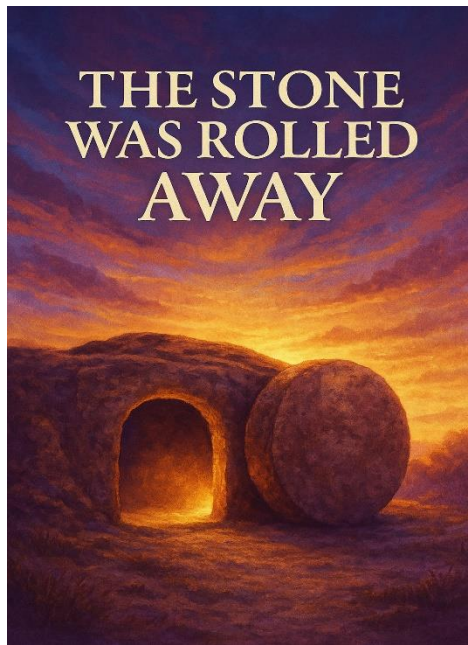


# THE STONE ... WAS *ROLLED AWAY*

A Musical Drama of the Resurrection



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In association with:  
Peter B. Francis Productions

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## Dedication

*“...To all Seekers of truth.”*

## Acknowledgments

My heartfelt thanks to my family for their patience, understanding, and support as I focused on developing *"Behold...The Moment! (A Christmas Cantata)"* and *"The Stone Was Rolled Away"*. Both projects demanded significant time and attention to ensure a meaningful presentation for all those seeking the truth. Thank you, and I love you all. God bless.

I wish to express my gratitude to Creative Ministries for their support with **"The Stone Was Rolled Away,"** a Musical Drama about the Resurrection, and **"Behold... The Moment! (A Christmas Cantata)"** that tells the story of the birth of Christ, and the brutality of King Herod's reign. These works intertwine theology with education, promising to captivate and inspire audiences and listeners alike!

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# Introduction

## The Stone Was Rolled Away

Written by **Peter B. Francis and Associates** and dedicated to all **“Seekers of Truth.”**

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In a world shaken by the death of a Savior, the story begins in the shadow of the cross, and in the searching heart of a modern-day Seeker.

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A young man stands in a contemporary church, interrupting a Sunday homily with questions that echo across the centuries: “How do we know? Who saw it happen? Why was the stone rolled away?” The Pastor, calm and compassionate, invites him and the audience on a journey through Scripture and history to uncover truth beyond doubt.

# Synopsis

## Act I

The story starts in ancient Jerusalem. Pilate is tormented by guilt as his wife, Claudia, delivers a haunting warning from a divine dream. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus tenderly lay Jesus in the tomb, while fearful priests seal it under Roman command, hoping to silence what they cannot understand.

But as whispers stir in the streets, the impossible happens, the stone is rolled away, and the tomb is empty. Faith wrestles with fear. Truth collides with power. And a restless world begins to ask, “Where is He now?”

Through each scene, the Seeker’s questions frame the unfolding story, bridging past and present as doubt gives way to discovery.

## Act II

The wonder of resurrection bursts forth. On the Road to Emmaus, hearts burn as a Stranger reveals the Scriptures fulfilled. In Jerusalem, joy erupts as Mary Magdalene sings “**Rise Up!**” and the disciples unite in praise with “**Only One God.**” Yet faith is tested as Thomas confronts his doubt - until the risen Christ stands before him, leading to his confession in “**With My Father’s Love (Believing Like a Man).**”

The story crescendos in the triumphant reprise “***The Stone Was Rolled Away,***” culminating on a Galilean hillside where Christ commissions His followers to go into all the world. The ensemble bursts into the finale, “**Alive in Paradise,**” a soaring anthem of mission, unity, and eternal hope.

Through drama, Scripture, and original music, *The Stone Was Rolled Away* tells the story of doubt transformed into faith, despair into joy, and death conquered by life, inviting every heart to see, believe, and proclaim: “**The Savior has come Alive in Paradise!**”

## Overview

### Act I: The Stone Was Rolled Away

#### Prologue: “The Question”

Modern-Day Church Sanctuary. A Seeker interrupts a sermon with bold questions about the resurrection. The Pastor invites him - and the audience - into a journey through Scripture to discover truth.

#### Scene 1: “The Warning”

In the shadow of judgment, **Pontius Pilate** wrestles with guilt after condemning Jesus to death. His wife, **Claudia**, pleads with him, haunted by a prophetic dream warning of divine consequences. Pilate’s hands may be washed, but his soul burns with shame.

#### Scene 2: “The Appeal”

**Joseph of Arimathea** boldly requests Jesus’ body from Pilate, risking reputation and power. Moved by conviction, Pilate grants his request. Joseph and **Nicodemus** prepare for burial, their courage standing in contrast to the fear that silenced others.

#### Scene 3: “The Garden Tomb”

In a moment of sacred tenderness, Joseph and Nicodemus gently lay Jesus in the tomb. Through song, they express grief, reverence, and fragile hope, sealing the stone as night and silence fall over the garden.

#### Scene 4: “The Guard at the Tomb”

Determined to suppress rumors, the **chief priests** secure Roman guards to seal the tomb. With chants of “*Seal it, guard it, deceive no more,*” they attempt to contain the truth - unaware that Heaven’s plan cannot be restrained by stone or seal.

#### Scene 5: “The Weight of Betrayal”

In the upper room, the disciples hide in fear. **Peter** mourns his denial, **Thomas** wrestles with doubt, and the group laments **Judas**’ death. Shame and grief hang heavy as faith falters in the shadow of loss.

#### Scene 6: “The Report”

At dawn, **Mary Magdalene**, **Joanna**, and **Salome** rush in with astonishing news—the tomb is empty! Peter races to see for himself. In the song “*The Stone Was Rolled Away,*” Peter confronts the grave and glimpses hope beyond despair.

#### Scene 7: “The Comfort”

Back in the upper room, confusion reigns. **Mary Magdalene** comforts Peter with the song “*God Loves You,*” reminding all that God’s love remains even in their fear and doubt.

## Scene 8: “Who Was He... Really?”

**Thomas** questions the truth, demanding proof before belief. As he departs, a **Seeker**—a traveler drawn by whispers of resurrection—enters, asking, “*Who was He... really?*” His searching heart becomes the voice of the audience.

## Scene 9: “The Promise Remembered”

**Salome** recalls Jesus’ words and the miracles they witnessed, urging the group to remember His promises. Through the song “*Do You Remember (He Said)*,” their sorrow begins to turn toward expectation - faith rekindled as the curtain falls on hope rising.

# Act II: The Risen Lord

## Scene 1: “The Rumors Spread”

Jerusalem awakens to confusion. Guards tremble, claiming the stone was rolled away; priests bribe them to spread lies. The crowd wrestles with truth and deceit as whispers of resurrection stir the city. In the ensemble song “*Where Is He, Now?*,” voices collide - faith, fear, and longing for the risen Christ.

## Scene 2: “The Road to Emmaus”

Two disciples journey home, hearts heavy with grief. A **Stranger** joins them, unfolding Scripture and revealing that the Messiah’s suffering fulfilled prophecy. The **Seeker** follows, drawn by the Stranger’s words and the hope they awaken.

## Scene 3: “God, Jesus, and Me” (*The Seeker’s Solo*)

Alone in reflection, the **Seeker** pours out a heartfelt cry in song. Through “*God, Jesus, and Me*,” he confesses doubt yet begins to believe in the power, glory, and mercy of the Trinity—faith stirring within his searching soul.

## Scene 4: “The Breaking of Bread”

In Emmaus, “The Stranger” breaks bread - and their eyes are opened. It is **Jesus**. In awe, the disciples proclaim, “*Did not our hearts burn within us?*” As He vanishes from sight, they rush back to Jerusalem, faith ignited. **The Seeker** whispers, “*Alive... for me.*”

## Scene 5: “Rise Up!”

Back in the upper room, joy returns as **Mary Magdalene** and the **Seeker** lift their voices in “*Rise Up!*” A triumphant duet calls the disciples from despair to mission - praising the risen Lord with renewed strength and purpose.

## Scene 6: “Only One God”

In unity, the disciples and followers declare their faith in one Lord, one Redeemer, one God. Each voice bears witness: forgiveness received, healing granted, lives transformed. Through the song “*Only One God*,” the community affirms their shared devotion and newfound courage.

## Scene 7: “The Lord, My God”

Still burdened with doubt, **Thomas** demands proof. Jesus appears among them, offering peace and showing His wounds. Overwhelmed, Thomas falls in worship, crying, “*My Lord and my God!*” In “***Believing Like a Man,***” his doubt turns to faith, his fear to surrender - a powerful confession of restored belief.

## Scene 8: “The Great Commission”

On a Galilean hillside, Jesus appears in radiant glory, proclaiming:  
“*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations... I am with you always.*”  
Faith and mission unite as the ensemble reprises “***The Stone Was Rolled Away,***” celebrating victory over death and the call to spread the Gospel.

## Scene 9: “Alive in Paradise” (Finale Ensemble)

In a soaring finale, Peter, Mary, Thomas, the Seeker, and all disciples join in “*Alive in Paradise.*” They proclaim the risen Savior, rejoice in redemption, and accept their divine mission. The curtain closes on radiant hope - Christ triumphant, alive forevermore, and His people commissioned to shine His light to the ends of the earth.

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## Cast of Characters

### **Jesus (The Risen Lord)**

Though unseen for much of Act I, His presence drives every action. In Act II, He appears in resurrected glory, revealing truth, restoring broken hearts, and commissioning His followers to proclaim the Gospel.

### **Pastor / Narrator**

A modern-day preacher who guides both the Seeker and the audience through the unfolding biblical drama. He bridges time, Scripture, and personal application.

### **The Seeker**

A modern voice woven into the ancient story. Representing every searching heart seeking the truth. The Seeker journeys from doubt to conviction through dialogue, reflection, and song, ultimately embracing faith.

## Roman Authority

**Pontius Pilate**

Roman governor of Judea. Caught between political pressure and conscience, he condemns Jesus despite declaring Him innocent. Haunted by guilt, he wrestles inwardly with the cost of his decision.

**Claudia (Pilate's Wife)**

Spiritually sensitive and troubled by a prophetic dream, she pleads with Pilate to avoid condemning an innocent man, serving as a voice of warning and conscience.

**Roman Guards**

Assigned to secure the tomb. Eyewitnesses to the miraculous events surrounding the resurrection, they struggle between truth and fear as they are drawn into a conspiracy of silence.

## Religious Leaders

**Priests and Pharisees (Sanhedrin Leaders)**

Religious authorities who seek to suppress the truth of Jesus' resurrection. Their actions reveal fear-driven resistance to divine power and the futility of opposing God's plan.

## Disciples and Followers

**Joseph of Arimathea**

A respected council member and secret disciple who courageously asks for Jesus' body. His devotion moves from hidden faith to public honor as he provides his own tomb.

**Nicodemus**

A Pharisee transformed by Jesus' teaching. Once cautious, he joins Joseph in preparing the body for burial, demonstrating faith emerging from secrecy into devotion.

**Mary Magdalene**

A devoted follower healed by Jesus. First witness of the resurrection, her sorrow turns to radiant hope as she proclaims the risen Lord with worship and boldness.

**Joanna**

Wife of Chuza and supporter of Jesus' ministry. She journeys to the tomb with spices and becomes a witness to the empty grave.

**Salome**

Mother of James and John. Faithful and reflective, she recalls Jesus' promises and anchors others in remembrance of His words.

**Peter**

Impulsive and passionate, yet wounded by his denial. His shame gives way to restoration in Act II as he boldly proclaims the risen Christ.

**John**

The beloved disciple, gentle, contemplative, and steadfast. His quiet faith provides a steady contrast to Peter's intensity.

**Thomas**

Honest and skeptical, he seeks tangible proof of the resurrection. His encounter with the risen Christ becomes a defining confession of belief.

**Cleopas and the Emmaus Disciple**

Travelers on the road to Emmaus whose eyes are opened in the breaking of bread. Their testimony reignites faith among the others.

**Disciples: James, Matthew, Philip, Bartholomew, Andrew, Thaddeus, Simon (the Zealot)**

The remaining disciples who embody the range of human response: fear, confusion, regret, longing, and eventual courage.

## Ensemble

**Townpeople / Ensemble**

The collective voice of Jerusalem. They question, doubt, mourn, and ultimately awaken to belief, carrying the emotional weight and energy of the unfolding story.

## The Spirit

Acknowledgements and Scripture.

## Prologue:

### “The Question”

**Narrator:** *In a Modern-Day Church Sanctuary, present time, soft morning light filters through stained-glass windows. An organ, flute, and cello play Hymn 454: “Open My Eyes, That I May See.” The Pastor*

*steps to the pulpit, Bible in hand. The Seeker, a young man in casual clothes, sits a few rows back among a reverent congregation, alert, anxious, and highly curious. The Pastor, with a calm authority, faces his congregation, saying:*

**PASTOR:**

My friends, today we proclaim the most transformative truth ever told: That Jesus the Christ - once crucified, buried, and sealed in a tomb - **is risen**. Let us hear the Word of the Lord.

**Narrator:** *He opens the Bible reverently and reads aloud...*

**PASTOR:**

- **Matthew 28:2** - "And behold, there was a great earthquake; For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it."
- **Mark 16:4** - "And looking up, they saw that the stone had been rolled back- it was very large."
- **Luke 24:2** - "And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb."
- **John 20:1** - "Now on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away."

**Narrator:** *He closes the Bible gently, resting his hand upon it.*

**PASTOR:**

This, dear friends, is the heartbeat of our faith.  
The stone was rolled away -  
not by human strength,  
But by the power of God.

**Narrator:** *A solemn pause. Silence fills the sanctuary. [The Seeker rises suddenly. The congregation turns, startled.] With a sincere, curious, searching tone, the Seeker says:*

**SEEKER:**

Pastor, excuse me, but...  
You say that an angel rolled away the stone.  
But how do we know? Who saw it happen?  
And if Jesus could walk through locked doors later,  
why would He need a stone rolled away at all?

**Narrator:** Murmurs ripple through the congregation.

**SEEKER:**

Was the stone for Him? Or for ...them?  
Or is it all just a story...  
a symbol for hope that people who want to believe?

**Narrator:** *The Pastor approaches the Seeker with compassion and with a desire to teach.*

**PASTOR:**

A story? No, my friend -

A witnessed moment in history.

The stone was not rolled away to let Jesus out...but to let the world see in.

To reveal what the grave could not contain.

The women saw it.

Peter saw it.

John saw it.

They ran - not from fear, but toward faith. And so must we!

**Narrator:** *The Seeker shakes his head with uncertainty.*

**SEEKER:**

I want to believe...

But belief needs more than words.

Show me how it all began - show me the truth behind the story.

**Narrator:** *Gently, extending a hand, the Pastor signals to the Seeker...*

**PASTOR:**

Then come with me.

Let us walk together - beyond time, beyond doubt,

back to "behold" the moment when darkness trembled...and history turned.

**Narrator:** *The Pastor turns toward the audience.*

**PASTOR:**

Come! To the halls of power,

Where fear and prophecy collide...

and a decision seals a destiny.

## Act 1. Scene 1:

### "The Warning"

**Narrator:** *The stage is dimly lit in Pilate's private chamber. Pilate sits at a stone table, staring at his hands. In the distance, a faint rumble of thunder is heard. A guard opens the door. Claudia, Pilate's wife, enters quickly, cloaked. With urgency, Claudia whispers...*

**CLAUDIA:**

Pilate, you dismissed ...my messenger!

**Narrator:** *Pilate was irritated.*

**PILATE:**

This is not the time, Claudia.

**CLAUDIA:**

Not the time? *Not the time?*

You condemned a righteous man, an innocent man... and you know it.

**Narrator:** *Pilate is defensive.*

**PILATE:**

The council forced my hand. The mob would have rioted.

Caesar cannot afford another rebellion ...and not on my record.

**Narrator:** *Claudia - gripping his arm.*

**CLAUDIA:**

I dreamed about Him, Pilate, and it was NO dream.

His eyes *pierced* me, ...Though I slept.

And His voice still echoes: "*Forgive them...*"

Do you hear me? That Man is NO ordinary criminal!

## SONG 1: "The Warning" (A Dream of Blood)

**Claudia:**

I dreamed about Him, Pilate

Not like any other dream.

His eyes pierced me, though I slept,

And His voice still echoes of His voice: "*Forgive them... Forgive them all.*"

Do you hear me? Pilate?

Do you hear me? Pilate?

That MAN is not a criminal at all!

**Pilate:**

Do you think I don't know?

How He looked at me as though He Judged me... without a word.

**Claudia:**

Then undo it! Stop this madness!!!

Don't let His blood stain this house!

**Pilate:** *(Ensemble repeats and sings: "It's too late" as a haunting sound in the background)*

It's too late, nails are driven

It's too late to save His life

It's too late, nails are driven

It's too late, He's already dead. He's Dead.

**Claudia:** *(Horried, spoken words during music)*

Then you will be haunted...  
Not by the council...  
Then you'll be haunted, and not by Rome...

**Pilate:** I wash my hands of Him (Too Late)  
I want no more of this (Too Late)  
He's hanging on a tree  
And now He's dead.

**Claudia:** No turning back

**Pilate:** He is dead.

**Claudia:** Then you will be haunted...  
Not by the council...  
Then you'll be haunted, and not by Rome...  
It shall be...by *Him*.

**Narrator:** *Claudia turns to leave, stops at the doorway, and slowly turns back and speaks softly:*

**CLAUDIA** (*softly*)

I saw His face... in glory, Pilate.  
And you... You were in chains.

**Narrator:** *She exits. Pilate stands frozen, staring at his own hands.  
The silence is broken by the **servant** rushing in.*

**SERVANT**

Governor... Joseph of Arimathea requests an audience.

**Narrator:** *Pilate blinks, regains composure, and gestures for him to enter.*