

Drama Ministry®

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TETELESTAI

by George Halitzka

GENRE: Drama/Light Comedy

SYNOPSIS: A Roman tax collector meets Luke the physician, and tells the doctor of his eyewitness to Jesus' crucifixion. But it is the "why" of the crucifixion that confuses the collector.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: The trick to this sketch is making clear to the audience when "invisible" characters are moving or speaking. The actor needs to know specifically where Luke is at all times, as well as Luke's position (sitting or standing). In rehearsal, constantly be aware if the actor's focus slips.

TIME: Under 5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 1

TOPIC: Good Friday, Salvation, Biblical Times

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: John 19:28-30

CHURCH YEAR SEASON: Easter, Any

SUGGESTED USE: Worship Service, Eastertide, Holy Week

CHARACTERS: A Roman tax collector

PROPS: 1) desk
2) chair
3) papers on the desk

COSTUMES: Cornelius can be dressed in either contemporary or Biblical-era clothing. He should wear an expensive but nondescript (and perhaps slightly tacky) suit or a richly decorated (but tasteless) robe.

SOUND: One wireless mike

LIGHTING: General stage

SETTING: An office with a large desk or table and a sign ("Israeli Roman Revenue Service") on the front.

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TETELESTAI *by George Halitzka*

Scene opens with CORNELIUS seated behind a table, attending to a line of taxpayers streaming by his position. He seems to greatly enjoy his job -- or at least the large amounts of money he's collecting. A sign reads, "Israeli Roman Revenue Service." Since this is a monologue, the people whom Cornelius addresses, including the taxpayers, are imaginary.

CORNELIUS: Thank you. Tetelestai. *(With a condescending smile)* Tetelestai, Rabbi.

Tetelestai. "Your debt is paid in full"; that's what tetelestai means. Whatsa matter, you don't speak Greek? Yeah? Well, your mother wears army sandals!

A stranger approaches, someone who does not seem to have taxes on his mind.

Okay, buddy, where's your 1040?

Yeah, that's what they all say. If you're not from around here, where are you from?

Jerusalem? Hey, I know one of the collectors down there-guy named

Zaccheus. You ever met him?

You interviewed him?

He motions Luke closer.

Hey, are you a reporter for the Jerusalem Gazette? *(Disappointed)* Oh, "writing a book." Yeah, you and everybody else, buddy. Okay, "Luke the Physician"-if that's your real name-what can I do for you?

Ahww... not that Jesus thing again! Don't tell me you're one of those crazy Christians; worshipping a dead guy-

Yeah, I've heard those "rose-from-the-dead" rumors. When I see it, I'll believe it... Now what can I do for you?

Sure, I was in Jerusalem at the time. Chasin' down a delinquent taxpayer. You shoulda seen his face when I found him... but he had the money, so I just gave him the old "tetelestai."

It means, "Your debt is paid in full." Doesn't anybody around here speak good Greek?

Oh yeah, about Jesus. Well, the day they crucified him, I was near Golgotha, so I went to see it. Hadn't seen a good execution in a while, y'know? There was a coupla broads crying, and some guy named John that smelled like fish... nobody else except the soldiers.