

Shereen Lee

GOD Makes a Hiring Decision

SCENE:

2018. Friday afternoon. JESUS sits alone in office cubicle overlooking Earth. He sits in a whirly chair, watching the news. The archangel GABRIEL floats over to Jesus's cubicle.

GABRIEL:

Hey, man. I have some bad news for you.

[He hands JESUS an envelope.]

JESUS:

What's this?

GABRIEL:

You're fired, effective immediately.

JESUS:

Um. From what? I wasn't really aware I had a job, besides being, like, God's son.

GABRIEL:

Your job as the branding head.

JESUS:

I hate to be that guy, but I feel like I'm kind of hard to replace. What are you even going to do without me?

GABRIEL:

For one thing, I think I get this cubicle when you move out. Also, none of us will have to worry about getting fired anymore because your salary was taking up so much of our annual budget, you can't even imagine.

JESUS:

I thought we weren't supposed to interfere with human issues, anyway. What did I do wrong?

GABRIEL:

Sure, but you were supposed to do damage control. PR. All the stuff you did in the good old days with the bread? Genius. It was great for our brand. But these days, you just sit in the office watching the news, mired in existential dread, doing nothing. You're more useless than *me*, and I've been relegated to secretarial duties for the past few decades. [He frowns resentfully.]

JESUS:

I'm supposed to be *dead*!

GABRIEL:

Christ. It's Friday. How do you think I feel? I've been giving people two-weeks' notices for going on four hours now. And don't give me any of that about how it wasn't your fault. Of course it was your fault! Lots of people would die to be in your position too, you know. You're the face of our corporate brand. Everyone knows you! You could have prevented all these messes for our ratings dive at one point in the past—I don't know—*three decades?*

JESUS:

I want to talk to the boss. In person.

GABRIEL:

He's in England, I think. Something about a scandal that you were supposed to be preventing. He's trying to do damage control, but the numbers aren't looking good.

JESUS:

It's been a year! He's still holding that over me?

[GABRIEL shrugs.]

JESUS:

Okay, just get him on the phone.

[The MESSENGER dials a number and puts it on speakerphone.]

GOD:

Hello?

GABRIEL:

It's me. Jesus, this time.

GOD:

Oh. Again? You're not very good at this firing business, are you?

GABRIEL:

I've spent all of my Friday afternoon doing your dirty work. You're not blaming this on me.

GOD:

Fine. *[sighs]* Jesus, I'm sure Gabriel has told you all of this already, but the angels and I have decided to let you go. It's mostly a budgetary thing, and you have a really have a nice cubicle. A lot of employees have their eye on it.

[JESUS is silent. After a moment, he takes the phone off speakerphone.]

GOD:

Look, Jesus. I like you, I really do. You've led us through a lot of growth. You'll get a wonderful severance package, of course. You've been asking for that vacation for millennia now. It's time for you to take a break.

JESUS:

Who's my replacement? I know you wouldn't fire me before you found one.

GOD:

I don't think that's really relevant to your personal situation right now. The fact is, your performance—

JESUS:

Who's my replacement?

[A long pause.]

GOD:

Taylor Swift.

[JESUS is silent.]

GOD:

Just think about it for a little longer and it'll make some more sense. Look, Jesus, it's brilliant—If she makes a public statement saying all of her songs were about me, imagine our Bible sales—they would skyrocket—and not to mention the in-built missionaries we would have—

JESUS:

After all that I've done for you?

GOD:

It's nothing personal. It's just that in recent years, we've seen your branding completely spiral out of control. I mean, for Christ's sake, they think you're white! "Taylor" is a unisex name too, but no one's been calling her "Mr. Swift."

JESUS:

Didn't you say that it was brilliant? That being white gave me—you—millions of new followers?

GOD:

Yeah, but Taylor was white this whole time, and you were just letting a lie run rampant. Just because people can't see you anymore doesn't mean you should be taking advantage of their blindness. Also, "Swifties" has a better ring to it than "Christians," to be honest.

JESUS:

What about all of my miracles?

GOD:

Your miracles are getting fewer every day. You've gone for centuries messing things up. Everyone's bitter and angry. I mean, even for you, these have been some new lows. Taylor doesn't have magic, but at least she makes people happy. Look, Jesus. I'm not *asking* you for permission here. I'm the boss. [*lowers voice*] I know this isn't ideal. But after all of your slacking, the people in the office are starting to accuse me of nepotism.

JESUS:

It's not like Heaven is a democracy!

I just don't know when you got so *human*.

JESUS [gently]:

I was always human, Dad. Even I know that the Immaculate Conception was just a story for Mom's sake.

GOD:

Yeah, I get that. But I always had the idea that after I adopted you, you'd be, I dunno, *more*.

JESUS:

I could tell. It wrecked me, Dad. I was this overachiever for so long. Nothing I did was good enough. It still isn't, I guess.

GOD:

You never told me.

JESUS:

How could I? It's not as if you're ever here. Even now you're cutting yourself off from me through someone else. You're never home. After this, who knows when I'll see you next?

GOD:

I'll send you postcards from now on, if that's what you want.

JESUS:

At this point, I'll take it. But you know that's never been enough.

GOD:

I should never have gotten you into this business in the first place. But I think this decision is for the best. I'm trying to be as honest to myself as I can, and it's time to let you go. Get a girlfriend, or a boyfriend, whatever. You can be a teenager now if you want to.

JESUS:

Yeah. A little late, but thanks for trying.

[An awkward pause.]

JESUS:

I guess this is goodbye then. You should get back to work.

GOD:

I'm sorry I wasn't here to tell you this in person.

JESUS:

I'm sorry, too. For not being good enough.

GOD:

I—

[JESUS hangs up and puts his face in his hands. GABRIEL pries the phone out of JESUS's hands
and floats out the sliding door.]