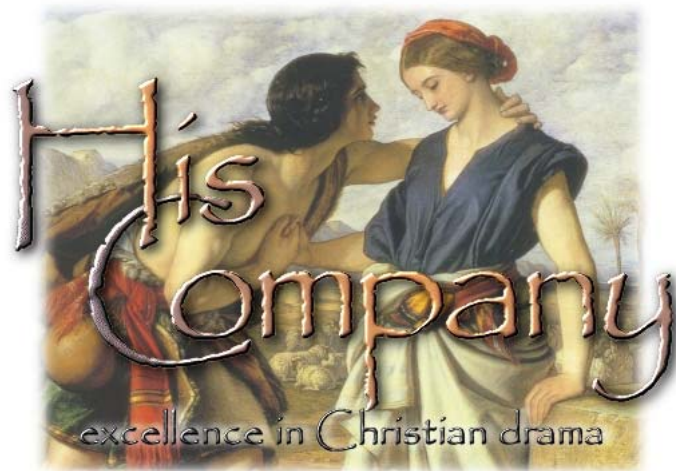


# GOING HOME

## JESUS BIDS FAREWELL TO HIS BROTHER, JAMES

by  
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**AUTHOR'S NOTE**


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For those who might question the premise of this sketch, we have included the scriptural basis for this script: Matthew 13:54-58; Mark 3:21; John 7:3-51; Corinthians 15:7; Galatians 2:7-9; The book of James.

5

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**CHARACTERS**


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James, brother of Jesus

Jesus

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**SCENE**


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10

*The Time: 39 days after the Resurrection*

*The Place: Nazareth*

*House lights down.*

15

*Stage lights up.*

20

*Enter James. He is in a state of emotional confusion. From his mother, Mary, he had learned of the lightning-quick events which had culminated in the death of his brother, Jesus. In sorrow and mental disarray he had left Jerusalem, returned to Nazareth and the carpentry business he had continued after the death of Joseph and the departure, three years earlier, of Jesus.*

25

*Then had come word of the Resurrection. This news dispelled none of his sorrow and confusion. It occurred to him that this rumor could be nothing more than a plot by the enemies of his brother to discredit the good He had accomplished. Or, at the very least, a rumor begun by the followers of Jesus to salvage some credibility after His untimely death. And neither explanation comforts James, who seeks to erase the horrible episode from his memory by attacking his work with a renewed—almost frantic—vigor.*

30

*James enters carrying carpentry tools. On stage is a rude support, upon which rests a roughly formed plank of wood. James immediately sets to working the piece of wood, shaping and smoothing.*

35

*Enter Jesus. There is a tranquility about Jesus that is set in marked contrast to the anxieties of James. This tranquility comes not only from the peace He has as the Son of God, but from the knowledge that His earthly trials are now over. No more pain, no more of humanity's sin. That is all behind Him. And with quiet expectation He anticipates His reunion with the Father.*

**Jesus**

40 *(quietly, from behind James)*

James.

**James**

45 *(turning, wiping his hands on his apron; not recognizing Jesus)*  
What can I do for you? Maybe a new table. A new bench? Need  
something repaired? We do the finest work in Nazareth.

**Jesus**

*(smiling)*

I'm not here to buy.

**James**

50 *(with suspicion)*

Oh? What then?

**Jesus**

I'm here to see James, son of Joseph and Mary.

**James**

55 *(still suspicious)*

With what purpose in mind?

**Jesus**

To bid him farewell.

**James**

60 *(confused; then, with a shrug, returning to his wood)*

Seems to me it would make more sense to meet this person first, before  
bidding him farewell.

**Jesus**

Oh, I've known James for many years.

65 **James**

*(turning to study the face of his visitor)*

Do I know you?

**Jesus**

70

*(moving about while he reminisces)*

James was a precocious lad, always finding trouble under the feet of his father. Why, when he was all of six years old, he invoked the wrath of Joseph by cutting irregular grooves into the surface of a recently completed table.

75

**James***(squinting to recognize Jesus)*

You have the advantage, sir. Your memory serves you well, but I can't place you. Were you a neighbor in my youth?

**Jesus**

80

I lived under your roof, James!

*(chuckling softly)*

You study me so. Examine me with your heart—not your eyes.

**James**

85

*(taking a step closer, looking closely at Jesus; then a glimmer of realization, followed quickly by disbelief; finally the powerful truth washes over him; almost swooning)*

Jesus!

**Jesus***(holding him)*

90

My brother.

**James***(stammering)*

Then— it's— true. But— how—

**Jesus**

95

Sit down, James.

**James**

I— I didn't think it could really be true.

**Jesus**

You're touching me. It is really true.

100

**James***(ashamedly)*

I didn't believe. I thought it was just rumors.

**Jesus***(with gentle sadness)*

105

What will it take, James? What will it take for you to believe?

**James**

You were my brother. For so many years that was all you were—my brother.

**Jesus**

110

You saw my work. Wasn't that enough?

**James**

Even with my own eyes it was hard to believe. Our people had waited generations for the Messiah. How could I imagine the prophecy would be answered in my own home—by the older brother who taught me how to climb the sycamore tree?

115

**Jesus***(smiling)*

Ah, the sycamore tree. Is it still there?

**James**

120

A little fatter, a little taller, but still there in front of the house.

**Jesus***(shaking his head)*

How that poor tree was abused while we were growing up!

**James**

125

Now my children play in its branches.

*(happily)*

And now you've come back home. Where you belong—with your family.

**Jesus**

I'm not here to stay. I've come to say good-bye.

130 **James**  
You just got here! Surely your travels are over.

**Jesus**  
*(happily; wanting James to share in his joy)*  
Yes, they are. I'm going home.

135 **James**  
Home.  
*(looking up)*  
Home?

*(confused)*  
140 This—this is your home.

**Jesus**  
Oh, James. You've always been a stubborn man.

**James**  
*(petulantly)*  
145 Our father's first born was more a dreamer than a worker. Somebody had to carry on when he died. And you know what they say about carpenter's wooden heads.

**Jesus**  
Do you still not see?  
*(patiently)*  
150 Do you not yet understand that your father, Joseph, was not my father?

**James**  
*(after struggling with the significance of his answer)*  
Do you realize how strange it feels to think of the person you grew up  
155 with as the Son of God?

**Jesus**  
*(with compassion)*  
You've been a part of something that will never again be repeated. I know this is hard for you, but, you see, my home—my real home—is not here.

160 When our mother gave birth to me, it was not my beginning. It was only  
my entrance.

*(smiling)*

I've never had a beginning. I just always— have been.

**James**

165 *(angered by his own frustration)*

And so you just dropped by to remind me—to remind me of how little we  
have in common.

**Jesus**

I love you, James. I wanted to see you one last time.

170 **James**

*(flaring)*

Why bother? Why come back just for that? It would have been better to  
leave things as they were.

*(with bitterness)*

175 Why couldn't you leave me happy in my ignorance?

**Jesus**

And were you so happy? Happy thinking your older brother had been put  
to death on a Roman cross? Where is your happiness, James? In my  
death? — or in my living?

180 **James**

*(in turmoil)*

But you can't be alive! You must be a spirit. In a while I'll wake up on the  
floor, in a pile of sawdust, and all this will be nothing more than a  
disturbing memory.

185 **Jesus**

*(firmly)*

What's disturbing you is that I am alive. Your eyes tell you it's true; your  
heart tells you it's true. Your hands have touched my flesh! Was it cold?  
Did it have the chill of the grave?

190

**James**

*(with his head in his hands)*

No— No—

*(struggling; trying to make sense out of all this; after a long pause)*

Are you my— real brother?

195

**Jesus**

Yes, I am your brother.

*(turning away)*

But I'm also every man's brother; I'm every woman's kin.

*(turning back to James)*

200

If they believe.

**James**

*(with gathering pride)*

Then, I may be counted twice. And wherever this home of yours is, may the people there know that you have a brother who loves you.

205

*(embracing Jesus; continuing after their embrace)*

When will you—

**Jesus**

Tomorrow, James. It will be tomorrow.

**James**

*(sadly; with a sigh)*

210

Oh, it's too soon.

**Jesus**

*(happily)*

Not for me. I've been away from my Father for thirty-three years. And I miss Him so.

215

**James**

*(with a new insistency)*

Then take me with you. I'm not prepared to lose my brother again.

220



**Jesus**

225 You can't go with me. But you'll not lose me, either. You have much work  
to do after I leave. You'll play an important role in the process I've begun.  
You'll see me again. We'll be together in my home. And it's now your  
home. Like me, your time here is but for a moment; your happiness here  
is passing. Our life is with the Father.

**James**

And the Father will accept me, too, in your home?

**Jesus**

230 You, too, are now His child.

*(as they exit)*

And that makes you more my brother than you've ever been before!

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