

The Chosen—Season 2, Episode 5, “Spirit”

“Easter Eggs,” Notes, and Discussion Questions—Details and Notes that Might Be Helpful or Interesting

Introductory Notes:

1. ‘*’ Indicates an extra-biblical character or incident.

Cold Open—Picking Fruit

00:00:20-00:01:39	<p>Scene Summary: The scene opens with Mary Magdalene, a basket under one arm, picking fruit (looks like persimmons to me) both from the tree as well as from the ground. As she gathers the produce, we hear her praying using “a formula” with which we might be coming accustomed: <i>“Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe...”</i> is a traditional Jewish formula, followed by whatever the particularities of the prayer, in this case, <i>“Whose world lacks nothing, and Who made wondrous creatures and good trees through which He brings pleasure to the children of Adam.”</i> (See Note 1—The Birkat Hallanot, p. 1, below). Mary seems to be referring to a scrap of paper, and this seems to be some of her, Matthew’s, and Ramah*’s “remedial Torah,” and we hear her recite the one verse from Psalm 139 that Philip had recommended to Matthew. (See Note 2—Psalm 139:1-18, p. 2, below.)</p> <p>As she recites the Scripture, suddenly we hear the whinny of a horse and see, along with Mary, a mounted Roman soldier. Dropping her basket in fright, she seeks some sort of hiding place as a second Roman horseman meets the first. Weeping and nearly overcome—perhaps even triggered by the incident we saw in flashback way back in Season 1 and the implied violent, (the implication is one of rape, I think) encounter Mary had with a Roman soldier at some point in her life—Mary seems to react to the crumpled paper in her hand, reminiscent of the crumpled prayer from Isaiah 43 (See Note 3—Isaiah 43:1-3, p. 2, below.) that her father had taught her as a girl and that she had kept stored in her doll when we first met her, then going by the name of Lilith.</p> <p>The horsemen don’t apparently notice her and keep on riding in separate directions.</p>
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Notes:

1. **Note 1—The Birkat Hallanot:** A *Birkat* is simply “a blessing”—that’s what the word means. Here, Mary prays a blessing or prayer for God’s providence through creation, per God’s blessing to Adam and Eve at Creation: *“God blessed [the humans, created in the image of God, vs. 26 & 27], and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”*²⁹ *God said, “See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food.*³⁰ *And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.”* *And it was so.*³¹ *God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day”* (Gen. 1:28-31).

In this case, Mary’s prayer is called *the Birkat Hallanot*, or “Prayer of Praise.” It is a prayer traditionally recited in the Spring time month of Nisan, (falling some time in April), when a fruit tree is first noticed to be bearing fruit. *“The Talmud [a collection of rabbinical debates over how best to keep Torah faithfully for the various situations in which one might find oneself, recorded over 300 years between the 2nd and 5th Centuries AD] recommends that we make one hundred blessings a day over everything from human wisdom to lightening to the smell of spices. We take in the sensory world and crown it with a blessing to make an ordinary moment special. We sanctify time and space when we look and listen and respond with a blessing. The text of the tree blessing is not about what we will one day eat but about pausing to note a world created for human enjoyment. Beauty is the handmaiden of spirituality”* (<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/blessing-on-a-fruit-tree/>).

Additionally, the word *Hallanot* (“Praises”), shares a root word *hallal* with a word we DO know, “Hallelujah,” which simply means, “Praises be to Adonai” or “Praises be to YHWH,” (which would not be pronounced but for which the word “Adonai” would be substituted).

We have heard reference to other Birkats, or prayers, including *the Birkat Hagomel* (a prayer not only for “life-threatening situations” but also for after recovering from a serious illness or surviving a dangerous journey—this was the prayer the

Pharisee Sh'muel prayed right before he began his public teaching in Jerusalem in the last episode). Other situational Birkats include the Birkat Hamazon (a blessing after a meal that includes bread); the Birkat HaBayit (a blessing for the home); and the Birkat haMinim (a curse, actually, for heretics, a prayer that arose during the rupture between Judaism and Christianity in the 1st Century AD.)

2. **Note 2—Psalm 139:1-18:** “O Lord, you have searched me and known me.
²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away.
³You search out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways.
⁴Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely.
⁵You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.
⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.
⁷Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?
⁸**If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, [“the place of the dead”] you are there.**
⁹If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
¹⁰even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast.
¹¹If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and night wraps itself around me,”
¹²even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.
¹³For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.
¹⁴I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.
¹⁵My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth.
¹⁶Your eyes beheld my unformed substance. In your book were written all the days that were formed for me, when none of them as yet existed.
¹⁷How weighty to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them!
¹⁸I try to count them—they are more than the sand; I come to the end—I am still with you.”
3. **Note 3—Isaiah 43:1-3:** “But now thus says the Lord, He who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine.
²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you, and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you.
³For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”

See **Questions for Discussion or Practice, 1. Practicing Our Faith** on p. 15, below.

Scene 1: Jesse* is Questioned by the Pharisees

00:02:42-00:04:08

Scene Summary: Jesse*--the paraplegic Jesus healed at the Bethesda Pool in the last episode—is being questioned by Sh'muel* and the other rabbi we met last episode who was with Sh'muel* and who was at the Pool when Jesus healed Jesse.* (That rabbi's name is Yunni*.) Jesse*, rightly maintains, the only thing he knew about the man who healed him is that His name is “Jesus.”

There has apparently been another encounter between Jesse* and Jesus (unseen to us), and the Pharisees seem particularly keen on finding out more. (See **Note 4—John 5:1-15**, on p. 2, below.) All that Jesse* can remember through the excitement and joy of his healing is that “they were going to see Jesus’ cousin, I think?” Sh'muel* is certain it is Jesus of Nazareth.

Notes:

4. **Note 4—John 5:1-15:** John’s account of this healing includes this second unseen encounter with the man (unnamed in Scripture), as well as the implication of the interrogation here:
“...[T]here was a festival of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
²Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. ³In these lay many ill, blind, lame, and paralyzed people. ⁵One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. ⁶When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be made well?” ⁷The ill man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am making my way someone else steps down ahead of me.” ⁸Jesus said to him, “Stand up, take your mat and walk.” ⁹At once the man was made well, and he took up his mat and began to walk.

Now that day was a Sabbath. ¹⁰ So the Jews said to the man who had been cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.” ¹¹ But he answered them, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your mat and walk.’” ¹² They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Take it up and walk?’” ¹³ Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had disappeared in the crowd that was there. ¹⁴ Later Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “See, you have been made well! Do not sin any more, so that nothing worse happens to you.” ¹⁵ The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.”

Scene 2: The Temple--Jerusalem

00:04:09-00:06:15	<p>Scene Summary: We are looking through “the Beautiful Gate,” the main entry way into the Temple compound. Two Jewish guards stand outside as Jesse* exits the Temple compound. Atticus* (the spy from the Cohortae Urbanae—the Roman “secret police—who was tracking Simon the Zealot) notices Jesse* and calls him by name. After a brief exchange between the two about who Atticus is*--he doesn’t tell Jesse* everything—Atticus* claims, “I believe...it was a miracle.”</p> <p>But we soon suspect Atticus’* ulterior motives as he begins to question Jesse* about whether he has anyone with whom to share the news, friends or family. Assuring Jesse* that he’s safe with Atticus*, Jesse* tells him that he encountered his brother Simon almost immediately afterward and that Simon seems to think the man who healed Jesse* is “our Messiah.” This draws a sly reaction from Atticus*--remember Atticus* described the Zealots as “extremists with a Messiah complex” in the previous episode.</p>
<p>Notes:</p>	

Scene 3: Somewhere Outside of Jerusalem—Would you believe this isn’t the strangest thing that’s happened to me in the past week...*

00:06:16-00:10:08	<p>Scene Summary: At a campsite somewhere outside Jerusalem, Simon the Zealot is praying a traditional morning prayer:</p> <p><i>“My God, the soul you put into me is pure. You created it, You formed it, and you breathed it into me. You preserve it within me, and You will restore it.”</i> (See Note 5—The soul you put into me is pure, p. 4, below.)</p> <p>Concluding his prayer, he rises from his kneeling position and begins to go through some deep breathing exercises and calisthenics with a knife in hand, not unlike we saw in the previous episode when he was training with the rest of the Zealots.</p> <p>Later, as he tends to his campfire, he hears a moan or a howl in the not too far off distance, and it attracts his wariness. Suddenly, he hears a human scream and draws his knife as he cautiously crouches and goes to investigate. Having climbed a nearby tree for a better view, he spots a bedraggled man, limping. Descending from the tree, knife drawn, Simon begins to sneak up on the stranger. “It can smell you, so I can smell you,” the stranger says, his back turned to Simon, and the stranger tells Simon not to come any closer, as the demon inside him—the one who apparently detected Simon’s presence—will hurt Simon. But the stranger even goes on to beg Simon to kill him, if he can do it, evidently to free the stranger from the demon’s grip. But as the stranger crouches to receive Simon’s blow, Simon sheathes his knife, indicating that if the man is strong enough to have lucid moments, it’s safe for him not to perish and to keep the demon inside. Revealing the wounds on his arm—“It makes me cut myself,” the stranger says, Simon replies, “Would you believe this isn’t the strangest thing that’s happened to me in the past week?”</p> <p>The conversation concludes with the demon possessed man indicating the demon “has a bad feeling about you,” to which Simon, with a wry grin and a subtle nod, simply replies, “Thank you.”</p>
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Notes:

5. **Note 5—The soul you put into me is pure.** In Christianity, you will encounter a teaching often called “the doctrine of Original Sin.” In short—and you can detect themes of this teaching in Paul’s writings, (See **Romans 3:9-26** below, for example), but it was largely developed by St. Augustine in the 3-400s AD—so the teaching goes, all humans are born into a state of sinfulness that we have inherited ever after from Adam and Eve. This means all humans have a tendency *toward* sin and *separation from* God. Even simpler, we are unable NOT to sin.

In Judaism, there is no concept of Original Sin, even though there are certainly Hebrew Scriptures that seem to point in the opposite direction. (See **Romans 3:9-26**, where the apostle Paul—himself a Pharisaical Jew—deploys a number of texts from the Hebrew Scriptures.) Rather, it is believed that every human is born pure—**this prayer is a daily reminder of that belief.** Along with that purity, it is taught, humans are also given free will AND, perhaps most importantly of all, the Torah as a guidebook. More, each of us has within us *Yetzer haTov* (good inclination) as well as *Yetzer haRa* (evil inclination), both sides of our own spirit that enables us, along with free will, to have the human experience. Our *Yetzer haRa* drives us to be better than anyone else; to be faster and stronger than anyone else; to build, compete, and conquer and thus, sin, so long as these drives are not reigned in through our free will toward our ward our *Yetzer haTov*.

Romans 3:9-26: ⁹What then? Are we any better off? No, not at all, for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, ¹⁰as it is written: ‘There is no one who is righteous, not even one; ¹¹there is no one who has understanding; there is no one who seeks God.

¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness; there is not even one.’ [Psalm 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Ecclesiastes 7:20]

¹³“Their throats are opened graves; they use their tongues to deceive.” [Psalm 5:9] “The venom of vipers is under their lips.” [Psalm 140:3]

¹⁴ “Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness.” [Psalm 10:7]

¹⁵“Their feet are swift to shed blood; ¹⁶ruin and misery are in their paths, ¹⁷and the way of peace they have not known.” [Isaiah 59:7-8]

¹⁸ “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” [Psalm 36:1]

¹⁹Now we know that, whatever the law says, it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰For no human will be justified before him by deeds prescribed by the law, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.

²¹But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed and is attested by the Law and the Prophets, ²²the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶it was to demonstrate at the present time his own righteousness, so that he is righteous and he justifies the one who has the faith of Jesus.”

Scene 4: Somewhere Outside of Jericho, Near the Jordan—Jesus and the disciples meet with John the Baptist* (You might want to refer to the map *Israel at the Time of Jesus*.)

00:10:09-00:11:21

Scene Summary: We join Jesus and three of the disciples—Simon, Andrew, and Philip—walking next to a pond, talking about finding someone near the Jordan, outside of Jericho. They are apparently looking for John the Baptist, who suddenly leaps out of the underbrush with a scream, much to his own amusement and startlement of Andrew in particular. The two men embrace—remember that both Andrew and Philip were once disciples of John the Baptist. (See **Note 6—Andrew & Philip: John 1:35-45**, p.5, below.) John also embraces Jesus, greeting him as “cousin.” (See **Note 7—Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptist: Luke 1:26-45**, p. 5, below.)

John indicates that he had heard about Jesus’ “scandal at the pool” and that while John approves, he also reminds Jesus that that authorities are going to come after Him hard for that.

John also indicates that he has to go back to Jerusalem because “Herod divorced Phasaelis and is marrying Herodias, his brother’s ex-wife.” (See **Note 8—John the Baptist and King Herod**, p. 5 below.) He reveals his intent to go to Jerusalem to call them out for their filth. Jesus does not react

but only looks intently at John for a moment before excusing Simon, Andrew, and Philip so that He can talk the situation over with John.

Notes:

6. **Note 6—Andrew & Philip: John 1:35-45:** *“The next day John [the Baptist] again was standing with two of his disciples,³⁶ and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, “Look, here is the Lamb of God!”³⁷ The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus.³⁸ When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, “What are you looking for?” They said to him, “Rabbi” (which translated means Teacher), “where are you staying?”³⁹ He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o’clock in the afternoon.⁴⁰ One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.⁴¹ He first found his brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated Anointed).⁴² He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).*

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, “Follow me.”⁴⁴ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found him about whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth.””

Some scholars think that the proximity of Philip’s call story to that of Andrew—explicitly identified as one of the two of John the Baptist’s disciples in verse 35—as well as his hometown of Bethsaida being the same as that of Andrew and Simon Peter means that Philip was the second of John’s disciples.

7. **Note 7—Jesus’ cousin, John the Baptist: Luke 1:26-45:** *“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.²⁸ And he came to her and said, “Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.”²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.³⁰ The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.³¹ And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David.³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”³⁵ The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.³⁶ And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren.³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.”³⁸ Then Mary said, “Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.*

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country,⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy.⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

We don’t know for certain the relationship between Elizabeth and Mary and likewise between Jesus and John the Baptist—only that they were “relatives.”

8. **Note 8—John the Baptist and King Herod:** Luke’s Gospel notes John the Baptist’s grievances with King Herod Antipas.

The Herodian dynasty was a family who weren’t actually Judean, but rather from Edom, a tribe and land in the wilderness region between the Dead Sea and the Red Sea. The Edomites had been converted to Judaism, though reluctantly, and they were never viewed a “truly Jewish,” especially by the more “purist” Jewish sects (think “denominations”) of the Pharisees and Essenes. Beginning with King Herod the Great, (who rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem along with dozens of other construction projects across his realm), the Herodians were appointed by the Roman Empire as a puppet regime.

Luke 3:19-20—*¹⁹ But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by [John the Baptist] because of Herodias, his brother’s wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done,²⁰ added to them all by shutting up John in prison.*

Matthew 14:3-5 goes into a little more detail about John the Baptist’s grievances against King Herod:

³For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, ⁴because John had been telling him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." ⁵Though Herod wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet.

Scene 5: Back at the Disciples' Campsite Outside Jerusalem*

00:11:22-00:14:46	<p>Scene Summary: The scene opens with Mary Magdalene and Ramah* seated across from each other at a small table inside one of the tents. Mary is teaching Ramah* how to read using Psalm 7. (See Note 9—Psalm 7:1-2, p. 6, below.) Ramah* is a little confused, and Mary is frustrated with herself in not being able to remember a particular grammatical rule. Ramah* suggests they take a break, and Mary reacts surprisingly curt and negatively, apologizing afterward. It would seem that whatever the issue in the Cold Open, it still lingers with her. The lesson continues, but Mary is clearly distracted by something.</p> <p>The scene shifts to outside the tent where we join Thomas and Matthew. The sukkot (the tabernacle) they had built in the previous episode has begun to come down. Thomas slices a cucumber, and Matthew seems distracted by the women's activity in the tent. Matthew observes that Mary and Ramah*'s lessons don't seem to be going very well. Thomas is annoyed with having to stay behind with Matthew while everyone else is out on their errands. Thomas' annoyance erupts into a number of other issues, accusing Matthew of arrogance; finally admitting that Thomas also is perturbed by Matthew's former identity as a tax collector; and seeming to harbor some jealousy toward Matthew's observations of Ramah*. (Remember from the first time we met Thomas and Ramah* there seemed to be an implication that the two are a couple. Or might be.)</p> <p>The scene shifts again, and we see Simon the Zealot spying on the campsite.</p>
<p>Notes:</p> <p>9. Note 9—Psalm 7:1-2: "O Lord my God, in you I take refuge; save me from all my pursuers, and deliver me, ² or like a lion they will tear me apart; they will drag me away, with no one to rescue."</p>	

Scene 6: Jesus and John the Baptist*

* **Note:** Apart from Jesus' baptism by John recorded in Matthew, Mark, & Luke (3:13-17, 1:9-11, & Luke 3:21-22, respectively) and implied in John (1:29-34), there is no record of the two ever meeting again. But the Gospels do note the connection between both men's ministry, even that John sent messengers inquiring about Jesus' identity and mission, akin the conversation you'll see in this scene—**Matthew 11:2-6:** "When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

00:14:48-00:20:13	<p>Scene Summary: Jesus and John are discussing not only John's intent to go to Jerusalem but as well the issue of Herod's sin.</p> <p>00:14:48 <u>John the Baptist</u> "It is right there in the Book of Moses: 'If a man takes his brother's wife, it is impurity. He has uncovered his brother's nakedness.'" (See Note 10—Leviticus 20:21, p. 8, below.)</p> <p><u>Jesus</u> "I understand it's against the Law of Moses, but I'm here for bigger purposes than the breaking of rules."</p> <p><u>John the Baptist</u> [<i>shocked</i>] "You minimize incest?"</p> <p><u>Jesus</u> "Of course not."</p> <p><u>John the Baptist</u> [<i>pushing</i>] "What of the Laws of Moses will be minimized?"</p> <p><u>Jesus</u> "All of this will be addressed. I'm not ready to get into the specifics."</p>
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<u>John the Baptist</u>	<i>[annoyed, impatient, looking side-eyed at Jesus]</i> “You appear to be not ready to get into the specifics of a lot of things. For instance...”
<u>Jesus</u>	<i>[interrupting, firmly]</i> “Stay on topic. The romantic lives of rulers and kings has been and always will be of enormous fascination to people. It was covered at length in Torah.” <i>[with growing annoyance]</i> “I don’t see why you feel the need to focus on it now.”
<u>John the Baptist</u>	<i>[arguing back]</i> “He’s a client king, or tetrarch, or whatever.” (Review Note 8—John the Baptist and King Herod , above, p. 5.) “He’s one of us, and he’s unlawful. I am not afraid of him.” <i>[Jesus shakes his head.]</i> “He may not be as bad as his father, but he is still bad. I’m going to march straight into his court, and I’m going to tell him to his face. My followers will love it.”
<u>Jesus</u>	“You do know how that’s going to end, don’t you?”
<u>John the Baptist</u>	<i>[dismissively]</i> “I get arrested all the time. It’s what radicals do.” <i>[pausing a moment as Jesus looks concerned, continuing assuredly]</i> “I’ll be fine. Herod is afraid of me. The people hold me to be a prophet. Some say Elijah himself.”
<u>Jesus</u>	<i>[chuckling a little]</i> “Maybe not THE Elijah, but we both know of the Elijah-ness of your own.” (See Note 11—John the Baptist & Elijah , p. 8, below.)
<u>John the Baptist</u>	<i>[provocatively, curtly, even with some antagonism]</i> “Do we? Because I’m beginning to wonder why you’re taking this so slow, why you’re always running away after performing miracles. Tell me, why do you always go off to these desolate places?”
<u>Jesus</u>	“I need solitude. I’m working on something. A sermon. A big one.” (See Note 12—A Sermon. A Big one , p. 8, below.)
<u>John the Baptist</u>	“Well, you’re the planning type. I always say the first thing that comes to my mind, in preaching and in life.”
<u>Jesus</u>	“Yes, I remember from the time you started talking. And I heard about that brood of vipers comment. That was classy.” <i>[chuckling, pausing for a moment]</i> “Yeah, do you know how the poets say vipers are born? (See Note 13—Brood of Vipers: Matthew 3:7-12, Matthew 12:33-37, & Matthew 23:33-39 , p. 8, below.)
<u>John the Baptist</u>	“Yes, they hatch inside their mothers and eat their way out, killing their mothers in the process. I thought it was a pretty good line.”
<u>Jesus</u>	“Yes, but no one wants to be accused of killing their eema.” <i>[The Hebrew familiar term for mother.]</i>
<u>John the Baptist</u>	“Yeah, well I’m not here to make friends with religious leaders. And judging by that stunt you pulled on the Sabbath, neither are you. Are you really going to be nice to these people?”
<u>Jesus</u>	“I suppose not. Just be careful.”
<u>John the Baptist</u>	“Now is not the time to be careful. Thirty years you’ve been here.”
<u>Jesus</u>	“David was a shepherd and in the wilderness and on the run for 30 years before he became king.”
<u>John the Baptist</u>	“Yes, and then he ruled for 40 years, he killed a bunch of people, made horrible mistakes, and then he died in bed with a teenager he was not married to.” (See Note 14—The Death of David: 1 Kings 1:1-4, 2:10 , p. 9, below.)
<u>Jesus</u>	“Maybe not the best analogy. But also, she was there to keep him warm.”
<u>John the Baptist</u>	“I know!”

00:18:00	<u>Jesus</u>	“Everyone knows...”
	<u>John the Baptist</u>	<i>[interrupting]</i> “I know! I know what you mean. But what I’m saying is, taking all this time, telling all these stories, I must confess, I’m eager for you to get to the point.”
	<u>Jesus</u>	“Look. I’m going to tell stories that make sense to some people but not to others. And that’s just how it’s going to be.” (See Note 15—Jesus’ Parables: Matthew 13:10-17 , p. 9, below.)
		The two look out over the pond where they are sitting, both realizing and acknowledging the deepness of the moment and the unfolding moment of God in which they are being swept up. Jesus grows thoughtful and ponderous. John references “my father’s prophecy, your mother’s song, “But it’s heavy when it becomes real, no?” (See Note 16—My Father’s Prophecy, Your Mother’s Song , p. 9, below.) They wonder about their readiness, the difficulties they will face.

10. **Note 10—Leviticus 20:21:** *“If a man takes his brother’s wife, it is impurity; he has uncovered his brother’s nakedness; they shall be childless.”*

The phrase *“he has uncovered his brother’s nakedness”* is a euphemism associated with shaming dishonor. Additionally, the phrase about childlessness is taken as a curse pronounced by Adonai upon the violators.

11. **Note 11—John the Baptist & Elijah:** Both Matthew (3:4) and Mark (1:6) describe John the Baptist as wearing clothing made of camel hair, a leather belt, and eating *“locusts and honey,”* things that would’ve identified him as a prophet, cut from the same cloth as the greatest of the Old Testament prophets Elijah.

The prophet Malachi insists that Elijah would come as a herald of the coming Messiah: *“See, the day is coming, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evildoers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch. ²But for you who revere my name the sun of righteousness shall rise, with healing in its wings. You shall go out leaping like calves from the stall. ³And you shall tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet, on the day when I act, says the Lord of hosts.*

⁴Remember the teaching of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

⁵See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. ⁶He will turn the hearts of parents to their children and the hearts of children to their parents, so that I will not come and strike the land with a curse” (Malachi 4).

Question: Which side of the Warrior Messiah-Suffering Servant tension does Malachi seem to arrive?

12. **Note 12—A Sermon. A Big one:** Likely, the so-called “Sermon on the Mount.” See **Matthew 5-7**.

13. **Note 13—Brood of Vipers: Matthew 3:7-12, Matthew 12:33-37, & Matthew 23:33-39:** John’s initial appearance as the herald of the coming Messiah includes that inflammatory phrase: *“But when John the Baptist saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance,⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*

¹¹“I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire” (Matt. 3:7-12).

Question: Which side of the Warrior Messiah-Suffering Servant tension does JOHN seem to fall on?

Jesus himself will pick up on this language in his own run in’s with the religiously self-righteous:

Matthew 12:33-37: *““Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil*

things out of an evil treasure. ³⁶I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter, ³⁷for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Matthew 23:33-39: ³³*You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape the judgment of hell?* ³⁴*For this reason I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town,* ³⁵*so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar.* ³⁶*Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.*

³⁷*“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!* ³⁸*See, your house is left to you, desolate.* ³⁹*For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’”*

14. **Note 14—The Death of David: 1 Kings 1:1-4, 2:10:** *“King David was old and advanced in years, and although they covered him with clothes, he could not get warm. ²So his servants said to him, “Let a young virgin be sought for my lord the king, and let her wait on the king and be his attendant; let her lie in your bosom, so that my lord the king may be warm.”³So they searched for a beautiful young woman throughout all the territory of Israel and found Abishag the Shunammite and brought her to the king. ⁴The young woman was very beautiful. She became the king’s attendant and served him, but the king did not know her sexually.*

... ¹⁰*Then David slept with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David.”*

15. **Note 15—Jesus’ Parables: Matthew 13:10-17:** Many times, we might think of Jesus’ use of parables as pithy, little illustrations that make Jesus’ preaching/teaching point more visible or understandable. But Jesus himself notes *that’s not necessarily the case:*

Then the disciples came and asked him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” ¹¹He answered, “To you it has been given to know the secrets^[a] of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ¹³The reason I speak to them in parables is that ‘seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.’ ¹⁴With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

*‘You will indeed listen but never understand,
and you will indeed look but never perceive.*

¹⁵*For this people’s heart has grown dull,*

and their ears are hard of hearing,

and they have shut their eyes,

so that they might not look with their eyes,

and hear with their ears

and understand with their heart and turn—

and I would heal them.’

¹⁶*“But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.*

Rather, *parabolic storytelling* invites listeners not only to some rhetorical point, lesson, or moral but deeper still, into a “pictured vision” of the world, even beyond the reaches of our biological sight and sound detection. (See Questions for Discussion or Practice, 2. Parabolic Bible Study, p. 16, below.)

16. **Note 16—My Father’s Prophecy, Your Mother’s Song:** Remember both Mary AND Zechariah offer up songs as they find themselves captured by God’s unfolding revelation:

Luke 1:46-55: *And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name;
⁵⁰indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.
⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly;
⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴He has come to the aid of his child Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”*

Luke 1:67-79: Then John's father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: ⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹ He has raised up a mighty savior for us in the house of his child David,

⁷⁰ as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

⁷¹ that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

⁷² Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors and has remembered his holy covenant,

⁷³ the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,

to grant us ⁷⁴ that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness in his presence all our days.

⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

⁷⁷ to give his people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.

⁷⁸ Because of the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,

⁷⁹ to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

Scene 7: Simon the Zealot's Campsite*

00:20:14-00:20:37	Scene Summary: Back at Simon the Zealot's campsite, the scene opens on what looks to be his abandoned campsite. Nothing but a smoldering, blackened piece of firewood remains. An initially unidentified set of feet walks into the campsite and crouches by the fire. We discover it is Atticus*, the officer from the Cohorte Urbanae, the imperial secret police, of sorts. He smiles ominously.
Notes:	

Scene 8: Outside Jerusalem—Jesus' and the Disciples' Campsite*

00:20:38-00:28:19	Scene Summary: Back at their campsite, Ramah* continues to pore over the scraps of paper, as Mary Magdalene comes in to the tent to check on her and seats herself once again across the table. Ramah* confesses the difficulty and Mary notes that it's probably easier for a child and the Mary had a better teacher than Ramah*. Mary goes on to apologize for her shortness before and begins to pour out what's been apparently eating at her, beginning with the Roman she saw on horseback earlier. She seems to be as disappointed that the prayers she was reading didn't seem to impact her fear as much as whatever the trigger might have been at first glance. Ramah* notes that it's hard (this seems to be the growing theme of the episode)—not just the reading but the application. The two resume the reading lessons. Meanwhile, Thomas prepares the group's meal and Matthew mimics his every move, to Thomas' annoyance. Back at the reading lesson in the tent, both the music and Mary's demeanor signal that something is seriously wrong. Mary places her hand to her head—a headache, perhaps?—and Ramah* notices, while at the same time hearing a horrible shriek outside. Thomas and Matthew have also heard it, and as the four gather together, Matthew also notices Mary's affect. Suddenly, the same demoniac from Scene 3: Somewhere Outside of Jerusalem—Would you believe this isn't the strangest thing that's happened to me in the past week...* (p. 3), bursts into camp raving about "the putrid smell," similar to the encounter earlier with Simon the Zealot. There seems to be some recognition—either by the demon or the possessed man—as he calls her by the name by which Mary went when we first met her, Lilith.
00:22:35	<u>Mary Magdalene</u> "Stop." [she bravely takes a step toward the demoniac]

	<p><u>Matthew</u> <i>[concerned]</i> “Mary...”</p> <p><u>Demoniac</u> <i>[recognizing her]</i> “Lilith?”</p> <p><u>Mary Magdalene</u> “I don’t answer to that name.”</p> <p><u>Demoniac</u> “Grrrrrr...they told me about you.”</p> <p><u>Mary Magdaelene</u> “Did they?”</p> <p><u>Demoniac</u> <i>[ominously]</i> “All seven of them.” (See Note 17—Mary Magdalene & the Seven Demons, p. 12, below.)</p> <p><u>Mary Magdalene</u> “My name is Mary. It was always Mary.”</p> <p><u>Demoniac</u> <i>[threateningly]</i> “Oh, the stories they had.” <i>[approaching closer to Mary]</i> “You’re scared.”</p> <p><u>Mary Magdalene</u> <i>[actually approaching closer to the demoniac]</i> “What’s your name?”</p> <p><u>Demoniac</u> “Belial, spawn of Oriax, Fifth Knight of Legion.” (See Note 18—Belial, p.12, below.)</p> <p><u>Mary Magdalene</u> <i>[shaking her head]</i> “What’s your real name?”</p> <p><u>Demoniac</u> <i>[convulsing]</i> “That smell, it’s on all of you! ”</p> <p><u>Mary Magdalene</u> <i>[forcefully]</i> “What did your mother call you!?”</p> <p><u>Demoniac</u> <i>[choking, struggling for words’ “C-c---c-c...” [regaining composure] “Can’t say!” [chuckling evilly]</i></p>
00:24:48	<p><u>Mary Magdalene</u> “Please say your name!”</p> <p>At that moment, as the demoniac lunges toward her, Simon the Zealot appears out of nowhere, knocking the demon possessed man away and drawing his own knife as Simon keeps his feet. Distracting Simon with a glance toward the four disciples watching in shock behind Simon, the demoniac is on Simon, knocking the knife from his hand in the melee and begins choking the Zealot.</p> <p>Immediately, Jesus appears with Simon, Andrew, Philip, and John the Baptist in tow. “Out! OUT!” He commands the demon, who rolls off Simon the Zealot, allowing him to scramble away, both men out of breath and gasping for air. Little James and Thaddeus appear, all focused on Jesus and once-demon-possess man, whimpering and trembling facedown on the ground. John the Baptist lets out a triumphal, “Yeah!” as Jesus tends to the man, whose name is Caleb.</p> <p>Mary Magdalene grabs her satchel and begins to slip away.</p> <p>John the Baptist now notices Simon the Zealot and wonders when did Jesus “pick up the Zealot.”</p> <p>Simon the Zealot asks if Jesus had been the one who healed his brother in Jerusalem, and when Jesus answers, “Yes,” Simon replies, “Then you are...”. Interestingly, Jesus doesn’t let Simon the Zealot finish, only replying with another “Yes.” Simon then expects to see the Messiah’s “forces,” only to discover, to Simon’s dismay, the rag-tag band of disciples is IT! Thomas disarmingly “brandishes” the small knife he was using to cut cucumbers and Matthew, his wooden spoon!</p>
00:27:47	<p><u>Jesus</u> “Not the fearsome warriors you pictured by my side when you were in the catacombs?” (See Note 19—Who is the Messiah? By What Will We Know Him?, p. 12 , below)</p> <p><u>Simon Zealot</u> <i>[chuckling—I can’t tell if he’s flabbergasted, surprised, skeptical, what?]</i></p> <p><u>Jesus</u> “There are more not here at the moment. Let’s go for a walk, Simon, son of Zebulun.” <i>[turning to the rest of the disciples and referring to the man freed from the demon]</i> “Boys, tend to his wounds. Thomas, some food for him. Ramah*, check on Mary, please.”</p>

00:28:19	Jesus and Simon the Zealot begin to walk off.
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17. **Note 17—Mary Magdalene & the Seven Demons:** We first encountered this suggestion about Mary Magdalene way back in Season 1, Episode 1, “I Have Called You By Name.” **Luke 8:2** describes the women who followed Jesus, “...and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out...”. There is no narrative in Scripture of this exorcism.
18. **Note 18—Belial:** This word that is being used for the demon is actually a fairly common word found throughout the Hebrew Scriptures most often understood as “lacking worth,” from two common words: *beli-* (“without”) and *ya'al* (“to be of value”). Most often, that idea is connected to the phrase “*sons of,*” a common idiom in Semitic languages meaning “people defined by.” So for example, in the material leading up to the call of the prophet Samuel as a boy serving under Eli in the Tabernacle, Eli’s sons are described as, in the New Revised Standard Version, in this way: “*Now the sons of Eli were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD or for the duties of the priests to the people*” (1 Sam. 2:12-13). In this case, the Hebrew word *beliAL* translated simply as “scoundrels.” The literal translation might go something like this: “*Now the sons of Eli were sons lacking worth...*”.
- By Jesus’ time, Belial as a proper name for a personified evil force begins to appear, capitalizing and amping up the original connotations of “lacking worth” or “scoundrel.” (There are a number of appearances of this name, for example, in some of the Dead Sea Scrolls, written between 300 BC and 70 AD.) **This seems to be what *The Chosen* is drawing from in naming this demon “Belial.”**
- Ok, honestly, none of this matters a whole lot—but it does demonstrate the challenge of both translation of ancient languages and how translations are to be interpreted.**
19. **Note 19—Who is the Messiah? By What Will We Know Him?** Please review our past notes and conversations about the competing tensions of identifying the Messiah, even out of the Hebrew Scriptures themselves? Victorious warrior, cut from the same bolt of cloth as King David? Or the Suffering Servant, out of Isaiah’s prophecies?

Scene 9: Somewhere in Jerusalem—Probably on the Temple Grounds*

00:28:31-00:30:13	<p>Scene Summary: Rabbi Sh’muel* and Rabbi Yanni* stand before a beleaguered looking clerk. Sh’muel* rattles off, in official clerical formalities, “We need to update a report submitted last week about a man who performed a miracle on Shabbat, and then told the healed person to commit a sin, and to file an addendum, linking this report to my original petition.”</p> <p>The annoyed scribe wonders about the nature of the change: it is the name of Jesus.</p> <p>The scribe is familiar with the case, indicating it had escalated to Sanhedrin (the authoritative Jewish religious council) and that the original inquiry, going all the way back to Jesus’ healing of the paralyzed man lowered through the roof back in Capernaum, had been closed.</p> <p>Sh’muel* and Yanni* are outraged, particularly at the news that a very prominent member of Sanhedrin had dismissed the whole incident as a “one-off incident by a rogue who posed no material threat.” (Nicodemus?)</p> <p>They storm off out into the Temple courtyards, and they know who stopped the inquiry by Sanhedrin: Nicodemus, Teacher of Teachers. Yanni* seems to indicate that he might have connections even over Nicodemus’ head.</p>
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Scene 10: Jesus and Simon the Zealot*

00:30:14-00:33:42	<p>Scene Summary: Jesus and Simon stroll, side by side, talking about Jesse**’s healing at the Bethesda Pool. Jesus seems to indicate that in addition to Jesse**’s long-suffering, it was an attempt to get Simon’s attention, nor the last trouble He intends to cause. Simon is drawn up short in front of Jesus, perhaps wondering if violence is part of that trouble, swearing his loyalty</p>
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	<p>to the Messiah. <i>“I ask you to understand the nature of my mission, Simon,” Jesus replies.</i> (See Questions for Discussion or Practice, 3. The Nature of Jesus’ Mission, p. 17, below.) Simon continues to insist he will zealously “execute Jesus’ mission.” Jesus isn’t so sure. Asking to see Simon’s weapon, the Zealot presents it to Jesus, who admires it, and throws it in the water! “Didn’t see that coming?” He says to Simon, who is shocked at what just happened. (See Note 20—the Sica Dagger as a Symbol of Rebellion in the Empire and Note 21—Swords into ploughshares: Isaiah 2, p. 13, below.) Simon is puzzled but Jesus is encouraging and tells him to be patient.</p> <p>Simon also reflects on what he has seen the Messiah do: healing on Shabbat, on a high, holy feast day and wonders if there will be some who misunderstand and will try to stop Jesus.</p> <p>The scene closes ominously with Atticus* the Spy on Simon’s trail, as Atticus* fishes Simon’s dagger out of the river.</p>
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20. **Note 21—the Sica Dagger as a Symbol of Rebellion in the Empire:** Among the Jewish Zealots, the Jewish Roman historian Josephus notes the presence of what he called the “*Sicarii*,” named for their easily-concealable curved daggers, not unlike the one we have seen on Simon the Zealot. Not only the Zealots, but other insurgent groups throughout the Empire were known to arm themselves with these weapons, so much so that the sica dagger, or *sicae*, became symbolic of rebellion within the Empire.
21. **Note 20—Swords into ploughshares: Isaiah 2:** Remember that this entire conversation with Simon the Zealot and Jesus’ action is disposing of Simon’s weapon is purely speculative. HOWEVER—what we see, at least, has echoes of **Isaiah 2:1-5**: *“The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ²In days to come the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. ³Many peoples shall come and say, “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths.” For out of Zion shall go forth instruction and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. ⁴He shall judge between the nations and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more. ⁵O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!”*

Scene 11: Jericho—There’s Something About Mary*

00:33:43-00:35:54	<p>Scene Summary: The scene opens on an arid, hilly landscape with Jericho on the hilltop in the distance. Mary walks along a road toward the hills and village. She weeps as she walks.</p> <p>A mounted Roman soldier approaches from behind and whatever Mary’s misgivings, the soldier rides past. I am uncertain of Mary’s reactions?</p> <p>Having entered the city, Mary makes her way resolutely through the darkening streets until she comes to a dark, narrow descending staircase. At the bottom of the stairs is some sort of establishment, and the attendant there tells her they don’t serve women there. But Mary seems to know someone there—Thro*. “Tell him, ‘Someone from the Hammer wants to win back her money,’” she tells the attendant.</p> <p>The attendant enters the establishment while Mary waits outside—it seems to be bustling and noisy.”</p>
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Scene 12: John the Baptist & Jesus Part Ways*

00:35:55-00:38:05	<p>Scene Summary: Again the scene opens over an arid and hilly landscape, as evening seems to settle in. John the Baptist stands, his back to the observer, as footsteps approach. It is Jesus</p>
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	<p>and Simon the Zealot. John is intent on going back to Jerusalem to confront Herod. (Review Note 8—John the Baptist and King Herod, p. xx, above.) Jesus assures John that Jesus too will “soon” break His silence, and John reflects on the word in terms reminiscent of how we’ve heard Jesus of <i>The Chosen</i> speak: “It could mean anything.”</p> <p>Jesus expresses His love for His relative, and the two mean embrace. Jesus’ lip quivers as John departs.</p> <p>Again, Atticus* the Spy lurks, apparently knowing of John: “The Baptizer!” he whispers.</p>
<p>Notes:</p>	

Scene 13: The Rabbis Plot*

<p>00:38:06-00:41:49</p>	<p>Scene Summary: The scene opens on Rabbi Yanni* and Rabbi Sh’muel* in what looks to be one of their studies. Yanni* seems to be writing something while Sh’muel* expresses hopelessness in an appeal because of Nicodemus’ power in Sanhedrin. Yanni* insists what he’s writing is not an appeal but instead an attempt to split Sanhedrin between party lines—Shammai versus Hillel (See Note 22—Shammai & Hillel, p. 14, below.)—hoping that a split over the right issue might tip the council away from Nicodemus’ influence.</p> <p>The rest of the conversation orbits around their plot to stir the pot and to influence Sanhedrin through the control the narrative with their own version about Jesus.</p>
<p>Notes:</p> <p>22. Note 22—Shammai and Hillel: These were two actual competing schools of Jewish interpretation within the Pharisees’ tradition during Jesus’ day. It was said of these two schools of interpretation, “<i>The school of Shammai binds...</i>”—meaning he was seen to be the more conservative, restrictive interpretation—“<i>and the school of Hillel looses</i>”—leaning toward a more expansive understanding of faithfulness. So for example, when it came to saying one’s evening prayers, including especially the <i>Shema</i> (“<i>Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,</i>” Deut. 6), Shammai’s opinion was that one should pray laying down in the evening and standing up in the morning, while Hillel’s opinion was that anyone can say it in any position they prefer.</p>	

Scene 14: Mary—Back at Thro*’s Place in Jericho*

<p>00:41:50-00:42:27</p>	<p>Scene Summary: The scene opens with the attendant at the establishment to which Mary has gone escorting her into the place. Mary seems coarse, tough, cynical even.</p> <p>She calls out to the one she was seeking: Jethro*. They are apparently quite familiar with one another, and he calls her by her old name, “Lilith,” which she doesn’t protest in the least.</p> <p>She indicates she’s there for one thing. She’s got money this time and can pay for it herself.</p> <p>And the scene ends.</p>
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Scene: Back at Jesus’ and the Disciples’ Campsite*

<p>00:42:28-00:44:55</p> <p>00:43:18</p> <p>00:43:35</p>	<p>Scene Summary: The group huddles around the campfire. Simon the Fisherman begins to introduce Simon the Zealot to the rest of the group. In all the excitement from earlier, her absence has gone unnoticed up until now. Simon the Fisherman seems concerned, and goes to find Jesus who is alone by the Jordan and seems to be rehearsing a teaching.</p> <p><u>Jesus</u> <i>[pacing, speaking out loud]</i> “Salt preserves from corruption. If it loses its saltiness, it doesn’t do what it...” <i>[He stumbles over a word or two.]</i> “No. No. ...” <i>[recollecting his thoughts]</i> “If salt has lost its flavor...its salty taste, its...” (See Note 23—The Sermon on the Mount, p. 15, below.)</p>
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	<p>Simon the Fisherman interrupts to report on Mary’s absence, that Ramah* speculates that Mary had been affected by the demoniac, that she wasn’t feeling right all day, something we had seen. He wonders if she has gone into Jericho and volunteers to go and look. Jesus agrees, and about that time, Matthew arrives and volunteers also to go. Jesus insists against Simon’s initial protest.</p> <p>Jesus asks Matthew about the verse Philip has been teaching, and Matthew spits it right out: <i>“If I ascend into heaven, you are there. If I make my bed deep in the depths, you are there.”</i> (Psalm 139:8) “Keep that in your thoughts,” Jesus commands.</p> <p>The two head off toward Jericho while Jesus prays.</p>
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Notes:

23. **Note 23—The Sermon on the Mount:** What we are hearing is Jesus’ rehearsing what we call “The Sermon on the Mount,” and this seems to be the big sermon He’s working on about which He had told John the Baptist. (See **Scene 6: Jesus and John the Baptist***, pgs. 6-8, above.)

Matthew 5:13: *“Jesus said, ‘You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.’”*

Questions for Discussion or Practice:

1. **Practicing our Faith:** Throughout both seasons of *The Chosen*, we have seen a constant pulse of faith practices, rituals, and traditions—think...

...“Shabbat” (and all that comes with it—no work; worship; gathering with family around food; etc.);

...ritual prayers (morning, bedtime, meal time; etc.); or

...pieces of Scripture that serve as “a mantra” or a way to be grounded/rooted in God’s promises and presence.

With a partner, choose at least 1 of the discussion points below; talk about your topic(s); and be willing to share with the group:

- Who has been someone in your life whose practice of the faith—prayer, rituals, traditions, etc.—has impacted you?

What was it about their practice that you noticed or was important to you?

What do you think was so important about those practices to that person?

- Is there a particular practice in your faith—prayer, rituals, traditions, etc.—that is especially important to you?

Why?

- If you have not been particularly devoted in/through a particular practice (or practices), where would you like to start?

Here are some suggestions—start SMALL and SIMPLY: choose ONE!

- () daily Bible reading;
- () talking about faith—i.e., “where I think I saw/experienced God in my life today;” “one moment that Jesus’ death and resurrection was especially important to me today;” etc.
- () ritual prayer—i.e., 1st thing in the morning; meal time; bed time; pausing for 15 minutes of silence to be centered around a piece of Scripture or a mantra (Psalm 139:8, *“If I ascend to*

heaven you are there; if I descend to the place of the dead, you are there.” Or Matthew 16:16, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Or Isaiah 43:1, “Fear not, for I have called you by name, and you are mine.” Etc. etc.)

- () free-form prayer with and for another person—i.e., “Is there anything I can pray for with you?” (And then DO IT.)
- () acts of service and generosity—especially with the intentionality of knowing I am serving/giving to God through serving/giving to others.
- () daily ritual blessings with those with whom I share life—think, a simple baptismal blessing by marking the sign of the cross on another’s forehead and the words, “You are marked with the cross of Christ and sealed by the Holy Spirit forever,” or “Remember God loves you, and so do I.”

What can you anticipate getting in the way of your practice? How can you anticipate intentionally figuring out small ways to counter those obstacles? How will you respond if/when you fail?

Who would be helpful in keeping you accountable and practicing? What would that look like?

2. **Parabolic Bible Study**—Gather into groups of two or three, and follow the instructions below:

Matthew 13:31-32: “Jesus put before them another parable: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.’”

A. Have 1 person from your group read the passage aloud.

- **As the passage is being read, simply listen for a word, a phrase, or image that seems to jump out or “shimmer” for you as it was being read.**
- *If you can resist the urge, don’t follow along—just close your eyes and listen.*
- *After the reading is complete, just sit in silence for a moment—15 to 30 seconds.*

Write your word/phrase/image here:

- *After that moment of silence, have each person in your group share the word, phrase, or image that seemed to jump out.*

NOTE: you don’t have to explain your word/phrase/image—you might not even know WHY that word/phrase/image grabbed you! Similarly, no one else should comment, question, or “lecture” on anyone else’s word/phrase/image. Just share that one piece.

B. Have a different person from your group read the same passage aloud.

- **This time, as the passage is being read—this one might be a little harder—listen for where you hear/see/wonder about God’s place or role or presence in this reading.**
- *Again, if you can resist the urge, don’t follow along—just close your eyes and listen.*
- *Again, after the reading is complete, just sit in silence for a moment—15 to 30 seconds.*

Lot down where you hear/see/wonder about God’s place or role in this reading here:

- *Again, after that moment of silence, have each person in your group share their discovery: where each hears/sees/wonders about God’s place or role or presence in this reading.*

C. Have a still different person from your group read the same passage aloud, one more time.

- **This time—and this one might be the hardest yet—as the passage is being read, listen for where/how you might have seen this passage, your word/phrase/image from A (above), or where you have heard/seen/wondered about God’s place/role/presence **VISIBLE, ACTIVE, OR ALIVE IN THIS WORLD.****

- *Again, if you can resist the urge, don’t follow along.*

- *Again, after the reading is complete, just sit in silence for a moment—15 to 30 seconds.*

jot down your thoughts/observations/questions here:

- *Again, after that moment of silence, have each person in your group share their discovery: where they have heard/seen/wondered about any of this **VISIBLE, ACTIVE, OR ALIVE IN THIS WORLD.***

3. **The Nature of Jesus’ Mission**—In **Scene 10: Jesus and Simon the Zealot*** (p. 13, above), when Simon the Zealot, the guerilla fighter trained to strike and die and expecting a warrior messiah, pledges his loyalty to Jesus the Messiah, Jesus only replies, *“I ask you to understand the nature of my mission, Simon.”*

Assuming *The Chosen* is a faithful and accurate depiction of the spirit of Jesus and of His mission—based on what you have seen, how would YOU understand and describe the nature of Jesus’ mission in the story?

What do you think that means for communities of faith who claim to follow Jesus today? What does that look like in today’s world?

What do you think that means for YOU?