

JESUS

Stop.

(ALL turn to look at him.)

This is the beginning.

(And with that one sentence, we realize that all that has gone before has been preparation. He has spent this time forging a community of these people so that now they can join him in the real work he has come here to do.)

[NOTE: During the preceding celebration that followed Turn Back, O Man, some of the cast have set up for the Pharisees scene. In the original, this entailed setting up the table on a diagonal SL; UZO, LINDSAY and NICK — who played the Pharisees — bedecked themselves with tin foil, to simulate rich raiment, and positioned themselves on and below the table in a vertical line, looking somewhat like a three-headed idol. The Pharisees are grand, grandiose and self-important, yet highly aware of public opinion — in other words, politicians.]

UZO

(Now a Pharisee, to JESUS)

By whose authority are you acting like this?

NICK

(Also as a Pharisee)

Who gave you this authority?

JESUS

Well, I have a question to ask you. Answer it and then I'll tell you by whose authority I act. The baptism of John; was it from God or was it from man?

(The Pharisees nervously confer among themselves.)

LINDSAY

(To UZO and NICK)

If we say "from God," he will say, "Then why did you not believe?"

NICK

But if we say "from man"...

UZO

...the people...

NICK

...will be angry, for they took John as a prophet.

(The Pharisees reach a decision and, thinking they have avoided a trap, reply smugly.)

THERS

*e applause.
ity, they
sive again.
ally he breaks*

UZO, LINDSAY, NICK

(To JESUS)

We do not know.

JESUS

Then neither will I tell you by whose authority I act. But I have a story for you:
A man had two sons.

(He motions to JUDAS, who crosses to JESUS center and accompanies his story by enacting it in pantomime.)

He went to the first, and said, "My son, go and work in the vineyard today."

JUDAS

"I will go,"

JESUS

said the boy, but he never went.

#12a - Pharisees (optional)

Then the father said to the second, "Now go my son, go and work in the vineyard today."

JUDAS

"I will not go,"

JESUS

said the son, but later on he changed his mind and went.

(JUDAS, having finished illustrating the story, crosses back to sit with the OTHERS as JESUS turns back to the Pharisees.)

Now which of these two did as his father wished?

(Once again, the Pharisees nervously confer with a sort of "buzz-buzz-buzz-ing" sound. Then they answer haughtily.)

UZO, LINDSAY, NICK

The second.

JESUS

And I tell you this: Tax gatherers and prostitutes are entering the kingdom of heaven ahead of you, because when John came and showed you the right way to live, you didn't believe him, but the tax gatherers and the prostitutes did. And even when you saw this, you did not change your minds and follow him.

UZO

Master, you are an "honest man." Give us your ruling on this: Are we or are we not permitted to pay taxes to the Roman emperor?

(The Pharisees snicker smugly among themselves: They know this is a question that can lead to trouble with the secular authorities for JESUS. JESUS' followers know it too.)

JUDAS

You hypocrites!

(JUDAS lunges for the Pharisees, but he is stopped by JESUS, who reassuringly urges JUDAS to return to his place.)

JESUS

(To Pharisees)

Show me the money in which the tax is paid.

(The Pharisees become a money-producing machine of some sort — cash register, slot machine, ATM, etc. — and produce an invisible coin, which one of them flips to JESUS.)

Well, now, whose head is on here, whose inscription?

UZO

Caesar's.

JESUS

Then pay Caesar what is due Caesar, but pay God what is due God.

(The Pharisees are irritated at not having tripped JESUS up.)

NICK

Master, what is the greatest commandment of them all?

(This is another trick question, for there is not supposed to be a "greatest" commandment. However JESUS answers will get him in trouble with the religious establishment. Nevertheless, JESUS answers clearly and calmly.)

JESUS

Thou shalt love the Lord, your God, with all your heart and all your soul. This is the greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. All the rest of the law, and all the prophets have written, is based on these first two.

(But JESUS sees that he is plainly not getting through to the Pharisees, that they have already pre-judged him. Frustrated, he turns to the audience and addresses us with urgency, getting angrier and angrier.)

The doctors of the law and the Pharisees sit in the chair of Moses, therefore listen to what they say, pay attention to their words, but do not follow their practices. For they say one thing and do another. They make up heavy packs and pile them on men's shoulders and they don't raise a finger to lift the load themselves. Everything they do is done for show. Oh, they go about wearing broad phylacteries with large tassels on their robes. They like to have their places of honor at feasts and at the