary gets up and with her some of the women, and they defy the command.<sup>51</sup> As Mary approaches the soldiers, the others beneath Jesus' cross begin to stand. After they are all standing, Mary begins to sing defiantly.]

**Mary**

*The land is covered in darkness.* [The crowd begins to sing and dance toyi-toyi again. The camera moves ahead past the military to focus on Mary and the other dancing with Jesus' body clearly present in the background. The scene shifts to a mural of Jesus' crucifixion.]

Polycrates for magnificence. [3] Having killed him in some way not fit to be told, Oroetes then crucified him; as for those who had accompanied him, he let the Samians go, telling them to thank him that they were free; those who were not Samians, or were servants of Polycrates' followers, he kept for slaves."

Herodotus, *The Histories* 3.125.2-3. English translation from: *Herodotus*, with an English translation by A. D. Godley (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1920) *ad loc.*

<sup>49</sup> Admittedly, this song is not an unquestionable reference to the time of Jesus' death in the Synoptic gospels, though there does seem to be an echo of this moment in the crucifixion narrative. It seems also likely that there could be an allusion to the end of the Benedictus, Lk 1.78-79 (possibly referencing the likes of Isa 9.2); however, the Benedictus does not appear in the film.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. 1:00-2:26 in [the clip](#) from *Amandla!: A Revolution in Four Part Harmony* (2002).

<sup>51</sup> After showing a clip of this to a class of mine, a student, Donald Glanzer, a retired officer for the US FBI, pointed out that the shot of Mary approaching the forces is framed to the guns to two of the soldiers standing at the ready. Glanzer points out that the two weapons are of interest – one is a US-made M16 and the other is an Israeli-made Uzi.

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**Jesus' Resurrection / Ascension / Glorification**

[With a shot of the empty grave, a single voice... and then a choir, begins singing. Shadows are first visible - first of Jesus and then of angels. The smiling faces of angels then appear. This is followed by tens of angels running up the hill toward the site of the crucifixion following Jesus. The singing crescendos with Jesus pumping a fist.]

**Solo/Choir** singing

*The sun in spring will rise over the mountain*

*Today we are united*

*We are one people*

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**Credits**

[The first text of the credits comes from Genesis 1.26]

And God said, "**Let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness**"

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