

A
Ruler
from
Bethlehem



Conversations in the Synagogue

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A Ruler from Bethlehem

Cast

Rabbi 1 (Rabbi Joachim) [Reader]

Rabbi 2 [Reader]

Shadow makers

Props Needed:

Shofar (Ram's Horn)

Menorah or candles

Candle lighters

Rabbi 1

Scroll

Stump with branch

Roman Helmet

Messiah

Anointing Oil being poured

Bethlehem silhouette

Crown

Sword

Temple Mountain

Rabbi 2

Lion & lamb

Kneeling Servant

Setup

The curtains will be drawn so that only the white "shadow box" curtain is visible. The video projector will be behind the white curtain and will

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be casting the light. Actors will be making shadows with themselves or props that have been cut out.

There are “rabbis” who will be reading and rabbis who will be the silhouettes in the shadow box. A sound system will hooked up to the computer for voice amplification and sound effects.

Ram’s Horn

The Gemara in Masechet Shabbat (35b) describes a custom that was observed each week before Shabbat in Jewish communities during Talmudic times. A person would climb onto the rooftop of a tall building in the town and blow six Shofa blasts. Specifically, he would twice blow the series of Teki’a-Teru’a-Teki’a.

Projector begins with person silhouetted blowing the Ram’s horn to announce the beginning of Sabbath. (Recorded sound of Ram’s horn).

Screen goes dark,

Sabbath or Shabat, begins at sundown on Friday evening with the sound of the ram’s horn.

RABBI 1 The Sabbath is a day of rest, prayer, and focusing on God.

Here in Bethlehem, the faithful gather to hear and discuss God’s Word.

*Lighting of the **MENORAH***

Rabbi 1 Let us recite together The Shema...

ALL Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.

*The **SCROLL** of Deuteronomy is brought out (with a Torah blessing in Hebrew?)*

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Rabbi 1 Let us declare the greatness of our God and give honor to the Torah.
Bless Adonai who is blessed.

ALL Blessed is Adonai who is blessed now and forever.

Rabbi 1 Blessed is Adonai who is blessed now and forever.
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has chosen us from
among the peoples, and given us the Torah. Blessed are You,
Adonai, who gives the Torah.

A reading from the scroll of Deuteronomy:

⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your might. ⁶ Keep
these words that I am commanding you today in your
heart. ⁷ Recite them to your children and talk about them
when you are at home and when you are away, when
you lie down and when you rise. ⁸ Bind them as a sign
on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, ⁹
and write them on the doorposts of your house and on
your gates.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has given us a Torah of truth, implanting within us
eternal life.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

RABBI 2 Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the
universe,
who has chosen faithful prophets to speak words of
truth.
Praise to You, Adonai, for the revelation of Torah, for
Your servant Moses,

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for Your people Israel and for prophets of truth and righteousness.

A reading from the scroll of Isaiah

Isaiah 11:1-5

A green Shoot will sprout from Jesse's stump,
from his roots a budding Branch.

[2] The life-giving Spirit of God will hover over him,
the Spirit that brings wisdom and understanding,
The Spirit that gives direction and builds strength,
the Spirit that instills knowledge and Fear-of-God.

[3] Fear-of-God

will be all his joy and delight.

He won't judge by appearances,
won't decide on the basis of hearsay.

[4] He'll judge the needy by what is right,
render decisions on earth's poor with justice.

His words will bring everyone to awed attention.

A mere breath from his lips will topple the wicked.

[5] Each morning he'll pull on sturdy work clothes and
boots, and build righteousness and faithfulness in the
land.

Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Rock of all creation, Righteous One of all generations,
the faithful God whose word is deed, whose every command
is just and true.

For the Torah, for the privilege of worship, for the prophets,
and for this Shabbat that You, Adonai our God, have given us
for holiness and rest, for honor and glory: we thank and bless
You.

May Your name be blessed for ever by every living being.
Praise to You, Adonai, for the Sabbath and its holiness.

Rabbi 1 As is our custom, I will comment on the Scripture.

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The prophet Isaiah spoke words from God to our people when they were in exile in Babylon. We find ourselves in a similar situation.

[ROMAN HELMET] We are exiled in our own land under the thumb of the Romans. Though God has been silent for almost 400 years, we wait...

[MESSIAH] we pray for... we expect God to raise up a leader—

[OIL POURED] an anointed one—a messiah,

[CROWN] He shall be a direct descendant of the great King David,

[BETHLEHEM OUTLINE] Born in our town, Bethlehem, the city of David.

He will reign amongst our people,

[SWORD] Lead us in victory over our Roman oppressors,

[TEMPLE MOUNT] And re-establish Jerusalem and God's temple above all other cities and nations.

And peace and justice will be the order of the day.”

Rabbi 2 **[LION & THE LAMB]** Rabbi Joachim, it is not true that the prophet Isaiah continues:

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

[PEACE] Does this not describe a Messiah who brings peace and not a sword?

[KNEELING SERVANT] The prophecy also describes a suffering servant who will come and bear the sins of our people.

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He will be tortured, rejected, and despised.
But God will use him to save God's people.

Rabbi 1: It is true that Scripture can be interpreted in different ways
regarding the coming king.

But the prophet Micah clearly points to the Messiah being
born here in Bethlehem:

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in
Israel,
whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.

Rabbi 2: On that we agree: The coming ruler is to be born here in
Bethlehem.

Rabbi 1 & 2: Praise be to God.

Rabbi 1: And now we conclude our service with the Blessing of
Aaron, the High priest:

ALL The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make his face
 shine upon you
 and be gracious to you.
 The Lord look upon you with favor,
 and grant you peace.

*The candles on the **MENORAH** could be put out.
Then the lights come up.*

*Finish with the cast coming out and dancing to "The King of Glory
Comes"...*

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