

The Identity of Divinity *Libretto*

PRELUDE [off-stage voice]:

As I crawl bare-kneed over the craggy rocks of memory,
I remember when man first awoke from his eternal sleep and,
Gaping, yawned in unrealized despair.
He stretched disjointedly towards the stars,
As if they could justify him, and stood on
Very toe-tip to touch and tower above them.

And the evening and the morning were the first day,
But the first night was the shadow of man
Across the face of the earth.

As I crawl bare-kneed over the craggy rocks of memory,
I remember God walking in the garden alone,
Where He used to walk with His favorite creation, Man.
And I remember God sighing and saying to Himself that
He would give up part of whatever He was if somehow
He could restore light to man's world of self-darkness and bring man
Back into perfect harmony with God, man's perfect creator.

ACT ONE: DISCOVERY

[as a boy of twelve, Jesus begins to suspect his divine identity and purpose]

Jesus:

Lord, I'm just a poor boy about to become a man,
Living and growing in a land where it's hard to understand
How Your chosen people have chosen to desert You;
Of the ones who claim to love You, there are so few who really do.
Lord, You know that I love You, You know I love Your people.
If there's some way You can, let me become part of Your plan.

Voice of God: [offstage chorus]

I Am Who I Am; I never change, I never change.

Jesus:

What voice is this that calls so clearly to me?
It sounds like some voice I've heard some place before.

Voice of God: [offstage chorus]

I Am Who I Am; I never change, I never change.

Jesus:

Lord, I know that is You; You're speaking to me.

Please give ear unto my prayer; help me become something great for You.

Lord, don't let me become satisfied with what I

Think I've become for you, but help me, Lord, in becoming.

Lord, You know I can't match what You become for me day by day.

Please help me, Lord, in becoming.

Lord, don't let me become satisfied with what I think I have done for You;

But help me, Lord, in doing for You.

Lord, You know I can't match what You do for me day by day.

Please help me, Lord, in doing for You.

Lord, don't let me become satisfied with what I think I have done for You;

But help me, Lord, in doing for You.

Lord, You know I can't match what You do for me day by day.

Please help me, Lord, in doing for You.

Lord, don't let me become satisfied with what I think I have given You;

But help me, Lord, in giving to You.

Lord, You know I can't match what You give to me day by day;

But help me, Lord, in giving to You.

Lord, don't let me become satisfied with how I've tried to love You;

But help me, Lord, in loving You.

Lord, You know I can't match how You love me day by day;

Please help me, Lord, in loving You.

Voice of God: [offstage chorus]

I have always been; I will always be. I cannot become.

Jesus:

Can't become? But that's what I asked You for.

I don't understand. Tell me, what do You mean?

Voice of God: [offstage chorus]

I have always been; I will always be. I cannot become.

You are the Word who was with God in beginning,

The Word who gave this world form.

You are the Word who gave image to man,

The Word who shall free man once more.

Jesus:

I am the Word who was with God in beginning,

The Word who gave this world form.

I am the Word who gave image to man,

The Word who shall free man once more.
What blasphemy would it then be for me to say that I am not?
Who is this Savior whom God has promised?
What and when and why is He to be?

Rabbis at Temple:

He will be God's Son, God's Holy One.
He'll be born in God's time to atone for all mankind.

Jesus:

Where will He be born, this "Savior of Mankind"?
What's His line and what will His mother be?

Rabbis at Temple:

He'll be born in Bethlehem of a virgin woman;
From the royal line of Jesse, like King David, He will come.

Jesus:

But what if by some chance I really am?
What blasphemy would it then be for me to say that I am not?

Rabbis at Temple:

What amazing questions you ask for such a young boy.
Why do you want to know the things you ask about?

Jesus:

I wish that I could tell you
What amazing things have been happening to me today.

Joseph:

What are you doing here? You were supposed to be with us.
Don't you know how we worried thinking you were lost?

Jesus:

Can't you understand that I must be here
About my Father's business?

Joseph:

Your Father's business? I don't understand.
Am I not your father? Tell me what do you mean?

Jesus:

Can't you understand that I must be here
About my Father's business?
I am the Word who was with God in beginning,
The Word who gave this world form.
I am the Word who gave image to man,

The Word who shall free man once more.
Who is my mother and who is my father?
What brothers and sisters do I have?
Who is my friend and who is my neighbor?
Who is not when this whole world is my own?
I must return home now to grow into manhood
To show in human form what I am.
Though I am, I must become the image of God
To show man what love and mercy mean.

ACT TWO: REVELATION

[from the time of His baptism, Jesus reveals his true identity to the people of His day, but is ultimately rejected by the crowd in general as not being the kind of Messiah they want him to be]

Voice of God: [off-stage chorus]

This is my Son, whom I dearly love, and with whom I am quite pleased.

John the Baptist:

Ladies and gentlemen and hypocrites of the church,
Your curiosity has brought you here to hear me.
Let me present you to the one,
The one I've been telling you about for so long.
The one whose shoestrings I'm not worthy to untie,
Much less to baptize as I would some ordinary man.
Let me present you to the one...
You may recognize Him by the following sign:
He wears God's dove of peace upon His shoulder.
Let me present you to the one...
He's the worthy Lamb of God, spotless and without blemish.
Let us present ourselves as an offering unto Him.

Crowd:

[ad lib applause—ragged and insincere]

John the Baptist:

There go the people thinking that this "show" is done;
If they'd believe me, then they'd know it's just begun.
They'd know that you're the Christ; you're God indeed,
The Flower of Beauty among the weeds,
The only source of hope for what they really need.

Jesus:

I must find some quiet place to go and fast and pray.
Lord, don't let me become satisfied...

O Lord, please give me the strength I need to resist being just human,
For You have a plan, and I share Your purpose; the devil has his plot
To divide us and conquer. He can. If I give in, he can.

Here comes the devil right now; why do I fear him so?
For I am God and he is not.
Here comes the devil right now; it's so hard to resist him,
For although I am God, I'm locked up in human form.

Devil:

If you are really the Son of God,
Order this stone to turn into bread.

Jesus:

The Scripture says, "Man cannot live by bread alone,
But by the Word of God."

Devil:

I will give you all power and all wealth
If you'll bow down and worship me.

Jesus:

The Scripture says, "Worship the Lord your God
And serve Him and only Him."

Devil:

If you are really God's Son, let His
Angels catch you as you jump from this roof.

Jesus:

The Scripture says, "You must not put the
Lord your God to the test."

There goes the devil for right now; why do I fear him so?
For I am God and he is not.
There goes the devil for right now; it's so hard to resist him,
For although I am God, I'm locked up in human form.

O Lord, please give me the strength I need to resist being just human,
For You have a plan and I share Your purpose;
The devil has his plot—to divide us and conquer. He can.
If I give in, he can.

Follow me, follow me, follow me and fish for men.

Voice of God: [offstage chorus]

Follow me, follow me, follow me and fish for men.

Disciples:

What voice is this that calls so clearly to me?
It sounds like the voice of God whom John presented us to.

Jesus:

Follow me, follow me, follow me and fish for men.

Voice of God: [offstage chorus]

Follow me, follow me, follow me and fish for men.

Disciples:

We will follow You wherever You lead us,
As fishers or whatever, we will become part of Your plan.

Jesus:

You cannot go where I'm going—not yet—
But if you will place your faith in me,
I will go to my Father's house and
Prepare a room for each of you.
Then I'll go ahead of you to show you
The way when the time is right.
Then I'll leave you here for a little while
To lead the way for others.
Then I'll leave you here for a little while
To lead the way for others.

Disciples:

Do some miracle, O Lord; do some magic trick for the crowd.
They say they want to believe, but they can't unless they're shown.

Crowd:

Do some miracle, O Lord; do a magic trick for us.
You know we want to believe, but we can't unless we're shown.

Disciples:

You can't really blame them, for Your reputation
Sounds almost unreal, but we've seen You in action.

One Disciple: [like the devil]

O Lord, we know You'd impress them
By turning this piece of stone Into fresh bread
Or by doing some feat of dare-devilment
To tickle their fancies and turn all their doubts into faith.

Jesus:

Do you see that poor widow there? What little she has she gives to the church.
She loves God; her faith is strong, and God provides for all her needs.

Blessed are those who believe without first having to be shown;
Heaven is made up of their kind, whose faith in God surpasses doubt.

If this crowd has no faith, then I can do nothing for them.
Had they just part of her faith, the themselves could move mountains.

Woman from Crowd:

Lord, won't You let me touch the hem of your gown?
If You'll let me do that, I know I'll be healed.

Man from Crowd:

Lord, won't You touch me as I reach out to You?
If You'll do that, I know I'll be healed.

Jesus:

Go your way and sin no more, for your faith has made you whole.
Go your way and praise the Lord; let God provide for all your needs.

Religious Leaders:

Who but God can forgive sin? And yet this Jesus claims to.
Isn't this man just human? These blasphemies must be stopped—now.

Jesus:

Heaven begins with the life you're now living,
So live your life for God.
If you say you can't live for a God you can't see,
Believe in Him through me.
If you say you can't live for a God you can't see,
Believe in Him through me.

Disciples:

Lord, what do we need to do now?

Jesus:

Do as God does: learn to love.

Disciples:

But whom should we love, and how, Lord?

Jesus:

Love your neighbors as yourselves.

Disciples:

But who is my neighbor, O Lord?

Jesus:

Look around you. Who is not?

Disciples:

But what should we do when he wrongs us?

Jesus:

Do as God does and forgive him.

Disciples:

How many times must we forgive him?

Jesus:

Do as God does: don't keep count.

So what do you need to do now?

Disciples:

We'll do as God does and learn to love.

Crowd:

Christ, You know how we believe in You now.

When You talk of faith, we know it's all true.

We know very well what You can do—

When You have a mind to.

Crowd Man:

You talk love and forgiveness...

Crowd Woman:

That shouldn't be Your business.

Crowd Man:

Heal us, feed us, and free us...

Crowd Woman:

We'll talk love when You've pleased us.

Crown Man: [like the devil]

O Christ, we want You to be our king and not our Messiah.

Can You not see it's Your patriotic duty to serve God and man

By doing your thing our way?

Jesus:

Can't you understand I'm not that kind of king?

My kingdom is not on this earth.

Voice of God: [off-stage chorus]

Can't you understand I'm not that kind of king?

My kingdom is not on this earth.

Jesus:

There go the people thinking that this “show” is done.
If they’d believe me, then they’d know it’s just begun.

Peter:

They’d know that You’re the Christ; You’re God indeed,
The Flower of Beauty among the weeds,
The only source of hope for what they really need.

Jesus:

But what doubts you’ll have until the “Miracle of Jonah” is done.

ACT THREE: RECOGNITION

[the despair of Jesus’ crucifixion turns into joy as the disciples recognize the reality of their Messiah]

Jesus:

Take this broken piece of bread as a symbol of my body.
When you eat it, think of me and remember who I am.
Take this cup of wine as a symbol of my blood.
When you drink it, think of me and remember who I am.

Do they faint at the sight of my real blood?
And do they forget what I came here to do for them?
Does the sight of my broken body repulse them so
That they’ll forget I’ll be raised from death in three days’ time?

John the Baptist: [as an echo]

Let me present you to the one,
The one I’ve been telling you about for so long.

Jesus:

What we shared last night was close to perfect,
But where are they now? Don’t they know that
I Am Who I Am? I never change. I never change.

Lord, it’s finished; I’ve done all I could do for you as just a man.
The world sees me as just a failure.
You alone know the success of Your plan.
Lord, it’s finished; I’ve done all I could do to carry out Your plan.
If I must die, please let it be soon.
I’m being cut off from You by every sin of man.
Lord, I am done now. I am finished; I am through.
I wait for You to bring me home, once more to be a part of You.

Off-Stage Voice:

The crucifixion now is past
And Christ is in His tomb at last
And at the door the stone is fast.
The tumult and the shouting's done;
His friends have left Him one by one.
To them He seemed a setting sun.
Despair-black is this evening's light;
There is no star at heaven's height
As on an earlier holy night.
There are no angels in the sky.
There are no shepherds standing nigh.
There is no babe in crib to lie.
Just a body killed and torn
From some fishers now forlorn,
A savior killed who once was born.
The temple veil in two was rent,
Darkness on the earth was sent.
Darkness which for light was meant.
Amen. Amen. Amen.

Crowd:

Lord! He's done now; what a waste.
The King of the Jews couldn't save himself from destruction.
We'll hear none of his blasphemies again.
Not even his disciples have anything good left to say.

Disciples:

Lord! He's done now; what a waste.
Though He was our king, he couldn't save Himself from destruction.
We'll hear no more promises, no talk of love and faith.
The empty echoes of His words make us wish He had been real.

Mary:

Lift your sad faces and listen to my good news:
I went to the tomb and found the body was not there.
When I asked where it was, an angel told me this news:
Christ is alive again. The "Miracle of Jonah" is done.
The miracle is done!

John the Baptist: [as an echo]

Let me present you to the one,
The one I've been telling you about for so long.

Everyone: [except the crowd]

Christ was not just some miracle worker whose magic died with Him.
For Christ is still alive and He changes the lives of
Those who believe that He came here
To die for their sins.
Christ was not just some man out of history who changed B.C. to A.D.
For Christ stepped out of time to make room in eternity
For the world if the world would believe.

This world seems far too ready
When it comes to accepting Christ as man and nothing more.
But this world seems quite unsteady
When it comes to accepting Christ as God in human form.

Christ was not just some radical peasant
Who was crowned with thorns “King for a Day.”
For Christ has a kingdom that is not of this world.
I don’t know where it is,
But I know that I’ll see it someday.
I’ll live there someday.

POSTLUDE: [off-stage voice]

As I crawl bare-kneed over the craggy rocks of memory,
I remember when God loved the world so much that
He sent part of Himself into the world to save mankind.
Mankind tried to kill Him,
But God lives
And God still loves!

Music and lyrics by Roger E. Bruner

