

THE CHOSEN

Episode #202

"I saw you"

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TEASER

200

INT. CAESAREA PHILIPPI - OFFICE - DAY

200

In the Roman city of Ceasarea Philippi, north of Bethsaida, a young man NATHANAEL (22) walks down a long corridor, trailing a construction foreperson, LEONTES (40).

NATHANAEL

I need more seawater for the cement, Leontes!

LEONTES

It will take three days.

NATHANAEL

You can't stop construction for three days! Is it because I'm Jewish?

LEONTES

No, Nathanael, it's not because you're Jewish.

NATHANAEL

I've been telling you and anyone I can get to listen -- I even told the primi -- I need that saltwater or the cement won't set to full strength!

LEONTES

Seawater is heavy. It's hard to move. Understand?

NATHANAEL

Plans are hard to draw, bedrock hard to reach... It's all hard, but your incompetence is making it harder!

LEONTES

Careful.

NATHANAEL

Hey, I'm just telling it like it is.

LEONTES

Three days. Nathanael, you're in no position to demand anything. You're lucky to have this job.

NATHANAEL

That's why I have to demand what I need, Leontes. Do you know how hard I've worked to earn a Roman commission? As a Jew?

LEONTES

You're a child that skipped the line. The men don't respect you for that.

NATHANAEL

Skipped the line? Just because I was smart enough to go to school instead of carrying mud.

LEONTES

(rolls eyes)

So what? Twenty men show up every day. Who cares how they feel?

NATHANAEL

I care. They need to share a vision.

LEONTES

They need to each do their jobs. The craftsman, the day laborer, the foreman, and the architect.

NATHANAEL

Yes! In concert with me.

LEONTES

Who do you think you are? I'm the foreman here. You think it'll all turn out if everyone would just do it your way.

NATHANAEL

I do.

LEONTES

Well, people have their own ideas.

OFF -- a CREAKING sound. SHOUTING VOICES. Leontes' eyes go wide. Finally, a deafening CRASH.

Leontes pushes Nathanael out of his way. RUNS down the hall.

201 EXT. CAESAREA PHILIPPI - CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS 201

Leontes emerges from the building. Nathanael appears a beat later. Both men stare in wide-eyed disbelief.

NATHANAEL

NO!

NATHANAEL POV - from a dust cloud, the wreckage of a collapsed building comes into view.

Leontes rushes to the site. Nathanael is frozen in place.

LEONTES

FABIUS?! MARCUS?!

Leontes pulls a bloodied, shocked man from the rubble.

LEONTES (CONT'D)

We need help!

Leontes searches up and down the street. He catches Nathanael in the doorway across the street.

LEONTES (CONT'D)

You are ruined! You hear me?!
You're ruined!

Off Nathanael's horror --

END TEASER

ACT ONE

202 FADE IN ON: 202

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX

DISSOLVE TO:

203 EXT. BASHAN COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 203

SIMON and THOMAS search the edge of a grove for Trees. BIG JAMES pushes the wheelbarrow with a few logs in it, JOHN at his side.

THOMAS

What do you mean, two days?

SIMON

He said to leave enough firewood for the next weary traveler. You heard that, John.

THOMAS

(scanning)

What if there is none?

SIMON

That's why it's good to have some strong bodies around. Like the Sons of Thunder here.

John throws Big James a look.

JOHN

You told him?

SIMON

Don't worry, he made himself look just as bad as you did.

BIG JAMES

Hey--

Big James nods OFF. Everyone turns to --

A STRANGER in the distance, coming over the hill, walking toward them.

JOHN
Who is that?

SIMON
Maybe it's a scout from...where are we? Seleucia?

John puts a hand on his dagger handle, sheathed on his belt. Stranger continues toward them.

THOMAS
Maybe he's just walking.

JOHN
No one just walks in the Bashan.

THOMAS
No one but us.

SIMON
Shh.
(stepping forward, to Stranger)
Don't come any closer.

He pauses, 20 yards off. Puts a stalk of wheat in his mouth.

STRANGER
Shalom.

BIG JAMES
(aside)
He's Jewish.

John fixes him with a look. **No kidding.** Stranger (late 20s) continues casually. Close enough to make out his tattered clothes, unkempt beard. A casual, almost-smirk on his face.

SIMON
What do you want?

STRANGER
For the Romans to go. For a pretty wife someday. I ate a fattened goose once, I'd love that again. Are you followers of the Rabbi Jesus from Nazareth?

SIMON
Don't say anything. He could be a spy.

THOMAS
Spying for whom? For what?

STRANGER

There are spies. But they're not smart enough to dress like this.

(to Simon)

Are you Simon? Son of Jonah?

SIMON

Who **are** you?

STRANGER

I can't tell you that.

(off his look)

You're new at this. I get it. When you've followed your rabbi awhile, you won't even blink when a strange guy walks out of the woods with a message he can only give to Jesus directly.

The disciples freeze. Share looks. Big James shrugs.

BIG JAMES

Yeah, we are pretty new.

JOHN

Doesn't make us dumb.

SIMON

We can't let you see the rabbi without knowing your business.

STRANGER

I just said I can't say. If you wanna send me away, fine. Say hello to my friend Andrew for me though.

Thomas moves closer to John and Big James.

THOMAS

What do you think?

JOHN

I don't know. Bring him in, I guess. Let Jesus figure it out.

BIG JAMES

(gesturing)

Something doesn't sit right with Simon.

Simon looks at Stranger, skeptical. A tense beat. Then --

SIMON
Andrew has friends?

Stranger shrugs. John and Big James laugh.

204 EXT. BASHAN CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON

204 *

Andrew pours water into a cup, Simon over his shoulder.

ANDREW
He's Philip of Bethsaida.

SIMON
Yeah? How does he know you?

ANDREW
You'll find this shocking but I
have a whole life that doesn't
revolve around you.

SIMON
What's your problem? I'm just
asking about this kook--

ANDREW
He's not a kook! You know, you
could be a little less...**you** all
the time.

Simon sighs. Takes his medicine. Throws his hands up.

SIMON
Fair enough.

Andrew relents. Hands Simon the cup of water.

ANDREW
You take it to him. Make nice.

Simon looks at Andrew a beat. Are you for real? He is.
Simon takes the water and goes to find --

Philip is fast asleep. Simon exchanges a look with John.

SIMON
We've been back five minutes.

John shrugs.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Philip?
(no response)
Philip?!

Philip rolls over, smiles at the sight of water. He sits up and takes it, gratefully.

PHILIP

You never know when you'll get to sleep next.

(sips the water)

Or when you'll have clean water. Take advantage when you've got either one. Thank you.

SIMON

Whoa. Sounds like you were in a war out there with cree... with John the Baptiser.

PHILIP

(laughs)

No. War has rules.

Philip rolls over. Simon's eyes bug out of his head.

BIG JAMES (O.S.)

What did you find?

Simon and Philip look to --

MATTHEW walks toward the camp.

MATTHEW

Nothing suitable.

SIMON

Of course he didn't find any. Where did you look?

MATTHEW

To the east, one mile.

SIMON

That's the ravine. Anything you find there would be--

MATTHEW

Wet. Yes, I discovered this.

Simon gives a frustrated shake of his head. Philip perks up.

PHILIP

But there was wood?

SIMON

It was wet. That's Matthew. He checks the ravines for wood. Probably fishes in the desert, too.

PHILIP

Good work, Matthew.

Simon and others -- including Matthew -- turn to Philip, quizzically.

MATTHEW

Thank you. Who are you?

PHILIP

I'm the guy who dries wood.

Philip is on his feet in a second.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

If only you had an arsenal of weapons, we could do it in the manner of Ezekiel.

MATTHEW

How did Ezekiel dry his wood?

ANDREW

No, it's--

JOHN

The prophecy against Gog and Magog.

PHILIP

(quoting Ezekiel 39)

"Then those who dwell in the cities of Israel will go out and make fires of the weapons and burn them -

ANDREW

Shields and bucklers --

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Shields and bucklers --

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Bow and arrows, clubs and spears --

JOHN

Bow and arrows, clubs and spears --

ALL

And they will make fires of them for seven years, so that they will not need to take wood out of the field or cut down any out of the forests --

Matthew, Mary, and Ramah look amazed and jealous.

PHILIP
For they will make their fires of
the weapons.

Philip walks past Matthew in the direction Matthew just came from.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
C'mon.
(to the others)
Keep that fire going.

Matthew takes in all the satisfied looks from the disciples. After a beat, he turns and follows Philip.

CUT TO:

205

INT. MINI HAMMER - AFTERNOON

205

Nathanael walks into a bar in Caesarea, defeated.

He all but crashes onto his stool and addresses the BARTENDER.

NATHANAEL
Your strongest. And cheapest.

Nathanael plants an elbow on the table and plops the side of his jaw onto his hand. The bartender glances at him...this is clearly someone more upset than normal.

With his back to Nat --

BARTENDER
Is something wrong, friend?

NATHANAEL
Yes.

BARTENDER
Did somebody die?

NATHANAEL
Yes.

BARTENDER
I'm sorry for your loss. Was it sudden?

NATHANAEL

I think...it was a long time coming for him, but it felt sudden.

BARTENDER

(furrows brow)

Hm. Tell me about him.

NATHANAEL

He was an architect. It was what he wanted to be his whole life.

Bartender mixes the drink.

BARTENDER

Sad.

NATHANAEL

He came from nothing. Worked his way up. Loved God.
(conspiratorially)
He wanted to build synagogues eventually. I know that's not very popular around here. One with colonnades that sing. Parapets that practically pray. Vaunted halls that draw the soul upward to God. That's what God made him for. Or so he thought.

BARTENDER

(serves drink)

Sounds like an ambitious guy. What did he die of?

He takes a drink.

NATHANAEL

Hubris.

Bartender gives him a long look. Nathanael picks up on it.

NATHANAEL (CONT'D)

It's me. Okay? I'm the dead man in the story.

BARTENDER

Yeah, I got that.

NATHANAEL

I just wanted to be clear.

As he takes another drink --

206 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

206

Matthew and Philip march through the countryside.

MATTHEW

Did you learn how to dry wood
before or after you started
following John?

PHILIP

What's up with you and Simon?

MATTHEW

He doesn't like me. He sees me as
his enemy.

PHILIP

Why?

MATTHEW

I was a tax collector.

PHILIP

Hmph.

MATTHEW

I was everyone's enemy.
(off Philip's non-
reaction)
That doesn't shock you?

PHILIP

I **was** something else once, too.
Once you've met the Messiah, **am** is
all that matters. Next time he
rides you, remind him that people
out there want to define us by our
past. Our sins.

MATTHEW

Out there, where?

PHILIP

With the sleepers. But we're
different. We're awake.

MATTHEW

I don't understand.

PHILIP

You haven't felt any relief except
with Him, have you? Your rabbi?

MATTHEW

No.

PHILIP

Don't expect to.

Matthew considers this for a beat as they walk.

MATTHEW

Where did you memorize prophecy?

PHILIP

In Hebrew school, like all Jewish boys. Didn't you?

MATTHEW

I started, but then I skipped ahead.

PHILIP

I've never heard of anyone skipping ahead. What did they do that for?

MATTHEW

I was sent to apprentice under a bookkeeper.

PHILIP

(amused)

Were you that good with numbers or that bad with Torah?

MATTHEW

I was proficient in both.

PHILIP

(still laughing)

No, I'm kidding. How old when you skipped ahead?

MATTHEW

Eight.

PHILIP

Eight?!

MATTHEW

I showed unusual promise.

PHILIP

I bet you did. How come you never circled back to Torah?

MATTHEW

I was paraded before the magistrate. Rome offered me higher wages than the annual income of my father and all three of his brothers combined. I bought my first house when I was thirteen.

Philip turns sad. Fearing the answer --

PHILIP

Why did you need to buy a house?

MATTHEW

My father...

PHILIP

He kicked you out.
(off Matthew's nod)
I don't blame him.

MATTHEW

I thought you said--

PHILIP

He's a man. He acted by man's standards. Everybody in your old life is playing a different game than you now. Do you get it?

MATTHEW

(nods. A beat, then --)
No.

Matthew stops walking. Frustrated --

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Everybody speaks in riddles! I can understand esoteric ideas. They're not beyond me.

PHILIP

Of course not. You'll probably pick it up faster than the rest of us. I'm sorry, man. I'm not trying to sound like an oracle here. It's a force of habit. Spend all your time with a rogue preacher in the wilderness you get a little...obtuse. They're simple ideas for complicated people.

Matthew wants to shout, "you're doing it right now!"

MATTHEW

I just... In your obtuse language,
here's a circle --

(traces a circle)

It represents everything in the
world and all the people that have
ever been.

(indicating a point
outside the circle)

And this is me. That's how I feel.

PHILIP

Well said, good for you. And yeah,
I've been living literally outside
the circle with John the outcast
for a couple years, I can relate.

Philip smiles. Amused and proud.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

You're fine, Matthew. Stick around
and you're gonna be alright.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

207 EXT. CAESAREA PHILIPPI - AFTERNOON

207

Outside of town, Nathanael drags his feet through a rural area. He sits under a FIG TREE, filled with remorse.

He looks around. There is no one for miles. He is alone.

He pulls the architectural drawings out of his satchel and ruffles through them.

Nathanael stares ahead, defeated.

NATHANAEL
(indicating drawings)
This was done for you.

He glances at the sky.

NATHANAEL (CONT'D)
Blessed are you, Lord our God, King
of the Universe...

He sighs, shakes his head. As though he's trying whatever he can come up with:

NATHANAEL (CONT'D)
Hear Israel, the Lord is our God,
the Lord is One.

He strikes a flint against a rock and sets fire to the drawings. As they start to burn...

NATHANAEL (CONT'D)
Hear my prayer, O Lord; let my cry
come to you...do not hide your face
from me in the day of my
distress...
(emotional)
incline your ear to me; answer me
speedily in the day when I call...

He looks up again, pauses...

NATHANAEL (CONT'D)
No? This was done for you. "Do
not hide your face from me." Do
you see me?

He sits back on his haunches under the tree, hugging his knees to his chin.

Nathanael watches his dreams burn.

208 EXT. BASHAN CAMPSITE - AFTERNOON

208 *

By the light of the fire, Matthew and Philip strip bark from the wood with a machete. Matthew struggles with the task.

Philip digs in his rucksack, pulls out a piece of burlap.

MATTHEW

What's that for?

He wraps it around the dull side at the end of his machete.

PHILIP

It turns a blade into a razor for logs.

Philip draws it across a wet log and it works. Matthew does likewise.

MATTHEW

Thank you. I've never done manual labor.

PHILIP

You must have worked hard to avoid it. But that's behind you now, too. You gotta lean in to it. Let someone teach you a thing. Keep your head down. Laugh at people's jokes. And then tell jokes. It helps the time pass. You know any?

MATTHEW

Any what?

PHILIP

Jokes.

(off his vacant look.

Changing gears)

So, was it hard to leave it all behind?

Matthew "shaves" a log.

MATTHEW

No. It should have been. I was comfortable. I had...a dog.

PHILIP

(hushed)

Bold. I like it.

MATTHEW

It was a source of amusement for others. But my home was bought with blood money. My parents and I haven't spoken in years. And numbers didn't make the world clear anymore.

PHILIP

You gave everything away to keep it.

MATTHEW

It's uncomfortable when no one likes me.

PHILIP

If this Rabbi Jesus from Nazareth called you, it means you already have everything you need for right now, and he'll give you the rest in time.

MATTHEW

But everyone else knows so much more than me. Especially about Torah.

PHILIP

Do you think Jesus will only call people who know a lot about Torah?

MATTHEW

Maybe not, but I don't know what he sees in me. He's a religious teacher, and I know nothing about religion.

PHILIP

From what I've heard, he doesn't love everything about religion. What you think you know doesn't matter. Only that Jesus chose you. That's where your confidence comes from now.

Matthew takes this in.

MATTHEW

I know he knows what he's doing. I just wish I did.

PHILIP

Skipped ahead out of Hebrew school
at eight. I think you'll catch on.

Philip studies Matthew warmly. Then offers --

PHILIP (CONT'D)

Here's an easy one. If someone
asks you to tell a joke, tell them
you have a vegetable joke, but it's
corny.

Matthew nods, taking Philip at face value. Misses the joke.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

We'll work on it.

209

EXT. OUTSIDE CAESAREA PHILIPPI - DUSK

209

Still under a fig tree, Nathanael's blueprints are a pile of
smoking ash.

He crawls to the ashes and slowly picks up a handful, letting
it slip through his fingers. He stares down at the remains
of what was supposed to be his future.

Nathanael looks around with a hopeless, desperate expression.

Nathanael tears his tunic at the collar, then takes another
handful of ashes and heaps them on his head. Over and over
he does this. Each time, tears and sobs.

Finally, he drags himself to his feet. He picks up his little
satchel as if it weighed 100 pounds.

Nathanael kicks dirt and rocks over the ashes, hikes the
satchel up on his back, and walks away from the fig tree,
aimless.

210

EXT. BASHAN CAMPSITE - NIGHT

210

*

A half moon shines through the branches of an acacia tree.
Crickets sing. Philip quietly stokes the fire with a small
log. Sparks fly up into the pale air.

All of the disciples are asleep in various tent-like
structures and lean-to shelters, except Matthew who lies
asleep next to the fire.

POV of the campsite from a distance.

REVERSE - Philip's POV. SEE JESUS walking towards us.

As Jesus approaches, his face becomes clear in the firelight. He smiles, unthreatened by this strange man in the midst of his sleeping followers.

Jesus joins Philip by the fire. They stand facing one another. Jesus speaks quietly, so as not to wake anyone.

JESUS

Shalom. I'm glad to find you here.

PHILIP

I'm Philip, I--wait, John told you?

JESUS

No, I remember your face. You were standing with Andrew the day John called me the Lamb. How is my old cousin? I shouldn't call him old; we're the same age.

PHILIP

His reputation with Rome is down, but his spirits are up.

JESUS

Sounds about right.

PHILIP

He sent me with a message. Wanted me to tell you something, on my behalf.

JESUS

That's good, because I have something to say to you, too.

PHILIP

It's a very short message. Only two words.

JESUS

Mine is also short.

They speak at the same time --

JESUS (CONT'D)

Follow me.

I will.

PHILIP

They smile at the interlocking messages.

JESUS (CONT'D)

John sends you to me.

PHILIP

Yes, he--

Jesus motions to the ground for them to sit.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

He spoke with someone the last time he was in prison.

JESUS

Someone.

PHILIP

A pharisee. He was troubled by a miracle he'd witnessed in the Red Quarter in Capernaum.

JESUS

Ah, yes, I know this man.

PHILIP

Know him?

JESUS

Yes I...might even call him a friend.

Philip struggles.

PHILIP

John told me to expect anything. Nothing. But I think he would be troubled to know you are friends with a Pharisee.

JESUS

(shrugs)
He'll get over it.

Philip moves on.

PHILIP

And then we received word of what you did in Cana, and that was all John needed. He sends his love.

JESUS

And you.

PHILIP

A meager offering.

JESUS
Hardly meager. You will be the
most experienced of all my
followers.

PHILIP
John's hardly standard procedure.

JESUS
Even better.

They share a hushed chuckle.

PHILIP
If I may be so bold...what are your
intentions here in Bashan?

JESUS
Just passing through.

PHILIP
To Caesarea Philippi?

JESUS
Caesarea for one night, and then
we'll continue north, into Syria.

Philip looks as startled as if someone proposed this in 2020.

PHILIP
Syria?

JESUS
Yes.

PHILIP
I heard you were just in Samaria,
and now to Syria. You and John are
cut from the same cloth. If I
didn't know better, I'd say you
each have a death wish.

Jesus stares into the crackling fire.

JESUS
Well, not a death...WISH, exactly.

PHILIP
But a what? A death what?

JESUS
It's nothing.

Philip cocks his head forward involuntarily, his eyes curious.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Or maybe everything. I'm still thinking through how to talk about it. It's why I was away for a couple days. A lot on my mind.

PHILIP
I can imagine.

Jesus smiles at him.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
In Syria will we go to Damascus? Antioch?

JESUS
Not to the big cities. The small places.

Matthew stirs in his sleep, turns over. Jesus and Philip watch him settle into his slumber.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You should sleep. We have a long road ahead of us tomorrow. I'll keep the fire.

PHILIP
Yes, Rabbi.

Philip takes a few steps and turns back --

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Rabbi, one last thing --

JESUS
Yes?

PHILIP
If we have time while we're there, I've a friend in Caesarea, who I haven't seen in some time.

JESUS
Your friend lives in a Roman city?

PHILIP
He's an architect.

JESUS
Ah.

PHILIP
If there's time, I'd love to--

JESUS
Of course.

PHILIP
Only if there's time.

JESUS
If we don't make time for friends,
we won't have any.

Philip smiles, grateful.

PHILIP
Good night.

JESUS
Good night, Philip.

Philip goes into his tent. Jesus turns his face back to the fire, weary.

FADE TO:

211 INT. BASHAN CAMPSITE - TENT - MORNING

211 *

Ramah wakes up with the morning sun streaming in through a crack in the tent door. Mary is already wide awake, tending to her pack.

MARY MAGDALENE
Good morning.

RAMAH
Good morning. Did I sleep late?

MARY MAGDALENE
The sun is hardly up.

RAMAH
Oh! My back.

MARY MAGDALENE
Yeah. It does get easier...a little. You get used to it.

RAMAH
Are you packing?

MARY MAGDALENE

I pack every morning now. I never know if we'll be in one place for a night or a week.

RAMAH

That sounds hard. I didn't think about how this would really work.

MARY MAGDALENE

I think everyone is struggling with that, to some degree.

MARY POV of -- the camp slowly coming to life. Simon brushes his teeth. Thaddeus prays. Others stand around the embers.

RAMAH

How about you?

Mary doesn't hear the question, lost in thought as she watches the others.

RAMAH (CONT'D)

Mary?

MARY MAGDALENE

(snapping to)

Wasn't it exciting yesterday? When the men began reciting prophecy?

RAMAH

And a little intimidating.

MARY MAGDALENE

Yes! How does everyone know this but me?

RAMAH

I don't think Matthew knew.

MARY MAGDALENE

We need to catch up.

RAMAH

Okay. How? I can't read.

MARY MAGDALENE

I'll teach you to read and write.

Ramah's eyes dance before...her face falls.

RAMAH

Where will we get materials?

MARY MAGDALENE

Leave it to me. I know just who to talk to.

Ramah beams with excitement. She then turns and prays:

RAMAH

I am thankful before You, living and enduring King, for you have mercifully restored my soul within me. Great is Your faithfulness.

212

EXT. BASHAN CAMPSITE - SAME

212

*

Thomas, Simon, and Andrew stand around the embers of the campfire looking at -- wood. Lots.

THOMAS

It's more than two days worth.

SIMON

It's wet.

PHILIP (O.S.)

Damp.

They turn to greet Philip.

SIMON

Good morning.

PHILIP

Good morning, boys. That stuff'll smoke something terrible if you light it now. But by nightfall...

SIMON

You did well.

PHILIP

I didn't do it.

SIMON

No? Then who? Matthew?

PHILIP

Young, smart guy...

SIMON

Matthew.

PHILIP

I don't know everyone's name yet.
You know, that reminds me of a time
with John...

ANDREW

Simon calls him Creepy John.

Simon glares at Andrew. ***Are you kidding me?***

SIMON

I, uh --

PHILIP

Ha. I like it. So the flock was
moving up and down the Jordan,
evading Roman patrols.

THOMAS

You were on the run?

PHILIP

One day, John starts addressing us -
- Zachariah, Tobias, Michal...
We're just standing around looking
at each other like, "who's he
talking to?" And we realize -- we
don't know each other's names.
We'd been out there months! But we
just knew each other's nickname or
alias.

ANDREW

How is John?

PHILIP

Same old John. He's proud of you,
I can tell you that. Like a
father.

(slaps Andrew on the back)

I should get some water. Wake me
up if you're doing some work.
Thank Matthew for the wood if you
see him.

Philip heads off leaving Andrew stunned by the notion. Simon
watches Philip go, just as stunned.

ANDREW

John remembers me.

Simon marches off.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Where are you going?

SIMON
To thank Matthew.

Thomas and Andrew watch him go.

213 EXT. ROCK - DAY

213

Matthew sits alone on a rock outcropping on the hillside, writing in his journal.

Thaddeus climbs up to join him. Matthew doesn't look up from his writing.

THADDEUS
I thought that might be what you were doing.

MATTHEW
Hiding?

THADDEUS
No, writing. ARE you hiding?

MATTHEW
Philip says I don't have to do that, anymore.

THADDEUS
The new guy?
(Matthew nods)
I like him already.

MATTHEW
Everybody does. Like Simon but he's not...like Simon.

Thad sits down next to him.

THADDEUS
What are you writing?

MATTHEW
I'm taking notes on what I see. This. I'm used to writing daily now. It began as a chore but has become habit.

THADDEUS

Hm. I think prayer is like that.
At first, anyway. When Rabbi first
taught me. Now I love it.

MATTHEW

In the short time I have followed,
people have quarreled over things
Jesus said, remembered things
differently, and disputed his
meaning. I think it's best we have
a written record to refer back to.

SIMON (O.S.)

Everything He says and does?

They turn to find Simon.

MATTHEW

Yes.

SIMON

That's not a good idea.

THADDEUS

Why?

SIMON

We have enemies. There are people
trying to trap Jesus in His words.
They could twist something He said
to defame Him. Have you thought
about that?

MATTHEW

They will find it easier to twist
something He is REPORTED to have
said than if it's confirmed in
writing.

SIMON

That's not how the world works!
People can twist words however they
want.

MATTHEW

But it's clearly written--

SIMON

I bet. As clear as the last time I
saw you writing in your journal,
spying on me for the Romans?

News to Thaddeus. Matthew squirms, manages --

MATTHEW

People out there want to define all of us by our pasts. But we do things differently because of Him.

The words freeze Simon for a beat.

SIMON

For the record, it's a bad idea. Write that down.

Matthew does. To Thad and Matthew --

SIMON (CONT'D)

We head out in an hour.

Simon leaps down from the rock and returns to camp.

THADDEUS

He's not wrong. Just be careful.

Matthew deflates, but nods.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

214 EXT. ROAD - DAY

214

At the very front of the group, Big James walks and talks with Simon, Big James pushing his usual cart.

Simon breaks away, turning to walk back down the line of disciples, spread out at intervals.

Simon goes into ebullient people-person mode.

SIMON

Thaddeus.

Next, Simon passes Philip and Matthew. He gives a silent smile and nod to Philip only.

Philip registers the subtle slight.

Simon passes Mary and Ramah. Thomas not far behind.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Ladies. Thomas.

At the very back, he at last reaches Jesus, walking with Andrew.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Is my brother slowing you down back here?

JESUS

Always.

ANDREW

Hey!

Jesus laughs.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

You watch Simon and me in a footrace, and we'll settle this once and for all.

SIMON

Race yourself to the front. Big James is asking for relief on that cart.

ANDREW

Already? I thought we called him big for a reason.

SIMON

Yeah, and that's why his shift is the longest. You're up.

JESUS

I'll be next, Andrew.

SIMON

No, no you don't need--

JESUS

I want to!

ANDREW

You shouldn't.

JESUS

Some days I miss manual labor. Fewer questions, less speculation, honest sweat.

SIMON

Time to go get honest, Andrew.

Andrew takes off for the front of the line.

ANDREW

Shalom shalom!

JESUS AND SIMON

Shalom shalom.

JESUS

It's funny. I would have thought Keeper of the Shifts would have been Matthew's job, not yours.

SIMON

(thrown)

Ehh... why's that?

JESUS

He thinks in divisions, calculation, order.

SIMON

I've noticed. Speaking of Matthew, I wanted to tell you --

(aside, whisper)

(MORE)

SIMON (CONT'D)
he's writing down everything you
do.

JESUS
Of course he is.

Simon is dumbstruck.

SIMON
And that's fine with you?

JESUS
It is.

SIMON
All right, good to know.

Jesus switches gears immediately --

JESUS
You strike me as someone who acts
on instinct, feeling.

SIMON
But I do think. I think all the
time. That's what I was hoping to
talk to you about.

JESUS
You were.

SIMON
Yes, I've been thinking... the
group is growing every day. And
with greater numbers come
more...opinions and perspectives.

JESUS
Sure.

SIMON
And we're all unified behind you.

JESUS
You're all unified.

SIMON
We agree on YOU. But sometimes
you're away. And during those
times we don't have your authority
to defer to.

JESUS
You have my instructions.

SIMON

Yes, we have a goal or an instruction or some place to go, but how we GET there, how we achieve it, sometimes there's a lot of noise.

JESUS

What are you suggesting?

SIMON

I'm suggesting we formalize a structure.

JESUS

For what?

SIMON

For how decisions are made, how plans are formed, and what the process is for raising objections to those plans. When and how they are vocalized, and to whom.

JESUS

Hmm.

SIMON

Such as how you sent John and Little James ahead to Syria to prepare, we can schedule that in advance. Or for instance, maybe all contrary ideas are routed through Big James, filtered, and then brought to me for consideration. Just thinking out loud here.

JESUS

Simon, I love that you are trying to make things better for the whole group. You could stand to be a little nicer sometimes, but you're a leader. You always have been, and always will be. I cherish that in you, and I will need it.

Simon beams.

JESUS (CONT'D)

I will need it in time. But every one of these people I called for a reason. They each bring something unique and important to the whole.

(MORE)

JESUS (CONT'D)

I want every voice heard, and none silenced. Everyone can learn from each other.

SIMON

Yes, but some people are troubled with tiny things and they slow us down.

Jesus stops and turns to him.

JESUS

I won't ask who you mean by that. But I will say, if someone is thinking about things that you feel slow everything down, maybe it means you need to slow down.

They hold eye contact before Jesus resumes walking.

JESUS (CONT'D)

One day, Simon, there will need to be more structure. And I see you playing a big part in it.

SIMON

Out of all humility, Rabbi, why not now? Why not more structure today?

JESUS

Because I'm still here.

SIMON

You--you're saying one day you won't be?

JESUS

It's a conversation for another time.

SIMON

But we WILL talk about it...?

JESUS

I think so.

SIMON

Soon?

JESUS

(rip roarin')
Aaaaaahhhhh--that word "soon"--

Jesus looks out over the hills.

JESUS (CONT'D)
 --it's the most imprecise thing in
 the world. What is soon? A few
 hours? A few days? Years? A
 hundred years? A thousand? Ask my
 Father in heaven how long a
 thousand years is. Then talk to me
 about "soon."

Jesus takes off for the front. Simon is mystified.

SIMON
 Where are you going?

JESUS
 To relieve Andrew of the cart.

SIMON
 But it's not your time.

JESUS
 That's what I tried to tell my
 mother at Cana. How much good did
 it do?

Simon makes an abortive sound of dissent, but Jesus is off
 and away. Simon is deflated and conflicted.

215

EXT. ROAD - SAME

215

Matthew is walking by himself amid the spread out group.
 Mary and Ramah catch up and flank him on either side
 cheerfully.

MATTHEW
 Mary. Ramah. Is something wrong?

MARY MAGDALENE
 Nothing, wrong. I wanted to ask a
 favor.

MATTHEW
 Of course.

MARY MAGDALENE
 Do you have a tablet I could use?

MATTHEW
 (deflates)
 Did Simon put you up to this?

MARY MAGDALENE

No. I want to teach Ramah to read.
We want to study Torah.

MATTHEW

That's what I want to do.

MARY MAGDALENE

They don't allow women in the bet
midrash. How could I get to the
scrolls?

MATTHEW

I could copy them for you.

MARY MAGDALENE

Matthew, they're really long.

MATTHEW

Maybe we could ask Philip what is
the most important part.

MARY MAGDALENE

I'm pretty sure it's all important.

RAMAH

We don't even know where to start.

MATTHEW

I'll ask Philip.

MARY MAGDALENE

Why Philip?

MATTHEW

He's kind to me. Thaddeus, too.

MARY MAGDALENE

I'm sorry they're the exception
Matthew.

Matthew doesn't know how to receive this. So he marches ahead
toward Philip.

A beat later, Thomas catches up to the women.

THOMAS

Everything good up here?

MARY MAGDALENE

Yes.

RAMAH
 (proud)
 We're going to study Torah.

THOMAS
 Who, you and Mary?

RAMAH
 And Matthew.

THOMAS
 Matthew doesn't know anything about
 Torah.

RAMAH
 How would you know what Matthew
 knows?

Thomas reels, stung.

MARY MAGDALENE
 That's the point.

THOMAS
 And you don't read.

RAMAH
 I wasn't sent to Hebrew school like
 you. So, that's exactly what I'll
 learn from Mary first. It's not
 like we're trying to be teachers or
 anything, we just want to learn
 more.

Thomas looks from Mary to Ramah.

RAMAH (CONT'D)
 Have you taken your shift with the
 cart yet?

THOMAS
 Anything you need to know, you can
 always ask me.
 (not getting anything)
 Be happy to answer any questions.
 (still nothing)
 You know that, right?

RAMAH
 Of course.

THOMAS
 Good.

Thomas jogs up the line. Looking back over his shoulder.

216

EXT. ROAD - SAME

216

Matthew and Philip walk side by side again.

PHILIP

A passage to memorize?

MATTHEW

Anything that would get me started.
To make up for lost time.

PHILIP

No, Matthew. You didn't lose any
time. It just got...rearranged.
You're gaining it all back now.

MATTHEW

But in the meantime, I want to
understand the things you do. And
everyone else.

PHILIP

It doesn't happen overnight.

BIG JAMES (O.S.)

(shouting)

There it is!

Big James points to a city in the distance that has come into
view.

PHILIP

Caesarea Philippi. My namesake.

MATTHEW

Really??

PHILIP

No. Philip the Tetrarch, brother
of Herod Antipas -- a family that
does not take kindly to my former
rabbi.

MATTHEW

Why?

PHILIP

Well, John criticizes them for
things like killing their own sons,
marrying their nieces. Things like
that.

MATTHEW

I suppose he should.

PHILIP

Welcome to the Empire. Of course,
you know more about that than any
of us, no offense. I'm going to go
on ahead. We'll get back to the
other thing soon.

Philip jogs forward to join Big James and Jesus at the front.

END ACT THREE

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ACT FOUR

217 INT. NATHANAEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

217

Nathanael sleeps in a squalid apartment. Nathanael lies passed out in his clothes.

A RAP at the door.

PHILIP (O.S.)
Nathanael?

KNOCKING continues. Louder.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Nathanael, it's me. It's Philip.
Are you there?

After knocking some more, the sounds stops. Philip crawls through the window over Nathanael's bed, essentially stepping onto his sleeping mat. Nathanael stirs.

NATHANAEL
(half conscious)
What...?

PHILIP
Are you sick? What happened?

Philip holds Nathanael's head, who squints at him.

NATHANAEL
Philip?

PHILIP
Why are you in bed? What's going on? Are you okay?

Nathanael sits up.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
We need to get you some water.

He helps Nathanael up on shaky legs.

218 INT NATHANAEL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

218

Philip and Nathanael sit side by side on the first century equivalent of a park bench.

Nathanael nurses a pitcher of water. Philip sighs --

PHILIP

I am truly sorry, my friend.

NATHANAEL

No one was killed. It could have been worse. I could be in prison.

PHILIP

I'm still proud of you. I've lived through you, at times. You know that?

NATHANAEL

Through me? I'm living through you, man!

PHILIP

I mean it.

NATHANAEL

What part? Going to classes, endlessly. Dealing with bureaucrats day in, day out.

PHILIP

I skipped that part. The part about building something with your hands. I had a calling, I don't regret it, but while you were in a city being validated by top professionals, I was in the wilderness. With a lot of yelling. I don't deny occasionally being jealous that you've had physical evidence to show for your efforts.

NATHANAEL

A pile of rubble.

Nathanael looks away, grieving. He bites his lip, reliving the whole brutal thing.

PHILIP

You don't know what you're impact was -- or will be.

NATHANAEL

I have a good idea what it'll be -- a cold day in Gehenna before they hire another Jew.

PHILIP

I thought I knew where God was putting me, too.

NATHANAEL

Yeah... What are you doing here? I thought you were out making enemies all over the place.

PHILIP

John sent me to someone new, I'm about to make more enemies all over the place.

NATHANAEL

You sure know how to pick 'em.

PHILIP

He's not just anyone.

NATHANAEL

You said that about the baptizer.

PHILIP

And I was right. But this is more. This is who the baptizer was preparing us for. Nathanael --
 (serious as a heart
 attack)
 He's The One.

NATHANAEL

The one.

PHILIP

The one who Moses foretold, and the prophets said would come.

NATHANAEL

THE one?

PHILIP

The one. Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph.

NATHANAEL

(blurting out)
 Nazareth! Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

PHILIP

Come and see.

NATHANAEL

Little dump on a craggy hilltop--

PHILIP
 (trying not to laugh)
 I'm serious.

NATHANAEL
 No paved roads, no public
 buildings, they barely have a
 synagogue--

PHILIP
 (losing his battle with
 laughter)
 You can't, you really can't...

NATHANAEL
 Hey, I'm just telling it like it
 is, why can't I do that?

PHILIP
 Because you're mean.

NATHANAEL
 The families, illiterate day
 laborers and peasants by the way,
 sleep under the same roof as their
 livestock, Philip!

PHILIP
 Listen to me--

NATHANAEL
 THE one comes from Nazareth. It's
 not even on most MAPS. Honestly,
 Philip, saying The One is a
 Nazarene is practically heresy.

PHILIP
 Just- come and see.

Nathanael lets out an exasperated sigh.

NATHANAEL
 I--

PHILIP
 What, you'll be late for work?

NATHANAEL
 Wow. That's dark. So dark.

PHILIP
 Your whole life you've wanted to
 serve God, and to meet the son of
 God, the king of Israel.

(MORE)

PHILIP (CONT'D)

I promise you won't regret it. If you do, I will refund your misery. But I know you, you don't mess around...you will want to join him. He's like no rabbi who ever has been or will be.

Nathanael looks at his friend suspiciously.

NATHANAEL

I've never seen you talk like this.
(a beat)
I'm still hung up on the Nazareth of it all...

Phil lets out his breath and smiles, taking his friend in. Grabs his arm-

PHILIP

Come and see.

219

EXT. HOSTEL - NIGHT

219

Jesus steps out into the night, latching the door behind him.

PHILIP (O.S.)

Rabbi.

Jesus turns to see Philip walking up with Nathanael. Jesus adjusts his posture, and seems genuinely honored.

JESUS

Well. Now this is a good night.

The two mortal men are confused.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Do you know who stands beside you?

PHILIP

(mystified)

This is my friend, Nathanael.

Jesus doesn't take his eyes off Nathanael.

JESUS

Yes, the truth-teller.

They stop.

NATHANAEL

I'm sorry?

JESUS

Man is often deceitful...and Israel began with Jacob, a bit of a deceiver, yes?

NATHANAEL

Yes?

JESU

But one of the great things about you...you are a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit.

Nathanael looks at Philip.

NATHANAEL

What did you say about me?

Philip shakes his head.

NATHANAEL (CONT'D)

What is this? How do you know me?

JESUS

I've known you long before Philip called you to come and see.

Off Nathanael's sideways glance...

JESUS (CONT'D)

Don't look at him, look at me.

(pauses)

When you were in your lowest moment, and you were alone...I did not turn my face from you. I saw you.

Nathanael doesn't blink.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Under the fig tree.

Nathanael's eyes widen. Jesus offers a compassionate smile, nods.

NATHANAEL

Rabbi.

Philip is clueless but watches with excitement. Nathanael's eyes fill.

JESUS

There it is.

NATHANAEL

You are the son of God. The King
of Israel.

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PHILIP

I knew it!

JESUS

Well that didn't take long.

PHILIP

He doesn't mess around.

JESUS

Because I said to you, "I saw you under the fig tree," you believe? Ha ha, you're going to see many greater things than that.

Jesus grabs his shoulders, leans in to Nathanael's now tear-stained face.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Like Jacob, you're going to see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. That's me, by the way.

NATHANAEL

(chuckles)

Yeah, I got that.

JESUS

Good. I know you like to be clear.

Andrew and Simon emerge from the hostel with urgency.

ANDREW

Rabbi, sorry to interrupt, but John just arrived with a message from Syria.

JESUS

He came back?

SIMON

Yes, he said people are already gathering to meet you, many with afflictions to be healed.

(excited)

Your fame is spreading...the good kind.

ANDREW

You should rest, Rabbi, we should leave early.

JESUS
Thank you, boys.

They hustle back in. Jesus turns to Nathanael.

JESUS (CONT'D)
You wanted to help build something
that would cause prayer, and song,
and vaunted halls to bring souls
closer to God, yes?

Nathanael nods.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Can you start tomorrow?

On Nathanael as we --

CUT TO BLACK.

END EPISODE

The Chosen-Media Valet