

THE CHOSEN

Season One
Episode One: "I Have Called You By Name"

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TEASER

1

EXT. BEDOUIN CAMP - NIGHT

1

The stars shine down on a desert camp just outside the limits of a small, torchlit city nestled between rolling hills. The crescent moon reflects off a peaceful sea in the distance.

SUPERSCRIPT: MAGDALA A.D. 2.

OMAR, a sturdy man with a beard, is tending a fire outside the family tent, humming softly. His humming turns to coughing, however, and he tries to quiet it.

Doesn't work. His daughter, MARY, age 5, appears at the flap of the tent, barefoot with a blanket.

MARY

Abba?

OMAR

(surprised)

You should be in bed, little one.

MARY

I can't sleep.

OMAR

Come here.

She goes to him and he holds her tight.

OMAR (CONT'D)

Does your head hurt again?

MARY

No.

OMAR

Are you thinking about the big new star? It's over there now...

They look at an abnormally big star. (Could it be?)

MARY

No.

OMAR

Why can't you sleep?

MARY

I'm scared.

OMAR

Of what?

MARY

I don't know.

Omar smiles lovingly, and again attempts to hide his cough. Mary's mother, ANNA, watches apprehensively at the tent flap. Omar casts her a reassuring glance.

OMAR

(giving her a big squeeze)
Hey. What do we do when we're
scared?

MARY

We say The Words.

OMAR

Adonai's Words. From the
prophet...

MARY

Isaiah.

OMAR

From the prophet Isaiah, that's
right: "Thus says the Lord who
created you, O Jacob, and he who
formed you, O Israel: Fear not--
Come now, let me hear you say it.
I like your pretty voice.

MARY

"Fear not, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are
mine."

OMAR

That's right.

As he kisses her we --

SMASH TO:

2

INT. LILITH'S ROOM - DAY

2

A WOMAN (late 20s) opens her eyes with a start, sits bolt upright in bed, GASPS sharply as if emerging from deep underwater.

SUPERSCRIPT: CITY OF CAPERNAUM A.D. 30

The woman takes in her surroundings. Frantic eyes dart around the room. Makeup dye smeared under a thick layer of sweat.

She touches her face where the man in her dream, Omar, kissed her and only then sees it--a deep red, thick substance smeared across her palm. This is not makeup...

She wipes at her mouth. More blood. Now notices the BROKEN FINGERNAILS on both her hands.

The woman leaps from bed in a panic, winces at a sharp pain in her side. What's happened to me? She examines a tear in her robe, wet with fresh blood when, from OFF --

SAILOR (O.S.)
Help! Somebody HELP ME!

She turns to the sound, guilt and fear on her face.

3 EXT. ALLEY - SAME 3

A SAILOR (30s) runs as fast as he can through an alley.

CLOSE ON Sailor in mortal terror. The back of his tunic is shredded.

4 EXT. CAPERNAUM MARKET - CONTINUOUS 4

An Eastern bazaar. Stalls upon stalls. Merchants sell wares from around the Mediterranean. Exotic sounds, sights. People of every ethnicity browse, BARGAIN in foreign tongues.

Sailor emerges from the alley, looking over his shoulder with wide eyes -- when he CRASHES into a MERCHANT. Pomegranates rain down. Sailor stumbles into a SHOPPER, gesturing wildly --

SAILOR
Help! She tried to KILL ME!

The market grinds to a halt. All LOOK -- no one offers help.

Everywhere Sailor turns, people RECOIL -- he looks like a crazy man. A MOTHER ushers her CHILD away. A CUSTOMER curses him.

From behind, a massive ROMAN GUARD (MARCUS) grabs him by the neck.

SAILOR (CONT'D)
Help me, please!

Marcus grimaces at the sight of BITE MARK on Sailor's shoulder. Some of Sailor's blood has smeared on his hand.

MARCUS

What is... You filthy dog!

Sailor turns, braces the guard with surprising force. LOOKS him square in the eyes.

SAILOR

Demons. Live. Inside. Her.

A SECOND and THIRD ROMAN jump in, pull Sailor away. As Marcus registers Sailor's words we--

CUT TO BLACK:

ACT ONE

5 FADE IN ON: 5

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

A PLACE WHERE THE CHOSEN HAVE GATHERED

Or something like that.

So on and so forth and --

DISSOLVE TO:

6 EXT. RURAL JUDEA - DAWN 6

In the faint light before sunrise, camels and SLAVES lead two carriages in single-file along a rutted, rural path.

7 INT. CARRIAGE - SAME 7

A man we'll come to know as NICODEMUS (50s) rides in his lavishly-appointed carriage.

From the 18 ostentatious garments adorning his body and his trimmed, gold dust-flecked beard, we make him for a Pharisee.

The rocky road JOSTLES the carriage. Nicodemus seeks solace in prayer. No sooner does he bow his head than a SLAVE appears at his window.

SLAVE

Forgive me, Rabbi--

Nicodemus SILENCES Slave with a gesture. Slave bows his head before stealing a glance at his travel partner, Nicodemus' wife, ZOHARA (50s).

She's at once matronly and striking -- and she does not wear the traditional head scarf.

Slave is SHOCKED. He looks away as if he caught her bathing.

ZOHARA

(whisper yelling)

Can you not see what he is doing?!

Slave is trapped. He has one job and now is the time, but he doesn't dare. He can only look to horizon, panic etched on his face as he points --

SLAVE

But, woman...ahead!

ZOHARA

He knows.

As Nicodemus continues to PRAY --

PULL OUT OF THE CARRIAGE. Across the rolling plane and to --

8 EXT. RURAL JUDEA - HORIZON - CONTINUOUS 8

The imposing FIGURES of a group of ROMAN LEGIONNAIRES on HORSEBACK. Silhouetted against the twilit horizon, they ride hard -- and straight for the carriages.

CLOSE UP on a youngish man astride the lead horse. His immaculate tunic and imperial helmet contrast sharply with his fellow soldiers. He's a leader. His looks may be refined but his smile is pure avarice...

9 EXT. RURAL JUDEA - MOMENTS LATER 9

The Pharisee's caravan halted. Nicodemus' carriage sits empty. Slaves try to still their camels as a DOZEN Legionnaires on horseback keep a watchful eye.

Zohara is now scarved. And her eyes do not leave --

NICODEMUS, standing away from the others. The youngish man APPROACHES on foot. This is QUINTUS (20s).

NICODEMUS

Why have you stopped us?

QUINTUS

It's not enough to say hello?

NICODEMUS

I'm on official business.

QUINTUS

Only Roman business is official.

Nicodemus isn't used to biting his tongue. It amuses Quintus to see him squirm.

QUINTUS (CONT'D)

My name is Quintus. I'm the praetor of Capernaum.

NICODEMUS

I am --

QUINTUS

You are the great Nicodemus. Word gets around.

NICODEMUS

Are you arresting me?

Quintus looks around for someone to laugh with him.

QUINTUS

No, my friend. I'm a magistrate, not a military man. I serve the will of the people. And Pilate.

NICODEMUS

I serve only God.

QUINTUS

Yes, yes. So do your enemies, the Sadducees. The Essenes. The zealots.

(whispered, aside)

Rogue preachers in the wilderness raving about a coming Messiah... They're all vying for the people's affection.

NICODEMUS

What do you want, Quintus?

QUINTUS

You see right through me. I believe taxes are going unpaid. If you help me, I will help the Pharisees continue to thrive.

NICODEMUS

How can I? The people are already drowning in tax.

QUINTUS

(greedy smile)

Tell me, Nicodemus, what can be under the water yet never drown?

NICODEMUS

(quizzical)

Fish?

CUT TO:

10 INT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - MORNING 10

An exquisite home bathed in early morning light. A huge living room with floor-to ceiling windows looking out over Capernaum, decorated in expensive, high style.

The floors are scrubbed to a sparkle, covered only by a plush deerskin mat.

All the furniture is clearly expensive but not decorative. The room is impeccably neat and oddly impersonal.

MATTHEW (late 20s), a slight man with sharp eyes, remains expressionless throughout this morning ritual --

Still dripping from the bath, he stands before a huge wardrobe, stocked with immaculate rows of pressed linens.

He wraps himself in fine linen. Smooths out the creases. He finishes the last grape from a porcelain plate.

Matthew spritzes himself with frankincense. Steps into ornate sandals. Finally, he takes a nice CLOTH NAPKIN off a stack of them.

11 INT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - LATER 11

Matthew approaches a large, monolithic door. He sets down his leather tote and strains to lift the bar upright from its latch.

Once open, Matthew uses his entire body to PUSH the door. Pushing until...daylight shines in.

12 EXT. CAPERNAUM - WEALTHY NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS 12

Matthew slips outside. He closes the heavy door behind him. With effort, LOCKS the door with a brass key. He then sniffs and wipes with the napkin. This is a common occurrence.

13 EXT. CAPERNAUM - ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER 13

Matthew moves quickly down kinked, narrow alleys. These aren't passageways -- they're for dumping trash, raw sewage.

Through a BREAK in buildings, we see PEDESTRIANS and storefronts just a block away.

Matthew deftly sidesteps a mass of rats -- steps straight in a pile of feces.

Matthew extricates his sodden sandal, GAGS at the smell.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Oy!

Matthew spies a DRIVER with a CAMEL and covered wagon motioning him from the end of the passage.

Matthew makes his way over. He hands the man PAYMENT.

MATTHEW

Keep your voice down.

DRIVER

Beg pardon, Mr. Public anus. But it's me that don't wanna be seen with you, remember?

MATTHEW

It's publi-CAHnus.

DRIVER

You sure? I like it the other way, tax man.

Matthew slips out of his soiled sandals. Removes a NEW PAIR from his tote. Matthew goes to throw his dirty sandals away -

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Hey!

Driver SNATCHES the Sandals from Matthew. Inspects them. Too closely. Unaffected by the filth.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

This is a month's wages for all my sons put together right here. And you'd just toss 'em out.

Matthew defiantly takes the sandals back, THROWS them in the alley.

MATTHEW

These are my property, I do with them what I wish. I pay you to drive. You sift through trash on your own time.

Driver gets real serious for a beat. Deciding whether to beat this little man or...LAUGH. Driver guffaws at Matthew.

DRIVER

Driving you's a bit of both now, isn't it?

Driver laughs heartily. He pulls back a tarp revealing Matthew's travel accommodations -- a filthy wood floor.

Matthew slips inside. Driver takes his camel's reins.

DRIVER (CONT'D)

But if any citizen asks about my cargo, I must tell the truth -- it's the biggest pile of dung in all Capernaum.

Matthew never gets jokes or metaphor. Aspergers?

Driver ROARS with laughter and gives his camel a tug. Matthew replaces the tarp to cover himself.

14

EXT. HEBREW SCHOOL - AMPHITHEATER - DAY

14

It's Autumn in Capernaum and the VIEW of dazzling colors against rolling hills and the expansive sea beyond is ours from HIGH ABOVE an amphitheater.

The capacity crowd, however, only has eyes for today's featured speaker, NICODEMUS (50s), who sits before them.

NICODEMUS

I always look forward to my annual visit to Capernaum. And to your Sea of Galilee. It is truly the envy of the kingdom.

APPLAUSE. Nicodemus is tall and angular with movie star charisma but the grace and ease of a much older man.

He holds his audience spellbound, hanging on every word.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

My children were enamored of it as well. All day they swam, watched the people, played games... I finally said, 'you love it so much, yet you never go to the sea when we're home, in Jerusalem.' My son just shrugged and said, "but father, no one's ever there," he says, "it's dead."

LAUGHTER from the adoring crowd. Nicodemus leans in slightly -- just enough to shift his tone, add gravity.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

And your sea boasts the most exquisite fish.

(MORE)

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

How unfortunate that those who do the actual fishing are unholy, given to gambling in secret dens, foul-mouthed, even fishing on the Sabbath. Can we eat the catch without being stained by sins of the catcher?

The desk and lectern hold large reference scrolls, ancient texts. He selects one, opens it effortlessly to illustrate --

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Make no mistake -- it is a sin to eat a fish caught on the Sabbath. What goes into the body of a man defiles him. What if, you may ask, the fishmonger lies and tells you it was caught on a Thursday? How is a man to know? Is it still a sin? But already you know the answer.

Nicodemus pauses to let the words hit their mark.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

The more important question is why are our Jewish brothers taking their boats to sea on Shabbat? I assure you, the Messiah will not come until this wickedness is purged from our midst.

HEADS BOW in shameful reflection.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Your actions are watched, studied. God has entrusted you to be exemplary in every way. If your status is a burden too great, you do not deserve to bear the name of Israel.

Nicodemus scans the audience, knows he's hit his mark. Off his barely concealed satisfaction --

CUT TO:

15

INT. HEBREW SCHOOL - TORAH ROOM - DAY

15

An ornate chamber. Part library, part throne room. Everything embossed in gold and leather.

Two STUDENTS polish the brass top rail of a magnificent seat of honor in a Torah study room.

Pharisee SHMUEL oversees the work. His student, YUSSIF, stands by to assist.

SHMUEL

I want to see my reflection in it plain as day. This teacher has traveled all the way from Judea. He is a member of the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and I won't have him resting his hallowed head on a dull chair.

The students polish harder.

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

Yussif, straighten your tefillin.

Yussif adjusts the black capsule containing parchments of Torah fastened with leather straps on the arm.

OFF, a COMMOTION from the hallway.

Yussif peeks out into the hall.

YUSSIF

Here he comes.

SHMUEL

(dismissing the students)
Away! Out the back door.

The students scurry away.

16

EXT. HEBREW SCHOOL PATHWAY - SAME

16

Nicodemus makes his way through the school, surrounded by adoring, fawning PHARISEES.

Shmuel waits in his path eagerly, half bowing, half cheering, fan-boying hard.

SHMUEL

Teacher! You have moved us all.

NICODEMUS

Shmuel.

Nicodemus braces Shmuel. Shmuel melts. He motions Nicodemus to enter the Torah Room with a slight BOW.

SHMUEL

Will you do us the honor, rabbi?

NICODEMUS

If it's where you keep the white sardines...

Shmuel's face puckers. He turns to Yussif in a panic --

SHMUEL

Well, I-we...certainly *could* get--

NICODEMUS

It was a joke, Shmuel.

Shmuel lights up, smiles like a man pardoned.

Nicodemus' SERVANT steps through the curtain, pulls it aside to let NICODEMUS into --

17

INT. HEBREW SCHOOL - TORAH ROOM - CONTINUOUS

17

STUDENTS are arranged like the Von Trapp children, awaiting inspection.

Upon his entrance, the students BOW low. Nicodemus graciously gives a half-bow.

NICODEMUS

A fine Torah room is the heartbeat of a worthy synogogue, Shmuel.

Nicodemus' servant runs his finger along the brass top rail of the seat of honor, duck-faced, looking for signs of imperfection.

SHMUEL

Thank you, teacher of Israel. You do us a great honor.

The servant pulls out the seat of honor.

NICODEMUS

It's my honor to be here. Not only for your bright students,
(motioning for the rest of the students to sit)
...but for the very soul of this city. You heard my address?

SHMUEL

Of course. Your words will resonate for generations.

YUSSIF

You were luminous.

NICODEMUS

In my remarks, I asked, for rhetorical purposes, why are Jews taking boats to sea on Shabbat? It is a question meant for you, rabbi Shmuel. The reports are becoming too frequent to ignore.

SHMUEL

(heart skips a beat)
Rabbi, of course, we--I will control it better. Th-the Romans believe we do not work on Sabbath, thus they do not patrol. Greed has overcome the fishermen, I'm afr--

OFF, a COMMOTION in the hall.

YUSSIF

Or they are just trying to feed their families.

Shmuel fixes Yussif with an acid look for speaking out of turn. Before he can respond, a PHARISEE appears at the door

PHARISEE

Begging your pardon, rabbi. A centurion is here, he demands to speak with you.

SHMUEL

Please tell him we have an honored guest and cannot be interrupted.

A MARCUS shoves past Pharisee into the room. Students GASP at the intrusion.

MARCUS

It can't wait.

SHMUEL

(looking to heaven)
Messiah, come quickly.

Nicodemus stands in silence, oddly DEFERENTIAL to the Roman -- not lost on Shmuel.

After a beat of SURPRISE, he mirrors Nicodemus' posture.

Marcus takes in his surroundings. WHISTLES appreciation.

MARCUS

Impressive. Looks like we're not the only ones taxing the people.

NICODEMUS

What's happened, officer?

MARCUS

I'm no officer. But at least you know your place. You're alright.

SHMUEL

This is Nicodemus! Teacher of teachers--

MARCUS

Ah ha! Just the man I want to see. I'm here about a Hebrew woman in the Red Quarter.

Scandalized whispers ripple through the students.

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Let's just say she's causing a *disturbance*.

SHMUEL

You have an entire Roman legion at your disposal.

MARCUS

Thank you for the reminder, Jew. But she needs a holy man...

Shmuel's ire up. Nicodemus calms him with a look.

NICODEMUS

We are men of God. It is not our custom to frequent the Red Quarter.

MARCUS

Perhaps I wasn't clear, *teacher of teachers* -- you'll accompany me to the Red Quarter or we'll burn it down with our fire of fires.

The Jewish men trade wide-eyed looks. Nicodemus is trapped.

CUT TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

BLACK.

A RUSTLING sound OFF. Sudden, BLINDING LIGHT reveals --

18

EXT. CAPERNAUM STREET - DAY

18

Driver pulls back the canvas, looks up and down the area for onlookers.

DRIVER

This is your stop.

Matthew's head pops up. His face falls. Nonplussed --

MATTHEW

That's...wait, we're on the far side of the market.

DRIVER

Get out.

MATTHEW

No.

DRIVER

NO?

MATTHEW

This *is* the job! You drive so I don't walk through market!

DRIVER

It's too crowded today. Something's up.

MATTHEW

I'll pay you double.

DRIVER

Money won't buy the stink off me and my family if I'm seen with you.

There's no bargaining with Driver today. Matthew exits the wagon, brushes dirt from his robes.

MATTHEW

This is very unprofessional.

DRIVER

Fire me.

Driver tugs his camel and they're off. Matthew looks at the teeming market.

19

EXT. CAPERNAUM MARKET - MOMENTS LATER

19

Matthew walks through the heart of the market, counting down the steps. Head down. He almost doesn't notice a SHOPKEEPER glaring as he PULLS his curtain closed.

Or the MAN walking the opposite direction steers his FAMILY clear of him.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

TRAITOR!

Heads TURN.

Matthew doesn't break stride. He passes an OLD MAN pointing at him over the shoulder of a YOUNG BOY, explaining LOUDLY --

OLD MAN

...it's someone who'd turn his own mother over to the Romans for gold.

Suddenly he stops and almost falls as his robe is yanked. He looks down at a BLIND MAN tugging on his robe.

MATTHEW

Please, I must --

BLIND MAN

Are you the Messiah? Are you the Messiah?

MATTHEW

I am not.

BLIND MAN

Please tell me when He comes!

Matthew hustles away, then mercifully rounds a corner. He breathes a short lived sigh of relief before noticing --

A line of PEOPLE about twelve deep leading up to his tax collection booth.

They stare at Matthew. A motley assortment. Some hold the hands of SMALL CHILDREN with dirty bare feet. Signs of poverty and oppression. Dark circles under the eyes. Tattered clothes.

A ROMAN SOLDIER approaches from opposite.

MATTHEW

You're late, Gaius.

Gaius grins, relishing the thought of Matthew alone, exposed.

GAIUS

I know.

Gaius produces a key and unlocks the latch gate to the booth, letting Matthew in and clicking it shut behind him. The booth is like a jail cell -- one meant to keep people out.

GAIUS (CONT'D)

Could you feel it?

MATTHEW

Feel what?

GAIUS

Market. It's on fire today.
Everybody's on edge. All it'd take
is one person to snap and you're --

MATTHEW

Just do your job.

GAIUS

You better hope.

Gaius chuckles. Matthew opens a large ledger. He wets a stick of chalk and motions to the first MAN in line.

MATTHEW

Name?

20

EXT. CAPERNAUM - RED DISTRICT - DAY

20

Marcus leads Nicodemus, Shmuel, and Yussif down the alley behind a two-story brick house. They walk past another ROMAN furiously washing graffiti off a wall that reads: "MESSIAH WILL DESTROY THE ROMANS"

MARCUS

Here. Rivka's joint.

The reality of the situation dawns on Nicodemus. Sensing his hesitation --

MARCUS (CONT'D)

Don't worry, rabbi. We took the
other lowlifes out to protect your
delicate sensibilities.

Marcus laughs -- then stops short. The men FREEZE as, from OFF, we make out a low, guttural GROAN. Almost subsonic.

SHMUEL

What is that--

MARCUS

Ssshh!

The groan intensifies then morphs into WAILING, HEAVING.

NICODEMUS

It's her.

Nicodemus can hardly believe his ears. His mind races, trying to conceive of any way to combat this evil. He glances at a horrified, frozen Shmuel.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

I need materials. Shmuel!

Shmuel breaks from his trance.

SHMUEL

Yes, teacher.

NICODEMUS

Sulfur, nettle...hyssop, mandrakes,
dried thistle, wormwood. GO!

Shmuel and Yussif disappear. A beat as Nicodemus steels himself. He turns to the guard.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Listen...I agreed to Quintus's request--not a demand, because he should not DEMAND anything of me-- to discourage Sabbath fishing because it is already our law, so my doing so was not a violation of my practice. And I will help this woman, even though this sort of situation would normally fall outside of my purview. But do not think of me as a tool to fix Roman problems. This will not be a pattern, I will not continue to use my position of religious influence for the benefit of those who look down on my people, whether it's you or even someone like Quintus.

(MORE)

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

So I will perform this task, but I want it noted for your superiors that it is an exception, do you understand?

Blank stare.

MARCUS

So are we going upstairs now?

NICODEMUS

Yes.

The guard rolls his eyes and he opens the door, and we --

CUT TO BLACK:

OVER BLACK we hear VOICES SHOUTING, the CRACK of a punch hitting its mark --

21

EXT. CAPERNAUM RAVINE - DAY

21

A fist fight.

A shirtless man we'll soon know as SIMON (20s) lies on the dusty ground.

A circle of MEN stand around him SHOUTING taunts or encouragement -- and placing bets.

JEHOSAPHAT (O.S.)

Stay down, Simon.

Standing over him, a BALD MAN, Jehosaphat. He's a little older and a lot angrier. Simon tries to blink the stars out of his eyes.

JEHOSAPHAT (CONT'D)

Suck dirt if you know what's good for you!

With tremendous effort, Simon climbs to a knee.

A FIST flies through frame, CONNECTS with Simon's face.

Simon falls with a THUD. Bald Man throws his hands in the air. The Men cheer. MONEY changes hands as the odds change.

Simon scans the crowd when he locks on one face -- a BORED LOOKING GUY with a suspicious resemblance to Simon...

Simon's eyes clear up instantly. He gives Bored Looking Guy an inquisitive look, "We good?"

Bored Looking Guy shakes his head, MOUTHS one word: "NO."

Simon ROLLS his eyes and instantly resumes his dopey-eyed, lifeless charade.

SIMON

You're too much, Jehosaphat. Too powerful.

JEHOSAPHAT

That's right! Like I tell you every time I see you. Like I tell my sister--

SIMON

Seriously, I can only take, maybe, two...

ON BORED LOOKING GUY shaking his head. Simon adjusts --

SIMON (CONT'D)

...one more punch. One more and I'm done.

A BUZZ goes through the crowd.

GAMBLER

He says he's had it!

MONEY changes hands frantically. Bored Looking Guy reluctantly nods to Simon.

Simon LEAPS to his feet easily. Jehosaphat doesn't see.

SIMON

Uh...hey, Jeho?

He turns, face falls. Barely time to register shock as -- CRACK. CRACK. Right-left in lightning succession.

SIMON (CONT'D)

What was it...you were saying? Something about your sister?

CRACK-CRACK. Left jabs. Jehosaphat is dead on his feet.

SIMON (CONT'D)

You think if you hit me hard enough I won't be married to her?

CRACK. THUD. Hook, liver punch. Jehosaphat doubles over.

SIMON (CONT'D)

That's why they call me wine hands.
Because of what I do to your liver!

ON BORED LOOKING GUY collects money hand over fist shrugging innocently.

Simon leans down, WHISPERS to Jehosaphat --

SIMON (CONT'D)

I don't wanna do this, Jehosaphat.
Can we please stop fighting every
week? I know you never trusted me,
but I love your sister more than
anything.

JEHOSAPHAT

(nods, weakly)
I will stop fighting you.

SIMON

You will?

JEHOSAPHAT

My brother won't.

SIMON

Your brother?

Simon turns in time to see the FIST flying into his nose...and the lights go out in Georgia. Simon FALLS.

ON BORED LOOKING GUY shaking his head as the money is snatched from his hands.

Simon's eyes roll back as we --

FADE TO:

22

EXT. SEA OF GALILEE - SHORE - DAY

22

On a dock in the fisherman's wharf, with endless tranquil water stretched out before us.

Simon holds a rag on his nose. Bored Looking Guy a.k.a. ANDREW (20s) paces nearby.

SIMON

Where's it written down, Andrew?
Huh? Answer me that.

ANDREW
(sotto)
I'm so foolish.

SIMON
How's a double knockout a push if
it's two-on-one?! Made up rule
right there.

ANDREW
Made up or in stone, who cares? We
lost, and I know better.

Andrew is brokenhearted.

SIMON
It's my fault. I talked ya into
it.

ANDREW
Meh.

A pause.

ANDREW (CONT'D)
"Wine hands"?

SIMON
Sounded more clever in my head.

A beat of anxious silence.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Tax day's coming.

ANDREW
Mmhm.

SIMON
Two sunrises away. Shabbat and
then--

ANDREW
I realize, Simon. Thank you.
(then)
We could lose the boat.

SIMON
What're you gonna do?

ANDREW
Don't know. Blood from a stone.

Worry etched on Andrew's face, lost in thought a beat. Simon stands suddenly, makes for the boats.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Where you going?

SIMON

Going to work.

ANDREW
Work... It's Shabbat in an hour.

SIMON
The Pharisees make allowances for
that if lives are at stake.

ANDREW
No one's life is --

SIMON
Not this moment, but it's coming...

Andrew's not convinced.

SIMON (CONT'D)
What, you going to tell your bug-
eating friend about it?

Andrew sighs. Simon begins the process of lowering his boat.
Andrew goes to lend a hand but Simon stops him.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Just me, not dragging you into
this.

ANDREW
What about Eden?

SIMON
She's staying at her Eema's
tonight.

ANDREW
You're crazy. You know that?

SIMON
Nah, just desperate.

The boat touches the water. As Simon hops in --

CUT TO:

23 INT. RIVKA'S HOSTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

23

A HALF-DOZEN CENTURIONS fill the hallway outside the
possessed woman's room. QUIET. Too quiet, then --

CRASH! A clay pot hits the door from the other side,
RATTLING in its frame. The centurions FLINCH in unison.

And ANOTHER. And ANOTHER. Each crash pounding the door with
intensifying force and volume.

THE OTHER END OF THE HALLWAY --

Nicodemus talks with the proprietor, RIVKA (40s).

Rivka is short and squat. A scar bisects her lower lip down to the chin. Signs of a life lived hard. She hates this attention from the Romans and from Nicodemus.

NICODEMUS

How long has she been like this,
Rivka?

RIVKA

Like what?

NICODEMUS

I'm trying to help her.

RIVKA

You're gonna mess the place up is
all you're gonna do. Then what?
You gonna stop by and help clean,
rabbi?

NICODEMUS

The demons that torment this woman
will turn your place to dust! If
you care nothing for her soul--

RIVKA

Lilith never hurt anyone that
didn't hurt her first!

(then)

...Mostly. She has these spells.
We let her be and then she's sweet
as an angel again.

CRASH! This one LOUDER -- and more damaging -- than the
others. Rivka sees red. Her facade cracks a little --

RIVKA (CONT'D)

Curse it all, Lil!

(ready to deal)

You can put an end to this?

The question catches Nicodemus off guard. As if he
momentarily forgot this rests on his shoulders.

He catches himself staring at Rivka.

NICODEMUS

We must hurry.

The Centurions hold a battering ram, three to a side.

CENTURION #1

One-two--

CRASH. The door FLIES off its hinges.

The Romans PULL BACK quickly, PART to allow --

Nicodemus through. He approaches swinging a thurible with each metered step, wafting the smoke of incense.

He is swallowed by the dark room. Shmuel and Yussif cautiously follow to the doorway but no farther.

25 INT. LILITH'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

25

The dark room in ruin. Walls stained. Bed flipped. Everything breakable broken.

Nicodemus moves slowly through the space. Incense smoke wafting, he commands in monotone --

NICODEMUS

I adjure you, by the holy angels
Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel,
and Reziel, by 72 names I adjure
you, cursed dragon and all
diabolical legions, come out!

Amidst a pile of bedding, he sees MOVEMENT through the smoke.

Nicodemus can make out a figure in fetal position -- LILITH. She looks at once frail and menacing. Sweating, writhing.

Lilith suddenly turns with purpose. Casts a COLD STARE directly at Nicodemus.

He SHUDDERS visibly. Shaken.

AT THE DOORWAY Shmuel is shocked to see fear in Nicodemus.

Lilith coughs, wheezes, and shakes violently as if very cold. Her eyes never leave his. It's all Nicodemus can do to continue --

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

I adjure you, spawn of Beelzebul!
Abbadon! And Sheol! By the
utterance of the watchers and the
holy ones--

Lilith WAILS.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)
...by the name of Adonai, God of
the Heavens, cease to deceive this
human creature!

Nicodemus cautiously, swings the thurible, inching closer to
her, getting the smoke in her face.

He makes a third and final appeal, very dramatic --

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)
I command you, in covenant with
Abraham and the names of Isaac,
Jacob, Moses and all-powerful El-
Shaddai...

Lilith WRITHES in agony, the words dagger.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)
(emboldened)
...**BEGONE** every impure spirit!
Every satanic power! Every
onslaught of the infernal
adversary! **FLY FROM THIS INNOCENT
SOUL!!!**

Lilith CRIES OUT -- an unholy, inhuman BELLOW. Her body
SPASMS until...she is still.

AT THE DOOR, Shmuel breathes again. Exchanges a hopeful look
with Yussif.

Nicodemus does not take his eyes from Lilith. Inching
closer. Closer. Closer...when --

She LURCHES at Nicodemus. Within an inch of his face before
he can react.

She goes to speak --

SEVEN VOICES
We're not afraid of you.

The voices of SEVEN MEN intertwined, unnatural and tortured
issue from Lilith's vacant face.

Nicodemus LEAPS back terrified.

SEVEN VOICES (CONT'D)
You have no power here, teacher...

In mortal terror, Nicodemus drops the thurible and flees the
room. OVER HIS SHOULDER -- Another plate crashes.

Nicodemus doesn't slow. Through the doorway, he staggers out of her room, gripped by fear. Finally stumbles into --

SHMUEL. He locks eyes with Nicodemus. A beat between them before Nicodemus turns to go --

NICODEMUS
We're finished here.

Yussif looks to Shmuel, expectantly. Shmuel looks away, unable to hide his surprise and disappointment --

FADE OUT:

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

26 EXT. RED DISTRICT - ALLEY - MORNING 26

Lilith wakes with a start amidst trash and refuse in an alleyway. Confusion and fear giving way to sadness.

Lilith bows her head and WEEPS.

27 EXT. RED DISTRICT - SIDE STREET - LATER 27

Lilith slinks down a side street. She glances over her shoulder for anyone following, then heads up the steps back at Rivka's.

28 INT. LILITH'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS 28

Lilith enters her room. We see it more clearly now.

The room is sparse but lived in. A WOODEN DOLL, worn smooth from hands and years, sits prominently on her mantle.

A bucket contains some water -- enough to wet a linen. She wipes at her cheek. Only when the dirt and blood come off can we tell how truly dirty she is.

The sight of blood affects Lilith. She trembles. TEARS well in her eyes as the fear comes flooding back. She falls into a seat.

BELLS TOLL in the distance. The sounds of coughing from down the hall. Lilith LISTENS and the COUGHING MERGES into --

A MEMORY:

28A INTERCUT WITH: 28A

Lilith as Little Girl is led into a BEDROOM with Omar on it, coughing what is clearly his final breaths. Little Girl's mother is drying her eyes.

Lilith bites her lip, fearful.

Little Girl is led out of the bedroom as a sheet is laid over Omar's head, and the door closes behind her.

BACK TO SCENE.

28B Lilith clutches her head as she PITCHES forward out of her chair. Blinding pain has her. She holds out her hand to steady herself, it TREMORS violently.

Lilith takes the doll from her mantle and TWISTS -- it's a container.

Inside, her fingers find a small piece of parchment. She unrolls it, READING as the words come into focus --

LILITH
(tremendous effort)
Thus...says the Lord who...created
you, O Jacob...and He who formed
you...O Israel: Fear not--

Lilith is distracted by movement outside her window. She sees a ROMAN HELMET, including the RED PLUME at the top.

A bolt of PAIN shoots through her skull. Lilith REELS.

A MEMORY:

28C INTERCUT WITH:

28C

A TEEN LILITH walks alone in the marketplace, and a LEERING ROMAN stares at her. She is clearly shaken, and she tries to hustle away. CU ON his hand as he grabs her. *

Present day Lilith grips her face, shakes her head.

The leering guard tosses her onto a BED, and we see FLASHES of imagery -- his demonic eyes, the red plume of his helmet, her terrified face. As this happens, DARKNESS overtakes her-- literally. It is clear the guard is not only blocking light; he is bringing darkness.

A beat and present-day Lilith tries again --

LILITH (CONT'D)
Fear not, for I have redeemed...

But the pain is too great. The words offer no relief.

Lilith SCREAMS in anger. She RIPS the parchment in two, in four. THROWS the bits.

Finally, Lilith collapses, overcome.

CUT TO:

29 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CAPERNAUM - DAY 29

An exhausted, unshaven Simon walks along a dusty road in a working class neighborhood on the edge of the city.

He passes NEIGHBORS in their shabbat clothes. Nods to them sheepishly.

30 INT. SIMON'S HOUSE - DAY 30

Simon enters the small home as quietly as possible. He removes his shoes as he enters, searching for signs of...

EDEN (20s) appears out of nowhere. Eden is a small woman of Sephardic heritage with olive skin and a shock of dark locks piled on her head. Her ACCENT is thicker than Simon's. *

Eden stares at Simon, face contorted with anger. *

EDEN *

Simon!

A deer in headlights.

SIMON

Oh. Hello, love.

EDEN *

Don't you--Why did you beat up Jehosaphat? *

SIMON *

What? *

EDEN *

My own brother! *

SIMON

He attacked ME! AGAIN!

EDEN *

He needs to know the husband of his sister is strong. But Andrew had no right to jump Abraham from behind! *

Simon is incredulous.

SIMON

Where are you getting this--

Eden bursts out laughing. *

EDEN

My brothers. They are fantastic storytellers, no?

*

SIMON

Tellers of fantastic stories. Yes, they are.

EDEN

They went into such great detail -- I knew you must have really given them a pounding.

*

SIMON

Yeah. Well...I was doing okay. 'Til Abe came out of nowhere.

Eden laughs, picturing the whole thing. It's a little psychotic but cute.

*

EDEN

I knew it! They have to cheat.

*

SIMON

They did cheat. Cost Andrew and me a lotta money.

EDEN

No! They shouldn't cheat you like that when you are also cheating!

*

Simon surrenders.

*

SIMON

All right, all right. Pardon me for saying so, love, but your--

*

*

EDEN

Don't!

*

SIMON

What?

EDEN

Don't say my family is troubled in the mind, Simon.

*

SIMON

Okay?

EDEN

We're colorful. And fun. You are stoic and purposeful.

*

SIMON
You think I'm stoic?

EDEN
Well...compared to me.

Simon agrees.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Together... we're perfection.

Simon can't argue with that. He takes her in his arms.

SIMON
Stoic, huh? Never heard that
before...I like it.

They kiss.

SIMON (CONT'D)
You and me. Fire and water.

EDEN
I like it.

SIMON
How was Eema's shabbat dinner?

EDEN
It was lovely. How was fishing?

Uh oh.

SIMON
What?

EDEN
Yesterday's catch. Good news?

SIMON
Yes, I pulled something in. Could
be big.

EDEN
(walking away)
Good. Let's go to synagogue, go
change, you still smell.

Simon's mind is miles away, racing.

CUT TO:

31 EXT. THE HAMMER - LATE AFTERNOON

31

Lilith stands before an inconspicuous wooden door on a dead end street.

Lilith raps on the door using a secret knock: long-long-short-short-long.

A beat. In the light of day, she's visibly diminished, haggard and gaunt.

The door OPENS a crack and she utters the password.

LILITH
(low voice)
Chaverim Maqqaba.

The door opens far enough for her to slip through.

32

INT. THE HAMMER - CONTINUOUS

32

This secret tavern/apothecary is called The Hammer, so named for Judas "The Hammer" Maccabeus, a legendary Jewish zealot who led the Maccabean revolt during the intertestamental period.

The place is dimly lit. GAMBLERS are hunched over games of dice and knucklebones at tables spread across the main floor.

Along one wall, rows of POTABLES, POTIONS, and HERBS.

But it's the ancient bar that dominates the space and is The Hammer's real draw.

SOL (40s), an African eunuch cum bartender, spots Lilith from behind the bar.

SOL
Lili! You're alive.

He races to greet her.

SOL (CONT'D)
We heard there was trouble.

LILITH
I can't stay.

Sol catches her meaning as Lilith clutches at the back of her head. He sets to making a drink for her.

SOL
(re his ingredients)
Fresh off the boat, from Cypress.

The smell of the drink Sol prepares reaches Lilith. She protests.

LILITH
No, no... I can't. I don't have
the strength.

SOL
Come now. You know what they say --
a mug of prevention...

LILITH
There's no preventing this, Sol.
And there's no cure.

SOL
C'mon, Lili--

LILITH
It's getting worse. Yesterday,
they brought in a holy man.
Someone important -- maybe even
from Jerusalem. I only remember
pieces, flashes.

SOL
A Pharisee?

LILITH
A leader of Pharisees. And he ran
away in *TERROR*, Sol.

SOL
One religious big shot's as full of
it as the next. It's no--

LILITH
I'm in hell!

Gamblers TURN at the outburst. Lilith shrinks, self-conscious --

SOL
I'm sorry.
(indicating his potion)
Please...just try.

Lilith manages a genuine, warm smile. She places her hand over Sol's in a loving gesture. Then remembers --

LILITH

I brought you something.

From her bundle, Lilith retrieves her wooden doll/container, now empty. Sol regards the doll with humble gratitude.

SOL

You didn't have to--

LILITH

It's for your nephew. One of your nephews.

SOL

Thank you. Looks like it was loved for a very long time.

LILITH

It used to hold something valuable... I don't need it anymore.

Doll aside --

SOL

You're starting to scare me, Lil.

LILITH

You and everyone else.

She rubs her temple, exhausted.

Sol serves her the murky drink in a steaming clay cup.

She DRINKS and smiles weakly.

LILITH (CONT'D)

It's terrible. Thank you.

Lilith smiles as a tear rolls down her cheek -- impossible to tell if it's joy or despair.

LILITH (CONT'D)

There's something I need to do.

Sol catches her meaning. He knows his options to persuade her are limited.

Meanwhile, a pair of DRUNK PATRONS step up to the rail.

PATRON (O.S.)

Eunuch!

SOL

(staying with Lilith)

You listen good, now -- you're gonna drink that up. And the next one, and the next after that. You're gonna stay here 'til you feel alright or 'til hell comes and if it does...we'll face it together.

Lilith gives him a long, fond look -- a goodbye.

LILITH

Not if you were my worst enemy.

PATRON (O.S.)

We're thirsty here, eunuch!

Sol shakes his head. He turns away from her, moves off to serve the drunks.

STAY ON Lilith. Her eyes are fixed on a distant horizon as if gathering strength, determination.

Lilith drains the remainder of her drink, sets the cup and turns to go as we --

MATCH CUT TO:

33 INT. NICO'S HOUSE - MAGIC HOUR

33

ZOHARA turns from her wardrobe to Nicodemus. He STARES into a glass that returns only a dim reflection.

ZOHARA

We'll be late to dinner.

NICODEMUS

(rubbing his eyes)

I know.

Zohara starts draping him with various vestal garments.

ZOHARA

You did everything you could for her. Now put it out of your mind.

NICODEMUS

I will never forget what I saw.

ZOHARA

Tonight you are an honored guest.
The leaders will expect you to
perform, and to have your wits
about you.

NICODEMUS

Why must I perform? First I
perform for Quintus--

ZOHARA

You taught God's law--

NICODEMUS

...Then a failed performance for
Romans and slum dwellers. What
performance is this? When did the
Sabbath become theater?

Zohara regards him with mild disgust and amusement, as one
might a rash child.

She won't even deign to give his silly question an answer --

ZOHARA

You are the Teacher of Israel. You
do not have questions, you have
answers. You have authority. You
bring clarity, not confusion.

Nicodemus looks into the dim, hazy mirror.

NICODEMUS

Look at yourself in this mirror,
Zohara. Come!

Zohara is unflappable. She strolls, leisurely, to the
mirror. Stands alongside her husband.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Tell me what you see.

Dismissive --

ZOHARA

It's a cheap glass. I can barely
make anything out.

NICODEMUS

Some days I wonder if what we can
know about Adonai in the Law is
just as blurred. What if we're not
seeing the whole picture?

(MORE)

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

What if it's more beautiful and
more strange than we can even
imagine?

A long beat. A SHARP BREATH is the only indication of her
annoyance as she explains, coolly --

ZOHARA

That's the most ridiculous thing
I've ever heard. It might even be
blasphemy.

NICODEMUS

(back to Earth)
It's just a thought...

ZOHARA

And you won't ever utter those
thoughts in public.

Nicodemus is unused to demands -- but Zohara is no ordinary
mate. She is partner and, in some ways, CEO of Nicodemus'
whole enterprise.

NICODEMUS

A man is free to inquire in his
heart, Zohara.

ZOHARA

(applying lip dye)
So, leave it in your heart. This
is a serious engagement. They
expect an erudite teacher, not a
doubting, blaspheming fool.

NICODEMUS

Others saw what happened in the Red
Quarter.

ZOHARA

What did they see? You rose to
your rank on merit. You've
dedicated your life's work to serve
God -- not to become Him.

NICODEMUS

(mind racing)
What if they already suppose me to
be weak and a fraud?

ZOHARA

Stop it! It was a mistake to be
there in the first place. From now
on, you stick to the academy.

(MORE)

ZOHARA (CONT'D)

Leave exorcism to the exorcists.

Nicodemus is heartened, at least there may be a way to save face --

NICODEMUS

Yes. I should never have been there.

ZOHARA

You spoke the words, the demon did not respond.

NICODEMUS

Demons. Many. And only God himself could have drawn them out.

She throws a shawl over her shoulders and heads toward the door.

Nicodemus remains, staring intently into the glass. LOST in his reflection.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Only God himself.

Zohara beckons him from the threshold.

ZOHARA

Nico!

NICODEMUS

I'm coming.

Nicodemus pushes away from the looking glass. He joins his wife, takes her by the hand.

FADE TO BLACK:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

- 34 EXT. CAPERNAUM - MORNING 34
- Sunrise over the city. Tall shadows against brilliant, weather-beaten stone buildings and homes.
- In the distance, sea and sky merge into a single smooth, blue mass.
- 35 EXT. ALLEY - MORNING 35
- Matthew stands at the end of the filthy trash strewn alleyway.
- Once again, Matthew's sandals are ruined. But he pays them no mind -- he has bigger fish to fry. Driver is nowhere in sight.
- Matthew LOOKS left, right. After a beat, he sets his jaw and begins a lonely, perilous walk.
- 36 EXT. ANDREW'S HOUSE - MORNING 36
- Andrew opens his front door and sighs nervously. He TUCKS a change purse into his tunic and turns to go.
- 37 INT. SIMON'S HOUSE - MORNING 37
- Simon looks in on a peacefully sleeping Eden from the next room. He looks like he hasn't slept a wink.
- Through a window, he spots Andrew approaching.
- Simon grabs his things and LOOKS IN at Eden one last time. He decides against rousing her and EXITS.
- 38 EXT. HEBREW SCHOOL - AMPITHEATER - MORNING 38
- Nicodemus sets up his lectern at the head of a large auditorium.

BACKSTAGE, Shmuel stands by when TWO ELDERS enter. He sees them look at Nicodemus and clearly react with disdain.

ON SHMUEL, clearly TORN. His respect for Nicodemus is shaken -- but he can't suffer the demeaning of his teacher.

39 EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - MORNING

39

Lilith stands on the precipice of a cliff on the sea shore. The VIEW is spectacular from fifty feet.

She closes her eyes and breathes deeply. A beat and she holds her FIST out in front of her.

As she opens her hand, torn pieces of parchment SCATTER on the breeze. Suddenly, DARKNESS passes over her --

Lilith's eyes flick open, terrified, only to realize it was the shadow of a DOVE flying overhead.

She strains to follow the bird with her eyes as it flies lazily overhead, drawing her AWAY from the sea.

SIMON (PRE-LAP)
How much do you trust me?

40 EXT. CAPERNAUM STREET - DAY

40

Simon and Andrew walk and talk through the city. Andrew gives Simon a look. "That an odd question."

ANDREW
With my life.

SIMON
Let me talk to the tax man.

ANDREW
I don't trust you that much.

SIMON
What if I told you I could save the boat and put us back in good standing?

ANDREW
Nope.

SIMON
You don't even know what I'm gonna say.

ANDREW

Don't care. It's something foolish. And I'm finally ready to face this.

SIMON

This affects me, too. Me and Eden.

ANDREW

Maybe you should think of that the next time you feel like taking off for a week.

Simon reacts. Can't believe Andrew went there.

SIMON

That is so like you...

ANDREW

Or play knucklebones at The Hammer. Or cheat your brothers-in-law for some *easy scratch!*

SIMON

I met a guy.

ANDREW

Really? Whoa. Get the papyrus -- Simon met a guy!

SIMON

Know what? Let's just go hand over our livelihood. I'm done.

ANDREW

You're done?

SIMON

As I'll ever be.

ANDREW

Good.

The brothers walk on in silence.

41

EXT. MATTHEW'S TAX BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

41

An ELDERLY WOMAN with a pronounced hunchback has just finished paying her tax.

Matthew's eyes follow her as she HOBBLER away. He betrays nothing but the act of watching her is revealing. At last --

MATTHEW

Next?

Andrew and Simon step up to the booth. Gaius stands guard nearby.

Andrew slides a receipt to Matthew under the grate -- a record of his last transaction.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Your last tribute was collected the first month of summer?

Andrew nods. Shoots Simon a nervous look.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Your account is therefore delinquent by...
(tabulating)
40 days. At a penalty rate of ten percent weekly...

While Matthew does the math, the numbers dawn on Andrew. Involuntarily --

ANDREW

Six weeks!

MATTHEW

(not looking up)
That's right. You're lucky not to be in jail.

Andrew's mind RACES ahead to foreclosures and homeless children and sickness and --

SIMON

Hey!

Simon jars Andrew from his spiral. Simon shrugs, "What's up?"

ANDREW

(aside)
He's saying 60 percent in penalties.

SIMON

What's that leave you with?

ANDREW

Simon, I came with about 60 percent of what I owe! I can't even pay the... We're ruined.

SIMON
Now it's "we?"

Matthew STAMPS a parchment tally of Andrew's tax bill.

MATTHEW
(impassive)
It's a high number. I say that
based on your tribute history and
future prospects. How do you
choose to square your account?

Andrew sheepishly hands his change purse to Matthew through
the steel bars. Matthew weighs the purse by feel --

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
Are there gems inside?

ANDREW
Just silver.

MATTHEW
Gold?

Andrew has to shake his head "no."

Andrew is in agony. Simon hates seeing him like this.

SIMON
Just open the purse.

MATTHEW
This will cover about half...of the
penalty balance.

ANDREW
Half the penalty?!

MATTHEW
My records indicate you filed for
an extension not once, not twice--

SIMON
He needed a couple extra days, man.

ANDREW
(sotto)
I'm ruined.

MATTHEW
Extended weeks compound at 15
percent.

Andrew runs his hands through his hair, frantic.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)
 As collateral, you've listed a
 fishing vessel and property at...

Andrew is barely holding it together. Simon can't take
 seeing him like this. He makes a SNAP DECISION --

SIMON
 Sorry, brother.
 (turning to Matthew)
 All right, listen up.

Matthew continues to search for the address of Andrew's home.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 What my brother didn't mention was
 our arrangement with Quintus.

Gaius REACTS with surprise at the name. He looks to --

Matthew's fingers slow then STOP, like a toy running out of
 power. He looks up from his work, LEANS FORWARD to really
 see Simon for the first time.

MATTHEW
 You have business with Quintus?

Simon nods. Andrew senses shifting sands but is clueless.

SIMON
 My brother's debt and a year
 gratis. For the both of us.

Matthew knows better than to scoff at Quintus' business --
 even when it sounds like a lie.

MATTHEW
 This will be verified with Quintus
 directly. If there's any
 inconsistency--

SIMON
 There won't be.

The men lock eyes. Simon's heart in his throat. Matthew's,
 too. He seems almost...jealous? Simon blinks first --

SIMON (CONT'D)
 Now can I get my brother's not-gold
 back, tax man?

MATTHEW
 This will be verified with Quintus.
 If you are misinformed--

SIMON
I know, I know, you'll see.

Matthew hands back the purse. After a beat --

MATTHEW
(acid)
Next?

Simon and Andrew walk away. Andrew, shell-shocked.

ANDREW
What just happened?

SIMON
Don't speak, just walk.

CUT TO:

42

EXT. HEBREW SCHOOL - AMPITHEATER - DAY

42

Nicodemus lectures to the capacity auditorium. All his charm and ease are back and on full display.

NICODEMUS
We are, after all, the keepers of
Adonai's traditions, yes?

AUDIENCE
Yes.

NICODEMUS
And very lively today...
(off AUDIENCE laughter)
His laws and commandments, too.
So, our lives *can* be marked by a
certain--
(stands up straight, chin
down, dour face)
--seriousness of purpose.

The audience LAUGHS at the impression. Nicodemus breaks character, all charisma.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)
But we're not glum. Leave that to
the Saducees.
(laughter)
(MORE)

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

In the scroll of the prophet
Isaiah, Adonai says to Israel: "I
will make you a light for the
nations, that my salvation may
reach to the ends of the earth."
How can the Sadducees fulfill
Israel's role as a light to the
nations when they keep aloof from
the common people? The Messiah,
when he comes, will judge them
harshly for their high-minded
isolation and indifference.

Among the sea of STUDENTS, a HAND goes up, sharply.

Nicodemus stops in his tracks, startled. He knows ALL can
see the hand, standing out like a fly in milk.

He covers his surprise with amusement.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Speaking of opportunities for
connection... You have a question
that cannot wait even a moment
longer, young man?

A STUDENT stands. If we paid close attention, we might
RECOGNIZE him from the Torah Room as one of Shmuel's...

STUDENT

Yes, teacher.

NICODEMUS

By all means, scratch the itch.

Student swallows hard. A deep breath and --

STUDENT

You spoke of the virtues of being a
light to the nations, Teacher.

NICODEMUS

Indeed.

STUDENT

Some have...heard talk of an
incident in the Red District.

A collective GASP from the students. Some Pharisee TEACHERS
exchange outraged LOOKS, others smirk and stare at Nicodemus.
Well?

One TEACHER rises, turns to SEE who the Student is. A low
rumble of WHISPERS threatens order...

ON NICODEMUS doesn't bat an eye. He is nothing if not thorough. Prepared for this moment. He surprises everyone when he responds --

NICODEMUS

Thank you for your question, brave, young man.

The murmurs CEASE. Silence rules. All eyes on Nicodemus.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Some are pretending they didn't have the same question.

(smiles)

Your first thought might be that I shouldn't have set my foot in the Red District at all. I would say that is probably correct, we often make decisions in haste in our desire to correct a lost soul. But...how to explain what happened when I was there? Brothers, when we follow God's law to the letter, He is alive through us. As surely as I stand before you, God lives through my deeds. Would you agree, pupil?

STUDENT

Yes, Rabbi.

NICODEMUS

And He lives through you if you heed His law.

(pointing)

And you. And you. We dedicate our lives to His law, and God becomes the center of our lives. Now, imagine -- if you can -- one that heeded only wickedness for a lifetime.

SILENCE as the students consider the unthinkable.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Demons root in wicked souls as pigs in filth. A possession like this is fatal. And souls such as hers are, sadly, beyond all human aid.

And like that, the room is FLIPPED back to Nicodemus' side -- perhaps more fervently than ever before.

APPLAUSE starts to build for the Teacher of Teacher's response.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)
 (to Student)
 You may take your seat.

ON STUDENT as he sits, GLANCES at Shmuel. NODS as if to say, "I've done as you asked." Shmuel NODS back. Then TURNS to--

ON NICODEMUS on stage, DEFERRING the applause. He GLANCES at Shmuel who REPEATS THE STUDENTS ACTION --

ON SHMUEL nodding, "I've done as you asked."

Almost imperceptibly, Nicodemus NODS BACK. He set the whole thing up.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)
 Let's continue, shall we?

CUT TO:

43 INT. THE HAMMER - DAY

43

Happy hour at The Hammer and the joint is jumping.

Though PATRONS are lined up two deep at the rail, somehow Simon and Andrew have managed a table to themselves.

Throughout the exchange, Simon will pause to acknowledge a greeting, as he's clearly popular there, but they stay mostly focused and quiet.

Neither is drinking yet, too keyed up from their encounter with Matthew. As in response to a question --

SIMON
 Fishing didn't exactly go like I planned the other night.

ANDREW
 What's that gotta do with--

SIMON
 I caught nothing. Net after net after net... Empty.

SIMON (CONT'D)
 I catch a breeze around the point and all of sudden I know why the nets are empty...

44 EXT. GALILEAN SEA - NIGHT [FLASHBACK] 44

Simon stands at the boat's bow, looking out at--

SIMON (OVER)
A merchant fleet. Six boats
across. Netting everything.

Fishing boats TRAWLING in precise formation.

ANDREW (OVER)
What'd you do?

45 INT. THE HAMMER - DAY 45

Simon takes a drink, shrugs.

SIMON
I followed 'em. Thought maybe I'd
catch 'em sleeping, snatch a net
during clean out, but -- didn't
work.

ANDREW
Of course it didn't.

SIMON
Desperate times... I even anchored
and swam in thinking maybe I'd get
scraps.

Simon shakes his head in defeat.

46 EXT. GALILEAN SEA / SHORE - NIGHT [FLASHBACK] 46

Simon wades in the shallows, watching --

ON SHORE, a crew of MEN clean and pack the fish in Barrels.

SIMON (OVER)
They loaded up like clockwork. Had
carts with mules ready to move.

Men LOAD the barrels onto a waiting flatbed cart.

ON SIMON awed by the size of the operation.

47 INT. THE HAMMER - DAY 47

Andrew is taken aback by Simon's story.

SIMON

So, I sail home, dock up, and--
(chuckles)
--wouldn't you know it? This
sniveling Roman standing on shore.
Couldn't believe it, they never
bother patrolling on Shabbat.

ANDREW

No, no, no.

SIMON

Yes, yes, yes. I didn't even
bother trying to run...

ANDREW

Good idea, considering how you run.

48 EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

48

A ROMAN CAPTAIN turns Simon around and starts the process of
tying his hands. Simon's mind is clearly racing.

SIMON (OVER)

Anyway... as he approaches me, I'm
trying to figure out why he's even
there. They don't care about any
of our rules, but then I realized --
they don't get the tax because we
don't report any Shabbat catches.
I figure I have nothing to lose,
and they gain nothing from me.

Simon turns to face the Patrolman.

49 INT. THE HAMMER - CONTINUOUS

49

SIMON

So I tell him if he took me
straight to Quintus, I'd let them
know who caught more in one night
than the guy they're arresting
catches in a week.

Andrew puts the pieces together.

ANDREW

You offered to turn in fishermen?

SIMON

Not fishermen -- merchants. And
guess who walks up behind me.

Andrew stares.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Guess.

ANDREW

I...don't--

50 EXT. GALILEAN SHORE - NIGHT 50

Peter turns to face Quintus, who gives his trademark smirk.

51 INT. THE HAMMER - CONTINUOUS 51

SIMON

Quintus! He's thorough, I guess.
We talked, and yes, what I said to
Matthew was real.

ANDREW

I don't like it. It's dangerous.

SIMON

So is sleeping outside. Besides,
what's a merchant ever done for
you?

ANDREW

So what? They're our people.

SIMON

We're clearing the way for the
little guy--

ANDREW

WE?

SIMON

--leveling the playing field.
Yeah, WE!

ANDREW

You will be cursed if you inform on
them. WE'RE not doing anything.

SIMON

Fine, Andrew. That's fine. Better
get moving though if ya wanna catch
the tax man. Might even be enough
daylight to get your kids out of
the house before they take it.

Simon STANDS abruptly and STOMPS off toward the bar. Andrew POUNDS his fist on the table in frustration.

After a beat, he chases after Simon.

CUT TO:

52 EXT. ROMAN AUTHORITY - DAY

52

A long, busy thoroughfare lined with merchant stalls and traversed by every conceivable mode of transportation, sits --

The Roman Authority, the headquarters for Roman bureaucrats and military officers.

A long, low building in contrasting Roman style to that of its neighbors, the R.A. is also home to the region's treasury.

With Gaius at his side, Matthew braves the pedestrian traffic carrying his LEDGER and the day's COLLECTION.

As they approach the FORTIFIED front entrance --

MATTHEW

I must see Quintus immediately.

GAIUS

If those Hebrew sea rats were lying, Quintus will have them killed and collect their tribute -- from you.

Matthew deflates. As they MOUNT the steps leading to the R.A., PULL UP AND OUT to SEE:

DOZENS of similar duos -- Soldier and Tax Collector -- mounting the stairs. HIGHER, we SEE HUNDREDS coming from all corners of the city, feeding the Roman machine. As we RISE--

CUT TO:

53 EXT. THE HAMMER - MAGIC HOUR

53

Lilith staggers along the street outside the wooden door of The Hammer. Her face cast upward, eyes fixed on the sky.

Suddenly, Simon hustles by, angry, followed a moment later by Andrew, who bumps into Lilith but keeps moving.

Lilith is not even aware of others. Her eyes trained skyward, never turning from something only she can see.

She does the knock on the door of The Hammer again.
The door OPENS a crack and she utters the password.

LILITH
Chaverim Maqqaba.

CUT TO:

54

INT. THE HAMMER

54

Lilith sits at the bar, exhausted, and lowers her head. Sol approaches.

SOL
So did it work?

She looks up. It clearly didn't. He gives a parental sigh.

SOL (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, Lilith.

A PATRON next to her turns, then does a double take.

PATRON
Lilith?

She raises her eyebrows.

PATRON (CONT'D)
I've heard good things about you.

LILITH
Hm?

He edges closer.

PATRON
Yes. We should...talk.

Lilith sinks.

LILITH
Leave me alone.

PATRON
Or what, you'll scratch me, too?

SOL
Come on, not now.

PATRON
Sol, she's --

SOL

Not now.

Sol indicates for him to go away. The Patron shakes his head as he leaves.

PATRON

She smells anyway.

A pause. Lilith looks down, hand over her eyes.

SOL

I don't know what else I can do to help you.

Lilith indicates towards one of his jugs.

LILITH

Give me that. Lots of it.

SOL

That's not going to solve your problems. It's meant to distract from them.

LILITH

No more preaching. Just give it to me.

SOL

Lilith, you shouldn't --

LILITH

Please.

He sighs, pours. As she reaches --

A MAN'S HAND covers hers.

MAN

Don't.

She snaps her head towards him.

LILITH

I said to leave --

It's not the patron. The man smiles with his eyes.

MAN

That's not for you.

She starts to speak but suddenly grimaces and yanks her hand from his, pressing her palm to her temple, as though a migraine has struck.

LILITH
Don't touch me.

SOL
Are you okay?

She stands up, grabs her cup, backs away.

LILITH
I need to go.
(to the man)
Leave me alone.

She stumbles off, still clutching her head. The man stares at her, and as she heads towards to the door, we see him start to follow.

CUT TO:

55 EXT. THE HAMMER - EVENING

55

Lilith stumbles into the alleyway, where she takes a quick swig. She stumbles more, and as she turns out of the alleyway onto a street, she looks back. The man exits as well. She gasps and accelerates.

He follows onto the street, and she gets more frantic as he gets closer.

LILITH
Please, leave me!!!

He stops. Then, quietly, but somehow with authority...

MAN
Mary.

She freezes. Her cup falls, and clay and drink crash on the ground. For a moment, her pain seems to pause as well.

MAN (CONT'D)
Mary of Magdala.

Mary cannot speak. She trembles. She slowly turns to face him, and Jesus looks at her with a different kind of affection than she's ever experienced.

She wants to laugh, jump, kick, and cry but can only manage a weak:

MARY

Who...

Jesus steps towards her...

JESUS

Thus says the Lord who created
you...and he who formed you:

As he gets closer, her tears fall, but his pace, and his look
of love, don't change.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Fear not, I have redeemed you. I
have called you by name.

He lifts his hands towards her, and her shock turns back to a
mix of fear and pain. She recoils as he reaches her and
firmly takes her face in his hands.

JESUS (CONT'D)

You are mine.

Everything stops. She slumps and exhales, and it's as if
everything "Lilith" goes away.

She cries as only one who feels safe for the first time can,
as we --

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE

THE CHOSEN

Episode #108

"I Am He"

written by

Ryan M. Swanson &
Dallas Jenkins &
Tyler Thompson

PINK draft
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TEASER

501

EXT. JERUSALEM - STEET - DAY

501

An average side street in a maze-like city. The midday heat is scorching, air dusty. MERCHANTS outside shops don't even try to solicit a rare PASSERBY.

MARY MOTHER (late 20s) rounds the corner, desperate. She's dirty and exhausted. Her stride halting. Out of breath. She looks like she'll collapse any second. She heads straight for a MERCHANT.

MARY MOTHER

Please! Have you seen --

Mary slumps in exhaustion, leans on a post near the Merchant, who steps back to avoid them touching.

MERCHANT

Why are you alone, woman?

MARY MOTHER

(unexpected strength)

My son! He's only 12, he's --

MERCHANT

I see kids all over.

(hands up)

It's Jerusalem. You from here?

MARY MOTHER

No, we came for the Passover Feast.

We thought he was in the caravan.

MERCHANT

The feast was three days ago!

Without even the energy to move, still bracing herself against a post, she cries out --

MARY MOTHER

JESUS?!?!!

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Mary?!

Mary doesn't move, too weak to have her hopes dashed again.

A lithe figure approaches. Standing just out of focus --

JESUS

Eema?

(CONTINUED)

Mary spins around, and sees JOSEPH (40s) and JESUS (12) rounding a corner.

And the light comes on. And Mary is aglow -- a mother reunited with her lost son. She rushes to them and practically collapses at Jesus' feet.

MARY MOTHER

(sobbing)

We looked everywhere. Day and night. We were so scared.

JOSEPH

I told him. He's okay.

JESUS

Why is everyone so upset?

JOSEPH

Mary, he was in the --

MARY MOTHER

(a wave of a mom's anger)

You were supposed to ride in the caravan with Uncle Abijah!

JESUS

I was supposed to be with my father.

MARY MOTHER

Then why weren't you?!

JESUS

I was.

Mary freezes. She looks at Joseph. He tilts his head behind him towards --

REVEAL: THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE, towering behind the wall.

MARY MOTHER

You were IN the temple?

Joseph, reeling with a different energy than his wife. He seems almost rejuvenated. Marveling --

JOSEPH

It was incredible, Mary. He was teaching when I found him. Rabbis, scribes, scholars... They could not believe their ears. They barely let us leave.

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

Didn't you know I must be in my
father's house?

The words take Mary's breath away. Jesus' earnest little
face.

MARY MOTHER

It's too early for all...
(indicates the temple)
This.

JESUS

If not now, when?

Mary and Joseph glance at each other and give a "who the h
knows?" look.

Mary bends down, her face close to Jesus.

JESUS POV - Mary's face nearly fills the frame.

MARY MOTHER

Just help us get through all this
WITH you. Please.

Jesus NODS understanding.

JOSEPH

Maybe we should get going before
they make a formal inquiry.
(chuckles)
Jesus -- please don't do that
again.

JESUS

Yes, Abba.
(then, hopeful)
May I read?

JOSEPH

We'll see. Come on, now. We've
got a long journey.

AD-LIBBED family discussion as they recede from view.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

502 FADE IN ON: 502

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX

DISSOLVE TO:

503 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - ESTABLISHING - DAWN 503

SUPER: CANA, GALILEE A.D. 30

An ancient but modest stone synagogue tucked into a grove of mature olive trees at the edge of a semi-arid, rolling plain.

504 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - FRONT DOOR - DAWN 504

DINAH (40s), in a modest frock, face framed by long braids of raven black hair, kneels before the stone doors of the Cana Synagogue. She prays.

505 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER 505

Dinah crosses the courtyard. She looks deep in thought, tense. Her hands tightly clasped.

Then, as she steps along the cobbles, hears the CLICK of her sandals...she lightens up --

Dinah flashes an impish smile. And DANCES. Just a couple steps before she catches herself. She checks to see if anybody saw. All clear. With a skip step --

506 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER 506

Dinah watches from a distance as:

-- FEMALE SERVANT carries buckets of water on a yolk slung across her shoulders.

-- CARPENTER and his ASSISTANT assemble the ceremonial canopy (chuppah). Carpenter pounds nails.

-- Two MALE SERVANTS move tables into rows.

(CONTINUED)

MARY MOTHER (O.S.)

Dinah!

Startled, Dinah turns, searches for the voice. Face lighting up at --

MARY MOTHER (now 40s) approaches, walking a mule.

DINAH

Mary!

Dinah rushes to meet her.

EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Mary and Dinah embrace. Dinah inspects Mary as if afraid she'll vanish.

DINAH

What're you doing here?

MARY MOTHER

I heard someone is celebrating a marriage.

DINAH

I mean so early.

MARY MOTHER

I'm here to help.

Dinah looks like she might cry.

DINAH

All the way from Nazareth? You must've been riding in the dark...

MARY MOTHER

When your best friend is the mother of the groom, you'll show up early for the feast, too. Now, c'mon. Give me a broom or something.

Now Dinah does cry. Mary throws an arm around Dinah, wipes her friend's tears, and they walk toward the synagogue.

CUT TO:

John the Baptist emerges from the shadows looking as disheveled as his reputation. He regards the vaunted figure of Nicodemus standing outside the cell.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Miracles?

Now over the shock of John's appearance, Nicodemus quickly regains his composure. It's not the first time he's sat down with a zealot. He's good at this.

NICODEMUS

Yes, John. Signs and wonders.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

From who?

NICODEMUS

You.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Are you adding those to my list of infractions? Only a Pharisee. You would have labeled Moses a lunatic for talking to a shrub.

NICODEMUS

Do you consider yourself to be like Moses?

Nicodemus places a stool in front of the cell, takes a seat.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Tell me about your ministry.

After a hard look, as though it were a non-sequitur recollection --

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Remember when Caesar traveled through Judea?

NICODEMUS

Yes.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

They sent all these workers ahead of his caravan to clear logs and debris for the coming king. "Make straight the way for the king!" they'd shout. "Prepare the way!"

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS

The roads in Jerusalem don't have that problem, but yes, I remember...

JOHN THE BAPTIST

I had to move. Romans aren't kind to the homeless. Lost all my possessions.

NICODEMUS

Many in Jerusalem were frightened as well.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

(serve)

They were lucky to have you to comfort them. For a price, of course.

NICODEMUS

(volley)

Should we be clearing the road for you, John? Is that the point of your story?

John scoffs, disappointed.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

I don't like your frock. The cost of the vestments alone could feed three children in Nazareth for a month.

NICODEMUS

Do you hail from Nazareth?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Mm. And Samaria. And Jericho. Bethlehem, Jaffa, Hebron...

NICODEMUS

I see. Well, you've got a new home now.

(rising to his feet)

Whatever your mission was, I hope you've completed it.

John is silent. Until curiosity wins out.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

I thought you were here to ask about miracles.

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS

I wanted to first *tell* you about a miracle. One I've seen and cannot comprehend.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

And then to make accusations.

NICODEMUS

This is pointless. It's clear you're not a frothing madman, but you're just as unreasonable.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

You imprison me and then accuse me of being ill-tempered about it?

NICODEMUS

I am *not* your captor. Do you understand? This is a Roman cell. I came to speak to the warden on your behalf.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

On my behalf?

(scoffs)

Why are you really here, old man?

NICODEMUS

The official answer is that you're a Jewish citizen. If you've broken Jewish law, it sets a dangerous precedent to allow Rome to adjudicate.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

And the real answer?

Nicodemus retakes a seat on the stool. A thoughtful beat.

NICODEMUS

The truth is that I am far from home, and I am looking in places I would never go because...I am seeking an explanation for something I cannot un-see."

John is taken aback, as if sincerity were the strangest thing Nicodemus could have exhibited.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

(realizing as he speaks)

No one else knows you're here...

(CONTINUED)

Nicodemus indicates they do not. John's all ears for this.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)
Tell me from the beginning.

John leans in intently. Nicodemus lights up. As their conversation finally arrives at the good part, we --

CUT TO:

CLOSE-UP on the stone floor of a very small winepress.

BARE FEET enter the frame and a shower of grapes rains down, emptied from a sack.

WIDEN to reveal EDEN. She retrieves a second bag and empties it into the press -- a sunken, circular hole on a raised stone ledge.

SIMON enters the frame.

SIMON
Eden.

She turns. She exhales. There's love, but things aren't resolved.

SIMON (CONT'D)
We need to talk.

EDEN
So I hear.

SIMON
What have you heard?

EDEN
Nothing that makes sense.

Simon chuckles and nods.

EDEN (CONT'D)
Last night you told me the truth.
Let's continue with that.

Simon takes a deep breath. Might as well just--

SIMON
So I worked for hours last night
and couldn't even catch one fish.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SIMON (CONT'D)

And then Andrew and the boys showed up, thank you for that by the way, and none of us could catch one fish the entire night, it was horrible. And this morning, we finally gave up and went to shore, but there was this teacher on shore, and Andrew knew who he was but I'll talk about that later. He told me to cast one more time, which made no sense but I did it anyway, and then so many fish showed up they were pouring into the boat. So many kept coming that Zebedee ended up filling both our boats, enough to pay off the whole debt.

A pause. They stare at each other.

EDEN

I...uh...what?

SIMON

I know.

EDEN

Why don't you seem happy?

SIMON

This is hard to explain...

EDEN

More than what you just told me?

SIMON

It's like the story of Elijah and Elisha.

EDEN

Yes?

SIMON

Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and Elijah the prophet walked up and threw his cloak over him, a calling to follow him.

EDEN

And without delay Elisha slaughtered the oxen, burned his plow, and left everything behind.

SIMON

Yes!

(CONTINUED)

She looks at him expectantly.

SIMON (CONT'D)

The teacher...Andrew told me but I didn't believe him at first...He's the Messiah. I know it sounds impossible, but I saw it with my own eyes: he made boatfulls of fish appear out of nowhere, and the words he spoke. The one John told Andrew was the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. It was him. And then he called me to follow him. And Andrew, James, and John.

To go where he goes and learn from him. And he said I wouldn't be a fisherman anymore but that I would catch people instead. I don't even know what that means, but I am sure what I saw. He's the one we've been waiting for all our lives. And...I want to quit fishing and leave the sea behind to go.

Overcome, she covers her mouth and turns away sharply, trembling.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I know it makes no sense, and I knew it would make you upset, all I can tell you is--

EDEN

I'm not upset.

He doesn't understand.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Why would I be upset?

She turns to face him, her tear-streaked face twisted with emotion.

EDEN (CONT'D)

Come here.

He approaches, they meet at the edge of the winepress. She puts her hands on his face.

EDEN (CONT'D)

This is the man I married.
Of course he chose you.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

I don't know why he did. I tried to tell him I'm a sinful man.

EDEN

Everyone is sinful.

SIMON

I don't know what this means, I don't know yet how I'm going to provide.

EDEN

I don't care about that.

SIMON

Then why are you crying?

EDEN

Because someone finally sees in you what I've always seen -- you're more than a fisherman.

He leans his forehead against hers.

SIMON

I will travel sometimes, I don't want you to feel abandoned.

EDEN

You have to go with him. How could I feel abandoned? I feel saved!

SIMON

It's not going to be easy.

EDEN

(wiping tears away)
When have we ever had anything easy? That's not our people's way.

They manage a laugh. After a beat, she backs into the winepress and resumes stepping on the grapes...

EDEN (CONT'D)

So are you going to help me?

SIMON

I actually could watch you do that all day.

EDEN

(smiles)
Wash your feet.

(CONTINUED)

As he removes his sandals and wipes his feet...

SIMON
We leave for Cana today.

EDEN
What's in Cana?

SIMON
A wedding.

EDEN
What does a wedding have to do with
the liberation of Israel?

SIMON
I'm about to find out. But, c'mon,
don't you think our wedding was a
kind of...liberation?

They hold on to one another's forearms as they tread the
grapes in a methodical, grooving motion, a kind of dance.

EDEN
From your fear that I would be
bald.

SIMON
My father is nearly blind.

She moves in close, their feet treading nearly on top of each
other.

EDEN
Remember how cold it was?
(Simon shakes his head no)
Remember Andrew's toast?
(shakes his head)
Remember the Rabbi lost his place?
(maybe...no. He shakes
his head)
What?! He made everyone stand up
and *please be seated* twice in a
row. You don't remember?

Simon brushes hair out of her face. Brings his face closer --

SIMON
What I will remember for the rest
of my life is lifting your veil.

He kisses her forehead.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON (CONT'D)

I'd fight tigers for that memory.

EDEN

You'd fight tigers?

SIMON

Well, unless it was as cold as our wedding day, right before the sun came out and you got tangled in our chuppah.

EDEN

You DO remember!

He laughs mischievously through kisses as their feet intermingle in the grapes. You get the idea.

CUT TO BLACK.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

510 EXT. HOME BACK ENTRANCE - DAY

510

A donkey and cart are loaded up with crates, cheese wheels, sundry items, etc.. Throughout the scene, the caterer THOMAS (22) and his vintner, RAMAH (21), load the cart with the main attraction -- three amphorae (large ceramic jugs).

THOMAS

The lamb meat will be there before
or after we arrive?

RAMAH

After. They don't have a good place
to keep it so I didn't want it
there too early.

THOMAS

But are they going to show up --

RAMAH

With plenty of time for you to
roast it your way, yes, they
promised me.

As he adjusts one of the jars into place...

THOMAS

Wait, there's only three jars.

RAMAH

Yes, that's what they asked for.

THOMAS

Ramah, I'm very concerned we won't
be able to get all three all the
way to Cana intact. I told you we
needed four from your vineyard to
be safe.

RAMAH

And I told you the wedding family
can't afford it.

THOMAS

I would have paid you out of my own
pocket.

(CONTINUED)

RAMAH

Thomas. That would almost erase your whole margin, why would you do that?

THOMAS

(busted)

I-I mean, we're a team, right?

Thomas pulls back, afraid he's said too much. Thomas has a crush on Ramah. Has for a long time. It's mostly a one-sided thing. Mostly.

RAMAH

Well, I think everything will arrive perfectly intact, especially with how carefully you drive.

THOMAS

I just want to be certain that --

RAMAH

Thomas. It's going to be fine.

She stares at him. He sighs, then offers a slight smile.

CUT TO:

Dinah hugs Female Servant in gratitude and returns to --

Mary Mother, assembling strings of wildflowers at one of the tables nearby, smiles at the sight.

MARY MOTHER

I'm so happy you got some hired help. There's much to do.

DINAH

(re Female Servant)

Tirza? She wasn't hired, she's a neighbor.

MARY POV - Female servant scrubs the courtyard cobbles.

DINAH (CONT'D)

We couldn't afford anyone, so she volunteered -- on her only day off.

MARY MOTHER

And here I was, thinking how lucky you are to have me.

(CONTINUED)

DINAH

My son just married his love and
I'm surrounded by friends. Couldn't
be luckier.

MARY MOTHER

What's she like?

DINAH

Sarah is lovely and respectful and
just...wonderful. She loves Asher
more than life itself.

(air out of the balloon)

Her parents, Helah and Abner, are
not so convinced.

MARY MOTHER

About Abner?

DINAH

About Rafi and me as in-laws. The
father especially.

Mary offers a sympathetic nod. Been there.

DINAH (CONT'D)

But he's very successful. And
influential. Maybe it will be good
for the kids' future...

MARY MOTHER

You don't have to grovel to
anybody, Dinah. I'm sure they'll
come around.

Mary flashes an inspiring smile. Dinah nods agreement.

DINAH

I should go find Rafi.

As she goes, Mary's smile vanishes. Concern washes over her.

Simon and Andrew walk along a path in the countryside outside
Capernaum. Each man carries a pack lunch in his hands.

ANDREW

I do appreciate it. You heard me
tell Eden how grateful I was.

SIMON

I heard your words. But I also
watched your movements.

ANDREW

I don't know what to do with it! I
don't go on long trips. Do I hold
it like this? If I had a stick, I
could sling it over my shoulder.

SIMON

We'll see what the others do.

ANDREW

What if they didn't pack lunch?
Will we look stupid?
(freezing in his tracks)
What if it comes off as ungrateful?

SIMON

I don't know. Maybe it'll look
like we never traveled with The
Messiah before and we don't know
what we're doing!

The idea washes over them both, like a wave. Its enormity.
They walk on in silence.

Finally, at the top of a grassy knoll --

ANDREW

I'm a little nervous.

SIMON

Don't be nervous. If you're
nervous, I'll come on too strong.

ANDREW

Don't tell me *you're* not nervous.

SIMON

I said I was.

ANDREW

No, you said, if I'm nervous--

SIMON

I know what I said.
(a beat)
I don't want to let him down.

ANDREW

I don't want to do it wrong.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

C'mon, we'll probably both do it wrong. It's like fishing. Remember when dad taught us?

ANDREW

Dad didn't teach anything. We just sat there.

SIMON

And watched! And then it was our turn and we made our own mistakes.

Simon holds Andrew by the shoulders.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Can you believe this?

THADDEUS (O.S.)

Well, you guys are great. OW!

Simon and Andrew slowly turn to find THADDEUS rubbing his head where a fig just fell on it.

Also near by is MARY MAGDALENE, LITTLE JAMES, and JOHN. Simon and Andrew, both feeling about two inches tall --

SIMON

Hello.

ANDREW

Hello.

SIMON (CONT'D)

Have you been here long?

They nod.

LITTLE JAMES

Oh yeah.

JESUS (O.S.)

Perfect day for a wedding!

They all turn to see JESUS approaching, across the knoll.

SIMON

Master.

JESUS

Simon, Andrew, Mary, James, John and Thaddeus. But where is...

ON CUE, some figs FALL from above. Everyone looks up to SEE:

(CONTINUED)

512 CONTINUED: (3)

BIG JAMES high in the branches of the tree picking figs.

(CONTINUED)

BIG JAMES

Figs for the journey.

He TOSSES a few more. Jesus laughs.

JESUS

Ah! We won't even need to stop for lunch.

Simon and Andrew exchange looks, self conscious about their knapsacks. Big James drops from the tree.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Thank you, James.

LITTLE JAMES

Yes, master?

JESUS

Ahh, two Jameses. How will we solve this dilemma?

Assessing the hulking Big James and the diminutive Little.

BIG JAMES

What if...

(looking at Little James)

...I go by Big James?

JESUS

A radical solution. Is this acceptable to you, young James?

LITTLE JAMES

I think that's fair, master.

JESUS

And a sense of justice, too. Then it's settled. Now, to the road, friends. The bride and groom await!

ALL start walking. The men and Mary exchange intrigued, excited looks as we --

CUT TO:

LOOKING DOWN AT --

Mary Mother and Dinah stand side by side, LOOKING UP AT US from the courtyard.

(CONTINUED)

Mary's brow is creased in confusion.

MARY MOTHER

I think... I think it might be
just...a little...

Mary and Dinah both tilt their heads in the same direction.

YASMIN

Perfect.

MARY MOTHER (CONT'D)

Roomier on the one side.

REVERSE POV -- reveals a crooked canopy. Not comically
misshapen but unmistakably crooked.

DINAH

Yeah. No, it's perfect.
(testing it)
And sturdy.

MARY MOTHER

Let me speak with the carpenter. I
know their language.

DINAH

It will be okay. Will you help me
decorate it?

MARY MOTHER

Dinah, please. Let me do this for
you.

DINAH

I'll let you pick as many flowers
as you can carry, how's that?
(off her look)
Mary, I love you but Rafi and I got
what we paid for. I'm embarrassed
how few timbers we could offer.

MARY MOTHER

That's no reason to settle.

DINAH

Who's settling? It'll be perfect.

Mary is about to protest when --

DINAH (CONT'D)

There are many other things to do
today, Mary. You said so yourself.

Heartened by Dinah's optimism --

(CONTINUED)

MARY MOTHER
Always the bright side.

DINAH
(teasing)
Someone has to be.

Mary takes Dinah's face in her hands when --

Dinah SEES someone that makes all those good feels fade.

ANGLE ON -- HELAH (30s) enters the courtyard, eyes fixed on the chuppah.

In the parlance of our times, Helah is a trophy wife. Arm candy. Ready for The Real Housewives of Cana.

DINAH (CONT'D)
(to Mary)
Will you start on gathering more flowers?

MARY
Of course.

Mary heads to the nearby field. Dinah approaches --

DINAH
Hello, Helah.

HELAH
Dinah.

Helah bows. Dinah was ready to hug but follows her lead.

DINAH
I'm delighted to share this special day. Is Abner here? I'd love to tell Rafi...

HELAH
Abner sent me on ahead. He'll come with friends before the ceremony. He asked me to select his table.

DINAH
Well, we have arrangements...

HELAH
Abner likes things his way. I'm here to see that they are.

The passive aggression continues on both sides.

(CONTINUED)

DINAH

Even at our children's wedding
feast?

HELAH

(taken aback)

Dinah, Abner is set in his ways.
It's not personal.

DINAH

Well, it should be!

Dinah composes herself, regretting her decision to speak.

Her words haven't fallen on deaf ears. A kernel of hope --

HELAH

On certain important occasions,
I've been able to prevail on him.

DINAH

I hope this is important enough.

As Dinah turns to go --

HELAH

Dinah--

(Dinah turns back)

Sarah is unwavering in her love for
your family.

DINAH

We love Sarah...and her father *both*
very much.

HELAH

Sarah knows you do.

(a beat. Then, pointing)

The chuppah is crooked.

Dinah doesn't even look.

The group has been walking for hours, settled into a rhythm.

Simon watches Jesus from a few paces behind, snacking on
dates. Andrew catches a gleam in Simon's eye.

ANDREW

I know that look.

Simon hands Andrew his pack and catches up to Jesus.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

Master?

JESUS

Yes, Simon?

SIMON

I was thinking...

Andrew shoots him a look. Simon, pushes on --

SIMON (CONT'D)

If this wedding is worth the journey for you, who has so much to do, perhaps it is also worth the journey to many wealthy Jews.

JESUS

You believe important and powerful Hebrews may be there?

SIMON

Possibly.

JESUS

You are keen, Simon. In fact, the most important and powerful person I know will be there.

SIMON

Yeah?

JESUS

My mother.

ANDREW

But isn't your mother from Nazar--

Simon silences him with a brotherly SMACK.

SIMON

You should announce yourself to the guests, right? There will be no Romans, seems like the perfect place to gather more followers, get this whole thing moving.

Jesus breaks open a fig.

JESUS

It's not my special day. It's the special day of the couple, Asher and Sarah.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

They are blessed of all couples to have you at their wedding. Do they know what a remarkable thing it is?

JESUS

I was the clumsy teenager who cracked my head open at Asher's house when he was a child, I don't think he finds me remarkable. Do you think much of your childhood friends?

SIMON

He didn't have any.

ANDREW

That's not true!

SIMON

I stand corrected -- he had me. Compulsory service.

ANDREW

I don't remember kids exactly lining up around the block--

JESUS

(calling back)

Mary? Did you imagine having brothers would be like this?

MARY

I always wished for brothers as a little girl.

JESUS

Soon you shall have twelve. Then tell me how you like it.

ANDREW

Twelve?

JESUS

You'll see.

The disciples trade looks.

JESUS (CONT'D)

We're getting close now. Cana is just over the next rise.

(CONTINUED)

514 CONTINUED: (3)

Off Jesus' childlike enthusiasm --

CUT TO:

515 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - DAY

515

Wildflowers cascade from the *chuppah* and down each leg. If you weren't looking for it, you'd hardly know it was crooked.

Mary stands on a stool. Dinah on the ground below, handing Mary flowers to tuck into the vines.

MARY MOTHER

We *had* a wedding, it just wasn't like everyone else's.

DINAH

Why not?

MARY MOTHER

(mimes pregnancy)
You *know* why.

DINAH

I would have gone.

MARY MOTHER

I know. If Joseph were here today he would be so proud of you and Rafi. So happy for you.

DINAH

(re: the decorations)
You don't think I'm overdoing it?

MARY MOTHER

I would have said so.

DINAH

It's just that Helah's canopy for their son's feast had--

MARY MOTHER

It doesn't even matter. Sarah and Asher will love it.

Dinah is satisfied. Changing gears.

DINAH

Have you heard from your special guest?

(CONTINUED)

MARY MOTHER

(beaming)

He's coming. He may be joined by several others. Is that okay?

DINAH

Jesus can bring everybody he wants. I haven't seen him in ages. How is he?

MARY MOTHER

He's good. He's...

(sigh)

He's always good.

DINAH

I'm ecstatic for you. I imagine he's a fine craftsman.

MARY MOTHER

When he's not working.

Dinah reacts. *That's an odd thing to say.*

MARY MOTHER (CONT'D)

He has a calling. I seldom know where it will take him. He's bringing students.

DINAH

I bet he's handsome.

(off Mary's modesty)

I bet he is.

RAFI (O.S.)

Dinah!

Dinah's husband, RAFI (55), calls out from across the courtyard

RAFI (CONT'D)

Dinah! They're here!

DINAH

(conspiratorially to Mary)

The moment of truth. I made Rafi spend everything we had left for good wine, so wish me luck.

Dinah rushes off to meet Rafi.

516 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

516

Thomas hops out of the cart, helps Ramah step down. Rafi is hot on his heels. Dinah brings up the rear.

RAFI

You must be Thomas. I am Rafi, and this is my wife, Dinah.

THOMAS

(bowing)

Many blessings to you on this joyous day. And may I present the finest, most beautiful vintner in all of Galilee --

The compliment surprises Ramah. She covers.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

--Ramah bat Kafni of the Kafni Vineyards on the plains of Sharon.

She bows. Both bow. He bows. Lots of bowing.

RAFI

It is an honor to meet you at last. You will give my regards to the old scoundrel upon your return.

(to Dinah)

Ramah is the daughter of my old friend, Kaf.

DINAH

The wine is here on time. A good start to a joyous day!

RAMAH

Of course. Thomas is never late.

Her compliment surprises and moves Thomas.

Ramah uncorks a special clay jar.

RAMAH (CONT'D)

He sends you both his warmest regards...with this.

Rafi leans in, savors the aroma.

RAMAH (CONT'D)

Pressed in the year Augustus died. Cut with seawater, honey from Mount Hermon, black pepper, and pine from Tyre.

(CONTINUED)

RAFI

Divine!

Thomas pours a sample cup. Ramah hands it to Dinah.

DINAH

I certainly won't refuse that.
Blessed are you, Lord our God, King
of the universe, who brings forth
the fruit of the vine.

She takes a gentle sip of the wine, then closes her eyes.

DINAH (CONT'D)

Oh my... Thank heaven on Asher's
day. Abner and Helah will be
pleased.

(finishing another sip)
And maybe a little jealous even.

RAFI

Abner and Helah...I'm now in debt
because of wine for Abner and
Helah...

DINAH

Hush. How much is there?

RAMAH

Of the special vintage, there are
two amphorae and one of a lesser.
Of course we intend to serve the
best wine first, while the guests
are fresh.

THOMAS

Later, when everyone is stuffed and
senses dulled, we'll serve the
remaining jar. Do you understand?

RAFI

Yes, son. It's the oldest trick in
the book. We are in good hands!

Rafi and Dinah hug, giddy. Ramah and Thomas exchange a look,
happy for their happiness.

THOMAS

And I assume the head count is
still accurate? 40 or so at a time
during the week?

RAFI

Is it?

(CONTINUED)

THOMAS

I'm asking.

Rafi looks to Dinah who considers, then shoos the idea away.

DINAH

I'm sure it's right.

THOMAS

Perfect. Where would you like us
to set up?

RAFI

This way, the Master of the Banquet
will walk you through it.

Dinah hears voices and turns to see:

MARY hustling to greet Jesus as he and the others arrive.
She hugs him, then puts his face in her hands, a tender
moment before Jesus introduces her to the others.

On Dinah's smile we...

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

517 INT. DUNGEON - INDETERMINATE

517

John paces his cell. His cavalier bravado a distant memory.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Multiple demons?

NICODEMUS

I saw it myself. They jeered at me from inside her mouth. There was nothing that could be done for her short of a miracle.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

And she won't say who restored her?

NICODEMUS

He did not reveal his name to her.

John explodes involuntarily into an ecstatic JUMP. He lets out a triumphant WHOOP.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

What? What, man?!

JOHN THE BAPTIST

(breathless, pacing)

It has begun!

NICODEMUS

What has?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

If he's healing in secret now, the public signs cannot be far off.

NICODEMUS

Public signs? Who? You know him?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

You might say that.

NICODEMUS

What is his name?

JOHN THE BAPTIST

(quoting Proverbs 30:4)

Who has ascended into heaven and come down?

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS

I asked you his name.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

...Who has gathered the wind in his fists?

NICODEMUS

Don't quote Solomon to me, wild mongrel--

JOHN THE BAPTIST

...Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Finish it.

NICODEMUS

Answer me first!

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Teacher of Israel, finish the oracle of Agur, son of Jakeh --
...Who has established all the ends of the earth?

NICODEMUS AND JOHN THE BAPTIST

...What is his name

NICODEMUS

...And what is the name of his son.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

(almost a whisper)
Surely you know.

John's eyes glint in the light.

Nicodemus resumes pacing along the bars of the cell in deep consideration -- and deep ambivalence. At once, resistant --

NICODEMUS

You're careless with Torah. God does not have a son, except Israel. Israel is his son. All of us.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Suit yourself.

NICODEMUS

You know they'll put a man to death for blasphemy like that.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Who will? You? It'd be a terrible precedent for Rome to adjudicate.

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS
(turning to go)
I never should have come here.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
All your life you've been asleep!

Nicodemus stops in his tracks, listens without turning around. John speaks to his back.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)
Make straight the way for the King!
He is here to awaken the world, but
some will want to stay asleep.
They're in love with the dark.
(a beat)
I wonder which one you'll be.

Nicodemus composes himself.

NICODEMUS
If this man is anything like you
believe, or if he even exists, you
should leave this region. Your
presence will only put him at risk.

Nicodemus opens the door where Dungeon Guard is waiting on the other side.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (O.S.)
If you think he needs my help,
you've heard nothing.

As Nicodemus is led away --

CONGREGATION (PRE-LAP)
(song)
*"Who is this coming up from the
wilderness, like a column of
smoke..."*

DISSOLVE TO:

The WEDDING GUESTS singing the traditional wedding song from Song of Solomon 3:6.

SARAH (teens) makes her debut. She's stunning, even in what today we think of as a frumpy clothes.

Sarah passes through the crowd of singing guests.

(CONTINUED)

CONGREGATION
"...Perfumed with myrrh, and
incense made from all the spices of
the merchant?"

At the edge of the crowd, Ramah is counting the crowd, and as she nears the end, she is clearly concerned.

519 INT. PREPARATION AREA - CONTINUOUS

519

Thomas instructs TWO MALE SERVANTS holding food platters.

THOMAS
When the groom arrives bring out
the olives and cheeses. Set them
on the long table between the
loaves of bread and the cucumbers.

Thomas turns his attention to a lamb roasting on a spit.
Ramah enters quickly.

RAMAH
Thomas!

THOMAS
(obsessing over lamb)
In a moment.

RAMAH
Thomas!

THOMAS
Okay, okay.
(facing her)
Hi.

RAMAH
Am I going mad or has 40 been the
magic number all along?

THOMAS
The head count? Why, are we over?
They always do this. I brought
food enough for more.

RAMAH
The last count was 80.

THOMAS
(scoffs)
You made a mistake.

(CONTINUED)

RAMAH

Maybe by a few. Even if I'm off by
5, the wine...

THOMAS

I did advocate for a fourth--
(off her look)
But three is still enough for 60.

OFF SCREEN, a cheer erupts. Thomas looks like he just threw
up in his mouth.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET (O.S.)

Everybody! Here he is -- the
GROOM!

The crowd parts like the Red Sea and sings the traditional
groom song from Jeremiah 33:10-11 --

CONGREGATION

*"There shall be heard again the
voice of mirth and the voice of
gladness..."*

ASHER (20s) enters looking genuinely happy, moved. He SINGS
along, DANCES in a circle of guests -- Jesus among them.

ANGLE ON the faces of the disciples in the crowd -- Mary,
Simon, Little James, Thad -- taking it in, singing along.

CONGREGATION (CONT'D)

*"...the voice of the bridegroom and
the voice of the bride, the voice
of those who sing, as they bring
thank offerings to the house of the
Lord."*

MARY MOTHER dances with Dinah and Rafi. She is moved by the
sight of so much joy -- especially that of her son.

The song ends in ROAR from the crowd. TOASTS go up to the
happy Groom.

SHOTS of guests draining their glasses. Glass. After glass.

After glass. All empty...

521 INT. PREPARATION AREA - CONTINUOUS

521

Thomas and Ramah pour into goblets arranged on a platter. Thomas takes a pitcher from MALE SERVANT 1, demonstrates --

THOMAS

Lighten your pours, like this --
three quarters full. If they ask
for more, tell 'em you'll be right
back. But guess what? You won't
be. Understand?
(off their nods)
Go.

Male Servant 1 and 2 exit with pitchers, and they pass by the Master of the Banquet as he leans into the room.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET

Well, the guests seem happy so far,
the servants do not. How are we
doing?

Ramah gives a frozen smile, Thomas steps forward.

THOMAS

Nothing to worry about! You're one
of the finest banquet masters we've
seen, keep up the good work.

The master smiles proudly and exits.

Thomas and Ramah exchange weary looks.

THOMAS (CONT'D)

What now?

Ramah considers for a beat. Light bulb --

RAMAH

I have an idea.

522 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - LATE AFTERNOON

522

At the chuppah, Dinah and Rafi are surrounded by GUESTS offering congratulations and small talk. The crowd parts.

DINAH POV -- ABNER (50s) dressed in fine silk attire with the Babe Ruth of rum noses walks confidently toward us. Helah at his heel.

ABNER

Rafi! Dinah!

(CONTINUED)

ABNER (CONT'D)

I lost my train of thought.
(re the chuppah, to Helah)
I thought you said this was
crooked. Looks fine to me.

Helah manages a sheepish nod. *Busted.* Abner begins to float
back to the crowd. As he goes --

ABNER (CONT'D)

And the wine is delicious! I must
know the vineyard.

Rafi and Dinah wave goodbye. Once he's out of sight, they
LAUGH and shake their heads.

Inside a cavernous storage room are six stone water jars for
the rites of purification.

A single rectangular window sits high on the wall, like a
garden apartment. Late afternoon light falls onto the jars.

Ramah and Thomas enter.

RAMAH

Purification water. There's some
left in these.

THOMAS

Dilute the wine? People will
notice. Whispers will spread.

RAMAH

If they did, I feel like this
family would die of shame.

THOMAS

What about us? We'd be ruined.

RAMAH

It's not a great option, I agree.
So, help me think.

THOMAS

We could...fill the guests with
extra date cakes, over-salt the
food. Make them thirst for
water... I don't know. This is
humiliating.

523 CONTINUED:

RAMAH
Let's keep looking.

As they exit --

524 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - EVENING 524

A SERIES OF SHOTS communicate the passage of time:

A) People are laughing, eating, drinking, dancing (men and women are separate for the dancing).

B) A Turkish MUSICIAN plays the flute, accompanied by a TAMBOURINE PLAYER.

C) Big James and John chat with a pair of SISTERS.

D) Jesus sits with a group of children, delighting them with a shell game. They cackle and squeal at his reveals.

END SERIES.

525 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - EVENING 525

Simon, Andrew, Mary, Little James and Thad recline on pillows, watching Jesus with the children from a distance.

SIMON
They have no idea who sits before them.

THADDEUS
To be a child again, yes?

MARY
I think we're the lucky ones. They have to go home with their parents tonight. We get to stay with him.

ANDREW
Where will that be?

MARY
Who can say? With him, I've learned to stop worrying about those things.

ANDREW
I haven't. It's cold in this region.

(CONTINUED)

LITTLE JAMES

You think he would let you freeze?

SIMON

My brother has many worries. I keep reminding him of when our abba taught us to fish. We just sat there and watched until we *became* fisherman.

Andrew rolls his eyes.

MARY

We will watch and watch and watch him. Forever, I think.

Thad and Simon turn their faces to her, haunted by the word "forever." Andrew breaks the spell, holding up his goblet.

ANDREW

I'm going to get more wine.

He gets up and leaves. Simon calls after him --

SIMON

Get two!

Simon turns back to the group.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I don't really know why I'm here, normally students choose rabbis, not the other way around. And I'm not even a student.

LITTLE JAMES

I wasn't either. Thaddeus introduced me to him.

MARY MAGDALENE

And where did you meet?

THADDEUS

On a construction job in Bethsaida. He hasn't exactly been picking the best and brightest students.

SIMON

He works?

MARY MAGDALENE

At least until recently. He's not a professional rabbi.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

I thought he had no home and no job.

MARY MAGDALENE

He has no *permanent* home.

SIMON

He's a stonemason, like you?

THADDEUS

A craftsman. He taught as well, and he asked me to follow him. He said he was building a kingdom, a fortress stronger than stone. I believed him.

SIMON

What were you building in Bethsaida?

THADDEUS

A...public amenity.

SIMON

An aqueduct?

THADDEUS

No, something...humbler.

SIMON

What then, man?

THADDEUS

It's not proper to say in front of a woman.

MARY MAGDALENE

I've seen and heard things that would turn your blood to ice.

SIMON

A latrine?
(re Mary)
Wait, ice?

THADDEUS

Yes.

SIMON

Our master. Building a privy!

(CONTINUED)

THADDEUS

A job is a job. I was cutting stone for the retaining wall. He was building a ramp of cedar planks so the crippled and the elderly could get to it without climbing the steep stairs.

SIMON

Why didn't he heal them so they could mount the steps themselves?

MARY MAGDALENE

He's always saying his time has not yet come.

SIMON

But calling your name, the catch of fish... Why was it his time for miracles then and not others?

LITTLE JAMES

Those were private, he has not exhibited his signs to others publicly yet.

SIMON

What's keeping him from making his ministry public?

MARY MAGDALENE

The wind blows to the south or to the east and you cannot say why.

SIMON

A latrine. We better not spread that around.

MARY MAGDALENE

He doesn't hide where he's from.

SIMON

Well, don't tell Andrew. That will...he will be surprised.

The MASTER OF THE BANQUET stands.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET

Now, friends...The Song of Miriam!

A CHEER goes up from the crowd.

526 INT. PREPARATION AREA - CONTINUOUS

526

Amphora lay on their sides on the ground. Empty. Thomas attempts one last scoop out of one of them...nothing. He leans against a pillar, staring at the pile of empty jars wide-eyed, nearly catatonic.

Ramah, Dinah, and Mary Mother enter. Dinah takes in the scene, panic rising with each second.

DINAH
Thomas, talk to me.

Thomas looks pale, sick.

527 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - GROUNDS - EVENING

527

Fiery cauldrons illuminate rows of tables and a dance floor. Simon and Andrew wander, searching for something when --

JESUS (O.S.)
Sons of Jonah!

SIMON
We were just looking for you.
They're dancing to the Song of
Miriam and we thought you wouldn't
want to miss it.

JESUS
Of course. The three of us will
show 'em how it's done.

ANDREW
That might not be a good idea.

SIMON
Andrew has four left feet.

JESUS
Four?

SIMON
When he tries to dance he looks
like a donkey walking on hot coals.

JESUS
OOOohhh! Do you deny it, Andrew?

ANDREW
I've never seen a donkey step on
hot coals. Actually, that would be
a terrible thing to behold.

(CONTINUED)

Simon slings an arm around Andrew.

MARY MOTHER (O.S.)

My son!

ALL turn as --

Mary Mother approaches urgently. Thomas and Ramah follow.

JESUS

You see, Andrew? Even my own mother will be joining in the Song of Miriam.

MARY MOTHER

They've run out of wine.

ANDREW

But it's just the first day.

MARY MOTHER

Yes. And it's all gone, not a drop left.

JESUS

Why are you telling me this?

Mary draws in close to Jesus.

MARY MOTHER

We can't let the celebration end this way, and Asher's family humiliated.

Jesus pulls her slightly aside, away from the others.

JESUS

Mother, my hour has not yet come.

MARY MOTHER

If not now...when?

Mary pushes in, her face close to Jesus.

JESUS POV - Invoking the same intonation she did years ago in Jerusalem, her face nearly filling the frame --

MARY MOTHER (CONT'D)

Please.

They hold one another's gaze as something silent and powerful passes between them. Jesus smiles slightly.

To the others, but never breaking eye contact with Jesus --

(CONTINUED)

527

CONTINUED: (2)

45.
527

MARY MOTHER (CONT'D)
Do whatever he tells you.

Thomas and Ramah are deer in headlights.

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

528 INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

528

A shaft of light from the door opening falls across the six stone water jars as Jesus, Thomas, and Ramah enter. Female Servant and Male Servant 1 and 2 wait at the threshold.

JESUS

Fill these jars with water.

THOMAS

I'm not sure if you heard her clearly -- we've run out of wine, not water.

JESUS

(inspecting the jars)

These are similar in size to your amphorae?

THOMAS

At the prudent marks, yes. Equal if filled all the way to the brim.

JESUS

You are a very responsible person, aren't you?

THOMAS

We are in a crisis, and I was led to understand you have a solution.

JESUS

Do you know why jars for purification rites are stone?

THOMAS

What?

JESUS

You heard me.

THOMAS

Because the stone is pure, less likely to stain or break, and it can't be made unclean.

JESUS

Yes. Fill these jars with water, all the way to the brim.

(CONTINUED)

THOMAS

Why?

RAMAH

(to servants)

You heard him, start drawing water.
Quickly! Tell anyone you find to
stop what they're doing and help.

The group springs into action -- all except Thomas who is
left alone with Jesus.

THOMAS

From the directions you have
provided, I see no logical solution
to the problem.

JESUS

It's going to be like that
sometimes, Thomas.

THOMAS

(thrown)

What did you say?

JESUS

I do not rebuke you. It is good to
ask questions. To seek
understanding.

THOMAS

There's not time for this.

JESUS

(smiles)

I know of a man like you in
Capernaum. Always counting, always
measuring.

THOMAS

That's my job -- one that people
will think I have not done well
tonight.

JESUS

Join me, and I'll show you a new
way to count and measure. A
different way to see time.

THOMAS

Go with you where?

Male Servant 1 BURSTS in with a bucket of water. He POURS it
into a jar. Others follow.

(CONTINUED)

THOMAS (CONT'D)
I don't understand.

JESUS
Keep watching.

529 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - CONTINUOUS

529

Abner is finishing his plate. He goes to wash it down with wine -- but the cup is empty. He looks around. No servers. He spots Dinah.

ABNER
Dinah!

He motions her over with his empty cup.

DINAH
Abner! I do hope you're enjoying yourself.

ABNER
Where are the servers?

From nearby the Master of the Banquet approaches.

DINAH
I don't know, but I'll fi--

MASTER OF THE BANQUET
It's far past time for another round of wine. The last one was nearly an hour ago.

DINAH
Yes...Well, you see...

ON MARY, SEES the confrontation from across the courtyard.

ABNER
Surely there is more coming, Dinah?

Dinah looks around for help. Her worst fears. Abner sours.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET
(to Abner)
I am sorry, this will be --

Mary Mother swoops in, taking Dinah by the shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

MARY MOTHER

The next round of wine right away.
Thank you for reminding us. It's
all under control.

Dinah gives Mary a shocked look as she shuffles her away from the befuddled Master of Banquet and a stewing Abner.

EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE WALL - CONTINUOUS

Mary Magdalene and Thad, oblivious to events in the store room, sit against a wall on pillows, their faces lit by fire cauldrons, watching the dancing in the main courtyard.

MARY

Was your father a stonemason as well?

Thad shakes his head.

THADDEUS

A smith. I think it broke his heart, but I apprenticed under a stonecutter when I was nine and...every man must leave his father.

MARY

Masonry seems like harder work.

THADDEUS

It isn't harder, its just more...final.

As Thad speaks --

SEE Female Servant, Male Servants, GUESTS pouring water into the large jars, nearing completion.

THADDEUS (V.O.)

If the smith wants to change the horseshoe or the plowshare or the pot hook, he has only to put the iron back into the fire and reshape it to fit his designs.

RAMAH

They're full.

JESUS

Everyone please step outside.

Servants move toward the exit. Thomas pauses, suspicious.

(CONTINUED)

JESUS (CONT'D)
(without looking back)
Just for a moment, Thomas.

He closes the door, leaving Jesus alone with the six jars.
Jesus turns slowly to face the jars.

THADDEUS (V.O.)
Once you make that first cut into
the stone, it can't be undone. It
sets in motion a series of choices.
What used to be a shapeless block
of limestone or granite begins its
long journey of transformation, and
it will never be the same.

Jesus leans over the mouth of the vessel, looking at his
reflection.

A heaviness gathers at the corners of his eyes as if sensing
the chain of events this miracle will set in motion...

He closes his eyes and breathes.

JESUS
I am ready, Father.

He places his left hand against the side of the vessel and
TILTS.

Red wine spills over the edge into his open right palm.

Jesus closes his fist around the redness.

531 INT. PREPARATION AREA - CONTINUOUS

531

Jesus enters and smiles.

*

JESUS
Draw some out and serve it to the
Master of the Banquet.

As Ramah hustles out with a goblet, Jesus walks away.

*

Thomas watches him go. Male Servants stare, then dash into
the storage room, and then we hear them all yell.

532 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - MOMENTS LATER

532

Ramah approaches the Master of the Banquet with the goblet.
Abner stands watch.

(CONTINUED)

ABNER
It's about time.

RAMAH
(trance-like)
The latter vintage, sir.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET
Good, good. Let's have a taste.

He takes the drink and immediately hinges forward, as though he were about to spit it out. His eyes pop open, startled.

Master of the Banquet waves his hand wildly at the musicians--

MASTER OF THE BANQUET (CONT'D)
Stop the music! Stop the music!

MUSICIANS stop mid-measure. A hush falls over the feast.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET (CONT'D)
Everyone listen! I have something
I'd like to say.

Dinah is terrified. Mary Mother holds her.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET (O.S.) (CONT'D)
I'd like to address the bridegroom
and the bride.

Jesus passes by Dinah and Mary and kisses his mother on the cheek.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET (CONT'D)
At every wedding I've ever
overseen, they serve the best wine
first.

Sarah and Asher listen, intrigued. No idea what's happened.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET (CONT'D)
And then when the people have drunk
freely, much later in the feast
they serve the poorer wine, the
cheap stuff, because by then, who's
going to notice, am I right?

Scattered LAUGHTER.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET (CONT'D)
But you --

Dinah WINCES as though poked with a needle.

(CONTINUED)

MASTER OF THE BANQUET (CONT'D)

You have saved the best wine I have
ever tasted until now!

DINAH'S eyes go wide as she SEES --

A stream of servants filing out in rapid succession, each
with a tray containing full goblets of wine.

She practically melts into Mary Mother's arms.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET (CONT'D)

Let's thank them for this
unnecessary but honorable gesture!

A CHEER goes up.

SARAH AND ASHER try to look normal and gracious.

Rafi gives Abner a chuckle and a "Isn't this great, had it
all the way!" look, then turns away and finally exhales.

ABNER gets his hand on a glass. Tilts and tastes. He shakes
his head.

HELAH

Is something wrong?

Words slow to form --

ABNER

Yes...I was.

MASTER OF THE BANQUET raises a glass --

MASTER OF THE BANQUET

May the wedding of Asher, son of
Rafi and Dinah, to Sarah, daughter
of Abner and Helah, be as pure and
fruitful as this wine. Blessed are
you, Lord our God, King of the
universe, who brings forth the
fruit of the vine. To Asher and
Sarah!

ALL raise their goblets (if they have them) or fists and
cheers:

GUESTS

Asher and Sarah!

DINAH openly weeps sobs of relief in Mary Mother's arms.

MUSICIANS strike back up and music fills the courtyard.

(CONTINUED)

532 CONTINUED: (3)

MARY MOTHER meets and holds Jesus' gaze across the way.

MARY MOTHER

Thank you.

He smiles.

533 INT. STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

533

As music plays OFF, Thomas stands still as a statue, staring at the vessels full of wine.

534 EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

534

Simon comes close to Jesus, fixating on his eyes with wonder.

SIMON

Fish. Wine. What will be next?

JESUS

Do you have any suggestions?

SIMON

Anything and everything! Let's do this! I'll go with you to the ends of the earth.

Jesus regards him with a twinge of sorrow in his eyes.

JESUS

I hope you will, Simon. But I seem to remember there was a problem. Something about Andrew's feet.

Simon is snapped out of his reverie.

SIMON

Yes! Andrew's feet!

Nearby, Andrew realizes he is being talked about. The other disciples gather around.

JESUS

We must evaluate first, no?

ANDREW

No, no. I can't!

The disciples SHOVE him forward as he resists.

JESUS

Come on!

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

You've got it, Andrew!

ANDREW is thrust onto the men's dance floor, arms linked with Jesus and Simon and the other disciples, footwork flying.

DINAH dances on the women's side with Mary Mother, and Sarah.

RAFI AND ABNER face-off on the dance floor, their economic and ethnic differences invisible and forgotten.

As Andrew, Simon, and Jesus dance...

SIMON (CONT'D)

So will you help him?!

JESUS

Some things even I cannot do.

CUT TO:

EXT. CANA SYNAGOGUE - COURTYARD - LATE AT NIGHT

Clunk. Ramah sets down a crate of supplies on the cart.

RAMAH

That should it for the night.

Thomas stares across the town square, where Jesus walks with Mary Mother and the disciples. Ramah notices.

RAMAH (CONT'D)

I don't know who he is, but I can't pretend I didn't see a miracle. He gave us even more than we need.

Thomas and Ramah WATCH Jesus and the others cross the square.

STAY ON Thomas -- a mix of confusion and inspiration.

THOMAS

He invited me to join him.

She turns. *Really?*

THOMAS (CONT'D)

To meet him in Samaria in twelve days.

RAMAH

Samaria?

(CONTINUED)

THOMAS

I don't know what to think.

RAMAH

So, don't? Maybe, for once, don't
think.

She moves closer to him. Their eyes and minds remain stuck
on the receding figure of Jesus.

As we PULLBACK from the town square --

END EPISODE

THE CHOSEN

Episode #106

"Indescribable Compassion"

written by

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PINK draft
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TEASER

601 EXT. COUNTRY VILLAGE - DAY - ESTABLISHING 601

A sparsely populated village in the Galilean countryside. A half-dozen structures and a mule.

The only people in sight are gathered in a single line stretching out the door of --

602 EXT. PAWN BROKER'S TENT - DAY 602

A painted sign in Aramaic will translate to *Brokerage* or *Pawn Broker* or *Pledged Goods*.

The line of PEOPLE -- each one holding some sundry item -- is made up of sick, drunk, and maimed. All except for --

ANGLE ON - a sturdily built man we'll call STONE MASON. He stand at the front of the line, a LEATHER ROLL in hand.

CLOSER - Stone Mason is uncomfortable. Clearly out of place with the dregs of society, he also WEARS an unseasonably long tunic covering both arms. SWEAT running like a faucet.

Suddenly an ANGRY WOMAN storms out of the tent. Stone Mason walks in, it's his turn.

603 INT. PAWN BROKER'S TENT - CONTINUOUS 603

All about the tent, every sort of random item. Strewn here, there. On shelves. In heaps. It's a pawn shop.

PAWN BROKER

She was crazy. Just because we're a charity doesn't mean I can buy rocks from every old lady.

STONE MASON

Charity?

PAWN BROKER

(giving "sort of" gesture)
Like everything Roman, it's part business. We loan proceeds seized from criminals to the poor and...
(sizing up Stone Mason)
...others. You passing through? I don't recall seeing you before.

(CONTINUED)

STONE MASON

I come from Tyre.

Stone Mason opens his roll, reveals quality MASONRY TOOLS.

STONE MASON (CONT'D)

The mallet is carved of maple from Sidon. The chisels are bronze.

Broker listens, stealing an occasional glance at Stone Mason.

STONE MASON (CONT'D)

The trowel is tin from Phoenician ore.

PAWN BROKER

My, my. Why would anyone part with these?

STONE MASON

I'm on my way to The Dead Sea.

PAWN BROKER

Shalom, pilgrim. Lucky me. I don't often see items of such quality.

Pawn Broker furrows his brow. Here comes the bluff --

PAWN BROKER (CONT'D)

...if only they weren't brought in by a stranger passing through.

STONE MASON

They weren't stolen, if that's what you're getting at.

Pawn Broker feigns ambivalence as he inspects.

PAWN BROKER

I can justify...20 Denarii.

STONE MASON

You're joking. That's a fraction of what they're worth--

A harsh wind picks up. Stone Mason quickly TURNS, his sleeve momentarily BLOWS OPEN to reveal FESTERING SORES.

Pawn Broker's eyes go WIDE.

PAWN BROKER

Hades and Styx!

(CONTINUED)

With a curled, atrophied fist Stone Mason tries to cover his arm but too late. Pawn Broker covers his mouth with a scarf.

STONE MASON

I beg you--

PAWN BROKER

Leper!

Behind the Mason, the crowd reacts with shocked expressions - "It's a leper!" "He has leprosy!" "Run!"

A MOTHER frantically covers her CHILD's face.

PAWN BROKER (CONT'D)

You're marked!

Pawn Broker JABS Stone Mason's chest with a cane. He STUMBLES backward, lands in a heap. Tools fall with a CLANG.

PAWN BROKER (CONT'D)

It's already got its teeth in you!

Stone Mason slowly rolls over onto his knees, face contorted. He PUNCHES the dirt in desolation.

PAWN BROKER (CONT'D)

You couldn't just die...you'd bring us all to Hell!

Pawn Broker SPITS. Stone Mason gathers himself, RISES to his feet. Pawn Broker shocked when...Stone Mason APPROACHES.

PAWN BROKER (CONT'D)

You're forbidden to be within four cubits!

PAWN BROKER'S POV - Stone Mason's hand reaches out, like the hand of death itself. Pawn Broker COWERS --

Stone Mason SNATCHES the 20 Denarii from the table.

PAWN BROKER (CONT'D)

Take it and GO!

STONE MASON

I didn't mean you any harm. My tools were all I had left.

Stone Mason walks away. FOLLOW Pawn Broker's EYES to the set of tools scattered on the dusty ground as we--

END TEASER

ACT ONE

604 FADE IN ON: 604

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

XZXXZ ZXZZZ XZXXZ

DISSOLVE TO:

605 EXT. TAX BOOTH - DAY 605

GAIUS and MATTHEW STARE at something OFF. Neither speaks. All their attention on it.

PULL BACK to find the object of their attention -- GOLD. A Brinks truck-worth piled on a cart the size of a red wagon.

Paranoid, Gaius throws a tarp over it.

GAIUS

I never knew those little skiffs could hold so many fish.

MATTHEW

They can't. The weight of the catch and the sailors caused the boat to sink. They had to jump. They ended up filling two boats.

(a beat)

Should we bring it inside the booth?

GAIUS

They'll be here any minute.

MATTHEW

At least you have your sword. Should I have a weapon?

Gaius answers with a look.

GAIUS

This can't be the first time you've been saddled with a couple months worth of--

MATTHEW

(accuracy, please)
Two years and seven weeks.

(CONTINUED)

GAIUS

Two *years* and seven weeks?

MATTHEW

Simon and Andrew were each granted a year gratis. That totals one year and seven weeks plus another year less marital credit for Simon.

GAIUS

Okay. That's...

MATTHEW

Plus penalties.

A beat.

GAIUS

We're sitting ducks here.

MATTHEW'S POV -- of TOWNSFOLK. Their normally acid looks take on a special menace under the circumstances.

GAIUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Just try to look natural.

MATTHEW

I am natural. I look exactly how I feel.

GAIUS

Try to act like a normal person under normal circumstances.

Matthew shoots Gaius a look -- *Do you even know me?*

GAIUS (CONT'D)

Forget I said normal.

MARCUS (O.S.)

Gaius!

Roman soldier MARCUS arrives with TWO SOLDIERS and a cart.

GAIUS

Yes, Marcus.

MARCUS

(whistles at the gold)
We thought it was a joke.

MATTHEW

You could say it was comical when the men leapt from their boats.

(CONTINUED)

MARCUS

Leapt from their boats?

MATTHEW

They were sinking from the weight.

MARCUS

I told you it was made up. You can't catch this many fish that fast.

GAIUS

(head on a swivel)

Captain, may we continue this conversation on the road.

MARCUS

Whoa, Gaius. Don't tell me you're nervous about guarding a couple months' taxes.

Gaius and Matthew share a look.

A HALF-DOZEN JUDGES gathered in a semi-circle. AV BEIT DIN, the title of the man leading this panel, listens reverentially to Nicodemus, standing front and center.

A gallery of ONLOOKERS include Shmuel and Yussif.

NICODEMUS

I've just returned from questioning the man known as John the Baptizer while in Roman custody at length, Av Beit Din. Though his appearance may be unconventional and his teachings ignorant, I've concluded he presents...no material threat to Herod or to the public peace.

A STIR from the gallery. Murmurs and shoulder shrugging. Av Beit Din issues a gentle reminder --

AV BEIT DIN

Order... He has a following. We've heard as much from brother Shmuel's testimony. Is that not a matter of concern?

NICODEMUS

I believe these "followers" are simply investigating, as one would a loud noise -- and upon inspection, they will find his words to have about as much substance. He seeks attention. They do not gather at the Jordan to be immersed as we understand ritual cleansing. They stand in line because others are standing in line.

Nicodemus glances at Shmuel, seated nearby along one wall. His magnanimity a rebuke to Shmuel's timid bitterness.

AV BEIT DIN

While the Sanhedrin appreciates your assessment of his efficacy, this man's intentions are revolutionary, are they not?

NICODEMUS

To Roman occupation, to our faithful traditions, and to King Herod himself, the answer is yes.

The gallery STIRS. Judges exchange uneasy looks.

AV BEIT DIN

Order! But, Nicodemus, if this man is a revolutionary, does it not confirm the threat he poses?

NICODEMUS

I'll put the question to you, Av Beit Din -- why hasn't Rome mobilized its troops? Hmm? Launched an offensive against this wild man?

AV BEIT DIN

Certainly, he poses no real threat to Rome...

NICODEMUS

The same reason, I suspect, God Himself has not wiped John from the Earth whole cloth.

This line of reason hits the mark.

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

The people are restless, our task formidable, but we have God on our side. Under no circumstances should we concede the duty to uphold God's law to Rome. We only legitimized him by ordering his arrest. The very effort to keep him silent gives him a pedestal.

Judges REACT, confused looks. Side conversations spring up.

REACTION from Shmuel -- he's about to be outed.

AV BEIT DIN

But Nicodemus, we issued no such order.

NICODEMUS

Oh? I was shown sworn statements by the arresting soldiers that a Pharisee had ordered his detention. Perhaps, they were mistaken.

The place goes bonkers.

YUSSIF looks to Shmuel just as Shmuel STEPS FORWARD --

SHMUEL

It was me!

A HUSH passes over the chamber.

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

I turned him in.

AV BEIT DIN

Brother Shmuel?

SHMUEL

"He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous are both alike an abomination to the Lord."

AV BEIT DIN

Quoting the proverbs of Solomon is not an explanation.

SHMUEL

I will not turn a blind eye to his sins, even when all others do.

AV BEIT DIN

What sins?

(CONTINUED)

SHMUEL

He called us a brood of vipers.

Scattered CHUCKLES and RASPBERRIES from the assembly.

NICODEMUS

He uses coarse language to attract attention.

SHMUEL

Do you know how vipers are born?
They hatch inside their mothers...

More laughter. Side conversations spring up. Desperate --

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

The Law of Moses says "You shall not hate your brother in your heart."

NICODEMUS

And were he a member of our congregation or our faction we would admonish him, but he's not. He's a rogue who answers to no one.

AV BEIT DIN

Brother Shmuel, your rash action has inflated the importance of a trivial outlier and drawn undue attention to our sect by Rome.

SHMUEL

But he--

AV BEIT DIN

And I'm astonished that any student of the great and learned Nicodemus would have the temerity to bypass his approval.

Shmuel looks like he'll explode. *They don't understand.*

NICODEMUS

I'll talk to him, your honor.

AV BEIT DIN

You will defer to your teacher on all matters of polity and practice.
(when no response is forthcoming)
Do I make myself clear?

(CONTINUED)

SHMUEL

Yes, your honor.

AV BEIT DIN

This council is adjourned.

In a huff, Shmuel heads for the exit, straight past Nicodemus...who WATCHES after him with concern.

A BUZZ of activity around a dying campfire. A CANOPY is folded -- a shirrtail-full of FIGS is carried, dropped into a satchel -- TIMBER SUPPORTS are dismantled. MOVE OUT day.

SIMON and LITTLE JAMES dismantle a tent in tandem. Little James strains to lower a canopy. Doubles over in exhaustion.

SIMON

(catching his breath)

Glad I'm not the only one.

LITTLE JAMES

I thought I was prepared for life on the road. Snakes, hunger, floods.

SIMON

Torah doesn't mention the blisters.

LITTLE JAMES

You never read the book of constant, low-level aches?

SIMON

The sermon on dust in your nose?

They CHUCKLE. Continue packing.

SIMON (CONT'D)

What did you do before you met him?

LITTLE JAMES

I was on my way to join the 288.

SIMON

The Jerusalem Temple Choir?

(off his nod)

Riiight. I was Caesar's favorite gladiator.

LITTLE JAMES

SINGS A LINE OF A SONG

The DISCIPLES have frozen to listen to the beautiful song. They APPLAUD, HOOT when he finishes.

SIMON
I stand corrected.

LITTLE JAMES
Thank you.

SIMON
It's clear why Jesus asked you to join him.

Simon goes back to packing. Little James watches him a beat.

LITTLE JAMES
I don't think anything's clear. Maybe I'll sing. Maybe not. He's the only one who knows who I'll become. More than anything, he's a teacher, and we are his students.

Simon considers his own uncertainty when --

JESUS (O.S.)
Simon?

Jesus approaches. Simon hands the pack to Little James.

SIMON
Rabbi?

JESUS
I will be escorting my mother back to Nazareth. I'll catch up with the others at our camp near Capernaum.

SIMON
I understand. I'll see everyone arrives safely.

JESUS
I want you to go on ahead.

SIMON
Ahead of the others?

JESUS
You have business to tend to at home.

Simon knows he does. Jesus' look compels him not to deny it.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

But, teacher, I can protect the others.

JESUS

In time you will. But the others don't have families, you do. Look at me -- I'm leaving all this fun to escort my Eema.

SIMON

Yes, Rabbi.

STAY ON SIMON as Jesus recedes, says his GOODBYES.

608 INT. QUINTUS'S OFFICE - DAY

608

Matthew, Gaius, and Centurion Captain stand patiently by as Quintus inspects a ledger.

QUINTUS

Remarkable. For the first time in a year, quarterly collections will exceed Pilate's projections. And IF the fishermen are no longer fishing on Shabbat...

He tosses an olive in the air, CATCHES it in his mouth. Extending the platter --

QUINTUS (CONT'D)

Have an olive, Matthew. You earned it.

MATTHEW

Thank you, Dominus.

Quintus struts the room, self-satisfied. Musing --

QUINTUS

Simon the Cheat. Simon the Fraud. Simon...the guy who delivered when it mattered most. I wonder if there's a way to make him do it again.

MATTHEW

It wasn't Simon, Dominus.

Gaius shoots Matthew a horse eye. Quintus muses, oblivious.

(CONTINUED)

QUINTUS

What if I told him it wasn't enough? He obviously performs well under pressure. I do have a knack for creating stakes.

MATTHEW

Simon was not responsible for this.

QUINTUS

Oh, I don't care who he conscripts into his schemes.

MATTHEW

Forgive me, Dominus, if my report was unclear. There was a man--

QUINTUS

Yes, you're a fine reporter, Matthew -- you're just a rube. I read your report. It's clear Simon and his accomplice tricked you.

MATTHEW

But there were others--

QUINTUS

Accomplices.

Matthew considers this. It doesn't compute.

MATTHEW

To what end?

QUINTUS

Who can say? Maybe Simon wanted the other fishermen off his back. You said yourself that word of his disloyalty had spread. Maybe to spook anyone who'd fish on Shabbat.
(relishing the idea)
He is a wily one.

MATTHEW

The fishermen have taken notice.

QUINTUS

It couldn't have worked out better.
(pauses, clocking Matthew)
Don't tell me you're spooked.

Matthew considers his next words carefully.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

I'm neither sophisticated nor subtle, Dominus, but I'm observant. I detected no subterfuge. I recorded everything I witnessed, however impossible it seems.

QUINTUS

(there, there)

You did well, Matthew. Fortunately you have me to interpret for you.

Quintus returns to his ledger. Matthew chews on his dismissive words when --

A breathless MESSENGER does his best Kool-Aid Man impression, BURSTING in through the doorway. *Oh Yeah!*

MESSENGER

Forgive me, Praetor. It's urgent.

QUINTUS

No kidding.

MESSENGER

King Herod's envoy approaches.

Quintus perks up.

QUINTUS

Spotted where?

MESSENGER

Outside Gennesaret, riding north.

Quintus' wheels excitedly turn. Almost giddy.

QUINTUS

Captain?

Centurion Captain snaps to attention.

QUINTUS (CONT'D)

Silvius Gemelius, son of Senator Gemelius, will be arriving in one hour.

CAPTAIN

Yes, Dominus.

QUINTUS

Prepare my guard for inspection.

Captain bows, EXITS with purpose.

(CONTINUED)

Quintus quickly goes to his wardrobe and begins rifling through his military dress before slowly noticing --

Gaius and Matthew stand awkwardly off to a side of the room.

QUINTUS (CONT'D)

How long would you have stood there?

Matthew and Gaius exchange looks. *Probably forever.*

Quintus puts down the clothes and approaches.

QUINTUS (CONT'D)

Things with Simon turned out well, and I'm grateful. Gaius, I've reviewed your service records. You're Germanic?

GAIUS

My people were.

QUINTUS

Powerful warriors...even if they did surrender.

GAIUS

I believe they *sensibly* joined the winning team, Dominus.

QUINTUS

Sensibly.

GAIUS

My only allegiance is to Rome. I've trained to fight for her since I was a boy.

QUINTUS

And now you will lead. I hereby promote you to the rank of Primi.

Gaius falls to a knee. Head bowed --

GAIUS

Thank you for this honor, Praetor.

QUINTUS

Don't slobber. And Matthew, you're so wonderfully...odd. Keenly intelligent but it's your reactions to the world that I love.

Matthew doesn't know how to respond to the insulting praise.

(CONTINUED)

QUINTUS (CONT'D)

Like right now! How you're not a stain on a cart wheel is a mystery we will have many moons to unravel, my new friend.

MATTHEW

I saw no ruse or deception at the seashore, Dominus.

QUINTUS

Because you have no guile. Give me your first reaction to this scenario -- you are shortly to be visited by your childhood rival whose father gave him everything, while yours gave you nothing and yet you've risen to a higher rank.

(as Matthew goes to speak)

You want to make it clear that you won. That this is your meeting even if he arrived unannounced.

MATTHEW

I would show him my plans for infrastructure.

(off his look)

Conquest is not simply conquering nations but imposing a way of life.

Quintus is frozen by the logic. Unconsciously takes a seat.

QUINTUS

(sotto)

Unbelievable. So simple.

(to the men)

You're dismissed.

Matthew turns to go, confused by the exchange on every level and still troubled by Quintus's refusal to believe his report.

Gaius bows, exits with a bounce in his step.

Quintus rifles through his desk where he finds -- a set of technical sketches (ancient blueprints). As he unrolls them, we --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

609 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CAPERNAUM - DAY

609

Jesus, John, Big James, Little James, Thaddeus, and Mary Magdalene approach the edge of town.

They encounter a black Egyptian woman we'll soon know as TAMAR (20s) gathering flowers near the side of road.

MARY MAGDALENE

Hello.

TAMAR

Hello. Shalom.

MARY MAGDALENE

It's a beautiful day for picking flowers.

She opens the shawl for her to see:

TAMAR

If you ever want Gilboa Iris, lupine, and anemone, I sell them in the market.

Indicating Tamar's unique yellow African necklace --

JESUS

Is that Egyptian?

She lays a finger to the piece, blushing.

TAMAR

Yes, I grew up there. My father was from Ethiopia.

Jesus speaks in Arabic:

JESUS

(subtitled)

I grew up in Egypt, too. Your necklace reminds me of things I saw in my childhood.

The disciples exchange looks. *Of course he speaks Arabic.*

TAMAR

(subtitled)

I'm Tamar, of Heliopolis.

(CONTINUED)

JESUS
(subtitled)
Jesus of Nazareth. Peace to you,
sister.

TAMAR
(subtitled)
Thank you.
(Back to English)
Shalom to you all!

ALL
Shalom! Good day.

Tamar recedes down the road. John leans in --

JOHN
You were speaking Arabic?

JESUS
We lived in Egypt when I was a boy.

MARY
Why were you there?

JESUS
We had to leave Bethlehem when I
was two because of Herod. He --

BIG JAMES
You lived in Bethlehem during the
massacre of the innocents?

JESUS
I did.

BIG JAMES
I know that story. Herod had every
child in the area under the age of
two killed.

They shrink at the horrific thought.

JESUS
Not to spoil a beautiful day or
anything. Come on.

Jesus is interrupted by Mary's scream from the very back of
the group. They all turn in alarm.

Tamar straightens from the bush she was bending over when she
hears the scream echo out over the valley.

610 EXT. OUTSKIRTS OF CAPERNAUM - CONTINUOUS

610

A man with stringy hair and gaunt features is stumbling toward the group from behind, visibly ravaged by leprosy.

JOHN

It's a leper. Get back!

James and John quickly place themselves between Mary and the leper. Little James covers his mouth with a scarf as the group collectively backs away.

LITTLE JAMES

Cover your mouths! Don't breathe his air!

John zealously pulls a something roughly the length of a Bowie knife from his waistband and brandishes it.

JOHN

Don't come any closer.

But Jesus is moving toward the leper.

JESUS

It's alright, John.

We recognize the tattered and frayed remnants of one SAGE GREEN tunic and another that used to be GRAY but is now nearly black, hanging off the body of who we now realize is the Stone Mason from the cold open.

He hurls himself facedown on the ground before Jesus. His atrophied fist is pill-rolling in a Parkinson's motion we saw in the cold open.

STONE MASON

Please, please, please.

Jesus holds up a hand to silence his followers' cries for caution.

STONE MASON (CONT'D)

Please don't turn away from me.

JESUS

I won't.

Tamar rounds the bend to see what all the fuss is about and takes in the scene: leper on the ground, Jesus about three feet away facing him with John hovering over his shoulder, the rest of the group about 25 feet back in a frightened huddle. She ducks behind a rock to watch discreetly.

(CONTINUED)

STONE MASON

Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Only if you want to, I submit to you. My sister, she was a servant at the wedding, she told me what you can do. I know you can heal if you are willing.

Jesus' face curls up into gut-wrenching compassion. He swallows hard to regain his voice. Tamar studies his face.

JESUS

I am willing.

He stretches out his hand.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Be clean.

The pill-rolling fist becomes still. The dust which had been kicked up in the fray of all the leper's scuttled movements settles calmly around the stillness of the leper. The disciples watch breathlessly.

The clenched fist slowly unclenches. Open, festering sores remain on the hand, which slowly extends toward Jesus' feet. Jesus' eyes squeeze shut, tears streaming down his cheeks. The leper's forehead is still pressed to the dirt as his blighted hand reaches the space two inches from Jesus' feet.

As he leans over the leper ever so slightly, eyes still closed, a tear falls from Jesus's face and lands on the leprous hand. Slowly, encrusted boils fold down into healthy skin. The effect spreads up his arm. Eczema dissolves. Carbuncles disappear. Mary Magdalene covers her mouth to keep from crying. Little James relaxes his scarf cover to reveal a gaping mouth.

Tamar leans forward from behind her rock, eyes popping.

The leper inspects his beautifully clear hands and arms, turning them over in awe. He tears the last of the sliced tatters of sage green tunic from his body and presses his hands to his ribs, looking down and pulling on the healthy, taut skin.

Jesus kneels down so he is at eye level with the Stone Mason, whose emotions break through a dam as he collapses into Jesus' outstretched arms, burying his face Jesus's chest, shoulders heaving and arms clinging.

STONE MASON

(through tears, muffled)

Thank you. Thank you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

STONE MASON (CONT'D)

I knew it, I knew it, I knew it.
What...what can I....

Jesus strokes the man's head, as though comforting a disconsolate child.

JESUS

Shhhh. Shhhh.

STONE MASON

What can I ever do to--

JESUS

Promise me you will say nothing to anyone.

STONE MASON

(pulling back to look at him)

You don't seek your own honor?

JESUS

Just do me this one thing.

STONE MASON

But what do I tell people?

JESUS

Go and show yourself to the priest. Let him inspect you to see that you are cleansed. Make the proper offering in the temple, as Moses commanded, and go on your way.

Jesus turns to his followers.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Who has an extra tunic?

Immediately every male disciple starts haphazardly pulling off his outer layer of garment.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Enough, that's alright just one, just one.

Thaddeus emerges from the group, unslinging his rucksack and pulling out an extra cloth.

As Thad and Jesus help the mason slip into the tunic, we see Tamar watching. Turning from her post at the rock, a look on her face shows she is making a plan. She sprints away, leaving her pile of flowers behind.

611 EXT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - DAY - ESTABLISHING 611

A house in the same neighborhood as Simon's. Along one side, a clay staircase leads to the roof where --

612 EXT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS 612

ZEBEDEE lays out stalks of flax to dry.

There are slats in the roof with open spaces between them, giving us a clear view of the interior of house below.

ZEBEDEE POV - Zebedee's wife, SALOME (40s), hangs herbs to dry. Calling up --

SALOME

Zebedee? Will you check the grapes, please?

ZEBEDEE

Aah. I almost forgot -- we no longer have anyone on raisin duty.

Zebedee spreads out a few bundles of flax, then goes to a corner of the roof where grapes are spread out on a board.

ZEBEDEE (CONT'D)

(tasting one)

Too tart...

Zebedee trails off. His EYES light on something OFF. A SMILE starts deep inside him and slowly overtakes his face.

CALLING DOWN though his eyes don't leave the street below --

ZEBEDEE (CONT'D)

Salome!

613 INT./EXT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 613

Salome looks up in time to see her husband RUN across the rooftop slats.

SALOME

Zeb! Wha-- Be careful!

OFF - Zebedee's FOOTSTEPS quickly descend the exterior steps.

Salome rushes to the front door. Throwing it open, finds --

(CONTINUED)

Zebedee HUGS Big James with one arm, John with the other.
Jesus takes in the joyous reunion. Mary Magdalene in tow.

Salome, tears in her eyes, walks towards them. Her sons go to her BUT she blows straight past them -- to Jesus. She clasps her hands in front of her face, starts to speak but stops, covers her mouth, reaches out then pulls back...just altogether overwhelmed.

Big James and John share a look. Jesus just smiles.

SALOME (CONT'D)

James? John?

BIG JAMES

Yes, eema?

JOHN

Yes?

SALOME

Listen to him, boys. Please? Stay by his side.

JOHN

(get off my case)

We will.

Salome doesn't take her eyes off Jesus. Zebedee puts his arm around his wife. She's kind of embarrassing but he gets it.

JESUS

It's a pleasure to meet you, too, Salome. I am Jesus of Nazareth.

SALOME

Of course you are.

JESUS

And hello again, Zebedee.

ZEBEDEE

It's an honor, Rabbi.

JOHN

Eema?

SALOME

Where are my manners? Come. Please.

JESUS

Are you certain? Others will be joining us.

(CONTINUED)

SALOME

I insist. Everyone, please.

Salome leads the charge. Everyone heads inside. Zebedee pulls Big James and John aside. Scanning the faces --

ZEBEDEE

Where's Simon?

BIG JAMES

He's taking care of some things at home. Andrew's getting him now.

ZEBEDEE

Hmm. Good. I thought maybe he got cold feet, or I'd have to go drag him out of The Hammer.

JOHN

Are you kidding? He's the teacher's pet.

Zebedee and the boys LAUGH at the thought.

BIG JAMES

You'd hardly recognize the guy.

Simon, perched on the edge of a bed, SINGS a lullaby.

SIMON

*...May my meditations please you --
As I rejoice in you Lord --
Praise you Lord forever more.*

In the bed lies Eden's sleeping mother, DASHA (50s).

Simon pulls the blanket up to Dasha's chin.

Simon enters the main room. Andrew speaks excitedly in hushed tones to a rapt Eden.

ANDREW

It was unlike anything. We danced -
- *HE* danced!

EDEN

He did?

Conversation stops as Simon enters. Both turn expectantly.

SIMON
She's asleep.
(Eden goes to him)
Breathing is labored but steady.

Andrew takes in the not-bad news update. After a beat --

ANDREW
That was some soulful singing, my
man.

Simon freezes. Eden tries to stifle a laugh. Too late.

Andrew and Simon step into the street.

ANDREW
Most are at Zebedee's to regroup.

SIMON ANDREW (CONT'D)
And eat Salome's cooking. And eat Salome's cooking.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Don't tell Eden I said that.

Something catches Andrew's eye. He NUDGES Simon --

SIMON (CONT'D)
What?

FOLLOW ANDREW'S LOOK to -- Matthew. At the end of the street
in the spot we've grown used to seeing him. He withers.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Tax man.

MATTHEW
Simon. Andrew.

SIMON
I guess no one told you the news.

ANDREW
We squared our debts with Quintus.

SIMON
Isn't that great? So, go back to
your cage. And stop following us.

MATTHEW

It's not you. I'm here about the man...

Simon and Andrew freeze in their tracks. They share a look. *Concern. Caution. Patience...*

SIMON

What man?

MATTHEW

The man on the shore who made the fish appear.

Anger. Simon marches a bee line to Matthew. Andrew scrambles to catch up.

SIMON

Man on the shore? You saw no man on the shore, you hear me?

Taking a fistful of Matthew's tunic --

MATTHEW

(cowering)

Yes I did! I was there! I saw!

SIMON

And I bet the first thing you did was tell Rome.

ANDREW

Simon!

MATTHEW

They don't believe me!

SIMON

You really are a traitor.

ANDREW

SIMON!!!

Andrew gets Simon's attention. He releases Matthew, but stays hot.

SIMON

Best for you to forget it.

ANDREW

Go home, Matthew.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

They don't believe what I saw, but
I do.

That gets their attention.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I need to know...am I deceived?

Simon shakes his head. *I can't with this guy.*

ANDREW

What good is our answer if you
don't even listen to yourself?

Andrew gathers Simon, starts walking him away. Matthew is
left to twist in the wind.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

617 INT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY

617

Nicodemus enters from outdoors. STUDENTS and Yussif BOW.
Along one wall, Shmuel remains seated.

YUSSIF
Welcome, Rabbi.

NICODEMUS
Greetings.

YUSSIF
Everything is prepared, teacher.

NICODEMUS
Thank you.

Shmuel still does not rise. Doesn't acknowledge him at all.
Nicodemus notes it, takes it in stride.

YUSSIF
The scrolls of Isaiah, and Malachi.
Would you like us to bring you any
water, teacher, or...

NICODEMUS
No, thank you. Actually, I'd like
to do the readings a little later,
would you mind giving me some time
to myself?

YUSSIF
Of course, teacher.

Shmuel finally rises from his seat to follow the others when -

NICODEMUS
Shmuel, would you join me?

Shmuel freezes. Busted.

618 INT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - DAY

618

The group is seated around the main room of the house with
cups of tea. A platter of walnuts is passed around.

(CONTINUED)

ON SIMON accepting the platter with the spoiled look of a salty boy, passes it to Andrew -- the same look on his face.

SIMON
Salome didn't cook?

ANDREW
Walnuts?

JOHN pulls back wooden doors to reveal a huge bay window opening out to the street.

MARY MAGDALENE looks up to admire the herbs hanging from the ceiling beams.

MARY MAGDALENE
Your herbs are beautiful.
Saffron...dill...

SALOME
And mint, coriander, and sage, for
Zebedee's indigestion.

ZEBEDEE
Thank you for sharing that, dear
wife.

Changing gears. Any gear.

ZEBEDEE (CONT'D)
So, your father was a fisherman?

JESUS
A carpenter.

ZEBEDEE
Is he back in Nazareth?

JESUS
No he's...in heaven.

ZEBEDEE
What was your father's lineage?

JESUS
Josiah, father of Jeconiah at the
time of the exile.

ZEBEDEE
But before the exile, what tribe?

JOHN
Abba!

(CONTINUED)

ZEBEDEE

I like genealogies. It's what we talk about.

SALOME

I would imagine from the tribe of Judah. Wouldn't it be?

JESUS

(innocently)

And why would you guess the tribe of Judah?

Big James gives his mom a "Stop!" look before - a neighbor, MARA, appears with her husband ELIEL.

MARA

Are you having a party?

ELIEL

We heard voices.

SALOME

Mara, please come in.

BIG JAMES

Rabbi, these are our neighbors, Mara and Eliel.

MARA

Oh, we've heard about you.

JESUS

You have?

ELIEL

The parable of the net.

MARA

I have a question about that.

SIMON

Please, our master is tired, he's had a long day of walking.

JESUS

It's alright. Go on.

MARA

You said angels will come and separate the evil from the righteous. How soon do you think that day will come, Rabbi?

(CONTINUED)

The disciples are annoyed at her gall...and also curious.

JESUS

My friends and I were recently at a wedding. The father of the groom was a man of great wealth, Abner. As the night got longer, near the end of the feast, what do you think his servants were doing back home?

A beat. No one wants to be first. No one except --

SIMON

Waiting. If they're good at their job.

JESUS

Waiting where? In their rooms? In the kitchen?

MARY MAGDALENE

At the gate.

JESUS

Ah, at the gate. And doing what? Just standing there in the dark?

ANDREW

(emboldened)

Holding lamps. Trimmed and well-oiled.

JESUS

But why? Why wouldn't they just relax?

MARY MAGDALENE

Because they don't know when he's coming back.

JESUS

Suppose they figured the master was delayed in coming, so they took a nap on his bed? Got drunk on his wine and let their lamps burn down?

BARNABY (O.S.)

That's easy. They would be fired.

ALL TURN to -- SHULA and BARNABY standing in the open window.

(CONTINUED)

BARNABY (CONT'D)

Then kicked out and called a name
and told that if they ever show
their face around here again--

JESUS

My friends! Shalom.

SHULA

We were just passing by and heard a
familiar voice.

BARNABY

(to Jesus)

We heard about the wedding...can
you do that to the well by my
house?

ZEBEDEE

(to Jesus)

You know them?

JESUS

Yes, Mary introduced them to me.

ZEBEDEE

Come on in, why not?

Mary greets them as Salome goes for more refreshments.

BIG JAMES

You were saying, teacher...

JESUS

So it will be with the end of all
things. Neither the angels in
heaven nor the son of man know the
day or the hour, but only the
Father. So you must always be
ready, with your lamps trimmed and
burning brightly.

ON SIMON as he pulls John aside.

SIMON

It's getting too crowded.

JOHN

Don't worry. You know eema and
abba love company.

SIMON

I'm not worried about them.

(CONTINUED)

618

CONTINUED: (5)

Blue Rev. (mm/dd/yy)

32A.
618

He LOOKS around, SEES what Simon sees. After a beat --

JOHN

Okay. What do you want to do?

OFF -- OVERLAPPING VOICES catch Simon and John's attention.

(CONTINUED)

They TURN TO SEE -- A SMALL CROWD has gathered at the front window. Zebedee GREETs them. INTRODUCES Jesus.

SIMON

Let's try to make sure the path out of your back garden is clear.

JOHN

What do you think is going to happen?

SIMON

Anything could happen. All these people, word spreading, the wrong people stop by.

JOHN

You don't have to be His bodyguard. I think He can handle...anything.

SIMON

He called me, and if we're not fighting the Romans yet, I wanna *do* something until that time comes.

JOHN

He called you to catch men.

SIMON

Whatever that means.

JOHN

Exactly! And if He needed you to know what it meant, He'd have told you. So, just be you. Maybe you already know.

John returns to the others. Simon takes it in, feeling lighter. Feeling good. He might even smile.

CUT TO:

Two scrolls are laid out on the reading table.

NICODEMUS

Shmuel, my eyes are tired. Read to me from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah.

Nico closes his eyes and leans his head back.

(CONTINUED)

SHMUEL

"Comfort, comfort my people--"

NICODEMUS

Further down a few lines.

SHMUEL

"A voice cries, 'In the wilderness
prepare the way of Adonai; make
straight in the desert a highway
for our God.'"

The words hang in the air.

NICODEMUS

Who does that sound like?

Shmuel hesitates.

SHMUEL

The heretic John.

NICODEMUS

And what heresy do you find in
those words? Being that Isaiah
also said them?

SHMUEL

The heresy is that John
has...appropriated Isaiah's words.
By taking a spiritual description
of God in heaven and applying it to
John's physical successor on earth.

NICODEMUS

Successor.

SHMUEL

He said, "After me comes he who is
mightier than I, the strap of whose
sandals I am not worthy to stoop
down and untie."

NICODEMUS

And?

SHMUEL

God has no body. He cannot wear
sandals. God cannot take human
form. To say so is blasphemy.

NICODEMUS

Where does it say God cannot take
human form?

(CONTINUED)

SHMUEL

In the scroll of Deuteronomy --
"You saw no form on the day Adonai
spoke to you at Horeb..."

NICODEMUS

Just because they saw no form
doesn't mean there can never be
one.

SHMUEL

In Exodus -- "You cannot see my
face, for no man shall see me and
live." This person would have to
walk around with his face covered!

NICODEMUS

You would place limits on the
Almighty?

SHMUEL

None that are not written in law.

NICODEMUS

And if God did something that you
felt contradicted the Torah, would
you tell him to get back inside the
box you have carved for him? Or
would you question your
interpretation of the Torah?

Shmuel switches gears from defensive to offensive.

SHMUEL

When I was a student, I knew all
your sayings. I read every word
you wrote. Your teachings were so
sturdy, so reasoned and pure.

NICODEMUS

But we are *still* students. All of
us. Our understanding will never
be complete.

SHMUEL

It frightens me that I can no
longer predict your rulings.

NICODEMUS

And only fear can ensure we stay
ignorant, asleep in the safety of a
rigid tradition.

Shmuel's eyes search him. *Rigid?*

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Think of the Sadducees. They only take the first five books, the law of Moses, to be inspired Scripture. The rest is disregarded. To them, God stopped speaking when Moses died. Think of all they've missed - the psalms of David, the stories of Ruth and Boaz, Esther and Mordecai. I don't want to be living in some bleak past where God can't do anything new. Do you?

SHMUEL

Why is that your concern, God gave us his law, we must uphold it!

NICODEMUS

We can do both! Let's look to the ancient roads where the good way is and walk in it, as Jeremiah said, and yet still keep our eyes open to the startling and unexpected. Can we agree to that?

A pause.

SHMUEL

Yes.

NICODEMUS

You and I can lead the others in this.

YUSSIF (O.S.)

I beg your pardon, Teacher of Teachers.

They turn to see Yussif at the entrance.

SHMUEL

What's happened?

YUSSIF

A crowd has gathered in the east side to hear a man preaching.

SHMUEL

A Pharisee?

YUSSIF

No, a common person.

(off Shmuel)

It's not John. Someone normal.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YUSSIF (CONT'D)

He's commanding the attention of
the entire area.

NICODEMUS

We will investigate.

Shmuel nods assent. Nicodemus quickly gathers his things.

620 INT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - DAY 620

The CROWD has grown. Five, six...10 MEN DEEP in places.
There is no room to pass through the street.

But, while the numbers have swelled, ABSOLUTE SILENCE among
those gathered. Jesus holding court, addressing Eliel--

JESUS

So you think because Pilate killed
them, they must have been worse
sinners than others?

ELIEL

I know Pilate wasn't doing it for
that reason, but God must have been
punishing them for *something*.

Salome and Mara are busy moving from person to person,
refilling cups from a clay kettle.

JESUS

No, God doesn't look at some as
worse than others. All must repent
or perish. You know about the
tower in Siloam that killed the
eighteen.

ELIEL

Of course.

JESUS

Do you think they were worse than
the others who lived in Jerusalem?
No, *all* must repent or perish.

621 INT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - SIDE AREA - CONTINUOUS 621

Salome, Mary Magdalene, and Mara are scurrying past each
other in and out of the main room, carrying dishes.

SALOME

I'm out of pistachios, walnuts,
bread, and water.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

621 CONTINUED:

SALOME (CONT'D)

Can you go next door and ask
Deborah for more bread to serve
this crowd.

MARA

Deborah's...right there.

DEBORAH waves from a corner. Salome deflates.

MARY MAGDALENE

They're already being fed.

Mary turns to -- THE CROWD. Rapt, drinking in Jesus' words.

622 INT./EXT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

622

ON JESUS -

SHULA

What about prayer?

JESUS

What about it?

SHULA

I don't like to pray out loud
because I feel embarrassed around
the leaders who know how to do it
better.

JESUS

Bah, big words don't matter. A lot
of that's for show anyway, don't
worry about doing it in public.
It's better to go into your room
and shut the door and pray to your
Father who sees in secret. It's
the same with giving to the needy.
Don't let your left hand know what
your right hand is doing.

Barnaby is half inside, half out. The working end --

BARNABY

How can my right hand do something
and my left hand not know it?

JESUS

I mean be generous without thinking
about it. Don't make a big show of
it to others, and don't even
congratulate yourself privately.
Give in humility.

623 EXT. GHETTO STREET - CONTINUOUS

623

OFF -- Jesus TEACHES, semi-muted.

TAMAR rounds a corner, a half-block from Zebedee's house, taking in the scene before her. The crowd, pushing closer to listen. A KNOWING SMILE spreads and she looks back --

TAMAR

Come!

FOUR ETHIOPIAN MEN carrying a PARALYTIC on a stretcher.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

624 EXT. TAX BOOTH - DAY

624

Matthew is in a contemplative fog, Dog at his side. His writing tablet lies open before him.

Gaius, from his usual spot, scans the market. Oddly quiet.

GAIUS
When was your last customer?

No response.

GAIUS (CONT'D)
Matthew. Hello!

Matthew, roused from his stupor, tries to collect himself.

MATTHEW
I'm sorry, what?

GAIUS
How long has it been since you had a customer?

MATTHEW
I don't have customers.

GAIUS
When was the last *citizen*?

MATTHEW
One hour. Perhaps two.

GAIUS
Is there a Jewish holiday I don't know about?

MATTHEW
There are many you don't know about.

Gaius grimaces. *Golly, what's got this guy's goat?*

GAIUS
Snap out of it.

Marcus approaches.

GAIUS (CONT'D)
Marcus.

(CONTINUED)

Marcus and Gaius speak in HUSHED TONES. Matthew, meanwhile, takes in the almost deserted market.

GAIUS (CONT'D)

Matthew, close the booth and go home.

MATTHEW

It's not time yet.

GAIUS

There's a situation. Lock up and get out of here.

MATTHEW

What situation would require we abandon our post?

GAIUS

A mob in the east slums.

Matthew perks up, mind races. Could it be? He SPRINGS into action. Stuffs his tablet in a pouch.

MATTHEW

I'm coming with you.

GAIUS

Excuse me? I said a mob -- of people.

Dog comes to life --

MATTHEW

(to Dog)

You stay. It could be dangerous.

GAIUS

Matthew, I don't have time to protect you.

MATTHEW

How do you think I survive the other sixteen hours of the day?

Gaius locks the booth with Dog inside. As they start walking hurriedly --

GAIUS

I honestly don't know.

626 INT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - DAY

626

In the middle of the dialogue between Jesus and crowd...

JESUS

That brings up a good point. All of you listening...you are decent people, yes? Pretty righteous? Kind of? Not bad?

They chuckle.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Let me tell you a story.

627 EXT. EASTERN GHETTO - MOMENTS LATER

627

Tamar fights through the tight crowd with her friends carrying the stretcher.

JESUS (O.S.)

Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, the best of us, right? And the other a tax collector, the worst, yes?

SIMON moves easily through the crowd. We recognize him as the guy buying drinks and making friends again.

JESUS (CONT'D)

The Pharisee, standing by himself, prays this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'

Simon nods to a FISHERMAN and his FAMILY.

SIMON

Can you hear okay? He's amazing, right?

JESUS

But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his chest, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified before God, rather than the other.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JESUS (CONT'D)

For everyone who exalts himself
will be humbled, but the one who
humbles himself will be exalted."

Simon and Andrew continue, when they notice a disruption in
the crowd. They can't see the source, but hear --

TAMAR (O.S.)

Excuse us. Pardon me. Please...

Simon approaches the commotion when Tamar and Ethiopian Men
EMERGE from the crowd with the Paralytic in tow.

SIMON

Where are you going?

TAMAR

Please, we need to see Jesus.

ANDREW

There's no room up there.

TAMAR

He's paralyzed from the waist down.
He can't stand.

SIMON

There's definitely no room then.

MARY MAGDALENE

Simon, he deserves to hear Jesus as
much as anyone else.

TAMAR

(lighting up)

Hello again. Oh, I'm so glad I
found you.

SIMON

Why do you need to get closer?

TAMAR

I saw what your master did to that
leper. I know what I saw.

Simon looks to Mary, then Andrew. *He did it again?*

ANDREW

We're trying to keep that under
wraps for now. Look at this crowd.
Imagine what we'd be up against if
they--

(CONTINUED)

TAMAR

Please! Help me get my friend to him.

SIMON

We've got company.

Gaius, Marcus, and Matthew have arrived at the edge of the scene.

Holding Simon back --

ANDREW

I'll talk to them.

Andrew heads toward the soldiers.

MARY MAGDALENE turns to Tamar.

MARY MAGDALENE

Come with me.

At the edge of the crowd --

MARCUS

What's going on here?

ANDREW

This is a peaceful gathering.

GAIUS

That's what the Maccabees said.

MARCUS

(indicating the other side
of the crowd)

They're blocking the street.

GAIUS strides toward the other side of the street, Andrew tags along, trying to explain --

ANDREW

I'll move them. They just haven't been told where to stand yet.

MATTHEW watches them leave.

JESUS (O.S.)

You must always be persistent in your prayer and your faith. In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JESUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, "Grant me justice against my adversary."

SIMON watches Matthew wade into the crowd. A big man SEES him, shoves Matthew aside.

SIMON watches with amusement as Matthew stumbles backward, moves along the edge of the crowd.

JESUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, "Even though I don't fear God, because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she doesn't wear me out!"

Another man spits at Matthew. He leaps out of the way, backing into a wall. Terror etched on his face --

MARY MAGDALENE can't get Tamar through the crowd.

MARY MAGDALENE

I'm sorry, there's too many people.

TAMAR

But you know him. Can't you get us closer?

MARY MAGDALENE

I don't want to interrupt the Teacher by causing a scene.

PARALYTIC

What if you were *me*?

Mary sees the paralytic's frightened eyes full of longing and desperation.

TAMAR

Wouldn't you want your friends to make a scene? Wouldn't it be worth it?

MARY MAGDALENE

I was you, once.

TAMAR

What about the roof?

Mary spots the staircase along the side of Zebedee's house.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW inches along the wall...hyperventilating...rueing his decision to come.

JESUS (O.S.)

Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?

A cherry hits Matthew on the temple. Thinking the hostile Jews have now resorted to fruit throwing, he blurts out, covering his face--

MATTHEW

I just wanted to hear the teacher teach, I'm not here to collect tribute!

ABIGAIL (O.S.)

Psst!

Matthew looks around, confused.

JOSHUA (O.S.)

Up here!

Matthew looks up to see two children, JOSHUA and ABIGAIL, (from Episode 103) seated on the roof, eating from a bowl of cherries. They motion joyfully for him to join them.

ABIGAIL

It's okay! Come up!

MATTHEW

How did you get up there?

ABIGAIL

We climbed the ladder. It's easy.

*

It clearly won't be. Matthew makes a couple of awkward attempts, and then Joshua grabs Matthew's hand, which startles Matthew (OCD). He pulls away and wipes it.

SIMON sees Matthew struggling. He rolls his eyes and approaches. As Matthew lifts his foot against the wall, Simon easily pushes him up and onto the roof.

MATTHEW

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

Simon ignores him, notices the children.

SIMON

Where are your parents?

Abigail points to the crowd, chomping on a cherry.

SIMON (CONT'D)

I see. Well, the man speaking is called--

ABIGAIL

Jesus of Nazareth.

JOSHUA

We know him.

Simon doesn't know what to do with that.

Matthew, meanwhile, is entranced --

MATTHEW POV - a clear view of Jesus teaching from the window of Zebedee's house. His face glows with wonder.

JESUS

Consider how the wild flowers grow.
They do not labor or spin. Yet I
tell you, not even Solomon was
dressed as beautifully. If that is
how God clothes the grass of the
field, which is here today, and
tomorrow is thrown into the fire,
how much more will he clothe you?

Mary Magdalene leads the Ethiopians up the exterior stone staircase leading to the roof of Zeb's house.

MARY MAGDALENE

Up here. There's a hole in the
roof you'll be able to hear his
voice. It's the best I can do.

As they ascend, Friend notices a FISHING NET hanging on the wall. He GRABS at it as they carry Paralytic to the roof.

Nicodemus, Shmuel and Yussif arrive at the edge of the crowd. It's a human wall. They take in the scene for a moment, astonished. A few people notice them and step aside.

(CONTINUED)

Shmuel steps forward, nearing a man's back.

SHMUEL

Ahem.

No response. Shmuel loudly clears his throat.

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

Excuse me.

The man turns, it's Barnaby.

BARNABY

Quiet! We're trying to listen.

SHMUEL

(indignant)

Do you know who you're--

NICODEMUS

(pulling him back)

Shmuel--

Nico pulls him around so that that Nico is facing away from the crowd holding Shmuel by the shoulders.

SHMUEL

Did you hear his disrespect?

NICODEMUS

You remember the Red Quarter? We are out of our element.

SHMUEL

But we have to learn who is teaching. Look at this crowd!

NICODEMUS

All the more reason to be cautious.

*

But Shmuel's face has gone ashen white. He is looking up over Nico's shoulder to Zebedee's rooftop.

SHMUEL

Rabbi...it's her...

Nicodemus follows his gaze to SEE --

Mary Magdalene on the roof, indicating to the Ethiopians where to lay the paralytic near the open slats.

(CONTINUED)

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

She is truly restored!

(To Yussif)

I had only heard your report, not
seen her for myself. She's a
different person!

But Nicodemus' head is exploding for a different reason -- *If she is here the teacher in the house **must** be the miracle man.*

NICODEMUS

(to himself)

Why is she here?

EXT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - ROOF - CONTINUOUS

The Ethiopians situate the paralytic on the roof, sliding planks so that Jesus' voice comes through clearly.

OVERHEAD --

JESUS

Our faith isn't something we hide
and keep to ourselves. You are the
light of the world. A city on a
hill cannot be hidden. And if it
were nighttime, Zebedee wouldn't
light his lamp and put it under a
basket, he'd put it on a stand so
it could light us all.

TAMAR goes to the front edge of the roof directly over the window where Jesus is teaching.

CROWD recoils, concerned.

TAMAR straightens to her full height lets her voice fly, as if addressing the entire ghetto --

TAMAR

Jesus of Nazareth!

JESUS and the others inside the house look up, surprised.

TAMAR (CONT'D)

I saw what you did to the leper on
the road this afternoon.

CROWD is scandalized, intrigued.

TAMAR (CONT'D)

My friend has been paralyzed since
childhood. He has no hope but you.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TAMAR (CONT'D)

Please. Do for him what you did
for the leper.

FRIEND 2 lifts a roof board.

IN THE HOUSE --

ZEBEDEE

What on earth...?

SALOME

That's our roof!

JOHN

Put it back, man.

TAMAR

If you are willing, Rabbi, I know
you can do this.

ETHIOPIAN FRIENDS set Paralytic onto the giant fishing net,
canvas stretcher and all, and lower him down.

IN THE HOUSE - chaos. Paralytic dangles, SWINGS.

BIG JAMES and JOHN reach up to support him as he descends.

CROWD ROARS --

CROWD

Heal him! Show us a miracle! Show
us a sign, Rabbi!

SHMUEL has seen enough. Apoplectic, he plunges into the
crowd, elbowing his way toward the house. Yussif following.

NICODEMUS meanwhile is silent but AWAKE! Rapt. All but
crying out along with the crowd.

MATTHEW, too, can barely take all of this in. He absently
grabs a cherry from Abigail's bowl.

PARALYTIC is cradled in mid-air. Salome and Mara clear floor
space for him, scrambling to move pillows, stools, plates.

SIMON is suddenly gripped with fear. He looks up at Matthew -

SIMON

This is what you wanted. Get out
your tablet at least.

And with that, Simon hops onto the roof and then RACES along
the roofline.

(CONTINUED)

One rooftop. LEAPS to the next. Separated by an alley, he's close enough to Mary to call out --

SIMON (CONT'D)

Is he in danger?

MARY MAGDALENE

No. I don't think so. I don't know.

SIMON

He's got room in there?

Mary peers into Zebedee's house.

MARY MAGDALENE

Yes.

Simon scans for options. He'll have to climb down. He catches Mary's eye. Both are exhilarated and terrified, here to witness the indescribable.

SIMON

Can you believe we're really here for this?

MARY MAGDALENE

Yes.

Simon laughs. And starts to scale down the back wall of Zebedee's neighbor's house.

SHMUEL AND YUSSIF reach the window just as the disciples are laying the paralytic down on the floor gently.

SHMUEL

You. By whose authority do you teach? Answer me.

TAMAR (O.S.)

If you are willing you know you can.

JESUS looks up at her. Shmuel grows impatient --

SHMUEL

Hey! I'm talking to you. By whom do you teach? Certainly not the authority of any rabbi from Nazareth! Where did you study?

Jesus addresses those on the roof --

(CONTINUED)

JESUS
Your faith is beautiful.

He turns to the paralytic.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Son, take heart, your sins are
forgiven.

Silence. Everywhere. The paralytic and friends aren't unhappy, but this isn't why they came. Shmuel is horrified, Yussif shocked.

Jesus turns to them and chuckles.

JESUS (CONT'D)
"Who is this who speaks
blasphemies? Who can forgive sins
but God alone?" Right?

Nicodemus is transfixed. Yussif is shocked again, glances at Shmuel, who maintains a glare at Jesus.

JESUS (CONT'D)
But I ask you -- Which is easier to
say? "Your sins are forgiven," or
to say, "Rise and walk"?

Shmuel doesn't bite. The silence continues.

JESUS (CONT'D)
It's pretty easy to say anything,
no? But... to *show* you, and that
you may know, that the Son of Man
has authority on earth to forgive
sins...
(to Paralytic)
...I say to you, rise, pick up your
bed and go home.

PARALYTIC looks down at his own frail body. All the way down his stringy legs to the end of his toes --

One toe WIGGLES. GASPS from OFF. Then, the whole foot as...he LIFTS his knee.

TAMAR covers her mouth to keep from sobbing.

PARALYTIC slowly stands on shaky legs that have not borne weight in over 20 years, until...he collapses into an embrace with Jesus.

The four ETHIOPIANS erupt in cheers. The crowd follows.

(CONTINUED)

TAMAR lifts her tear-streaked face heavenward.

ABIGAIL and JOSHUA cheer. PAN TO Matthew who writes without looking, eyes frozen on the figures of --

PARALYTIC pulls back from Jesus, then does as he was told -- folds up the stretcher and walks out the door. The ETHIOPIANS yelp and run off the roof to go greet him.

CROWD parts like the Red Sea, still CHEERING.

NICODEMUS is awed and moved until -- he meets eyes with an apoplectic Shmuel across the way. NOW they're back on opposite sides of the fence.

Shmuel turns back to look at Jesus, who is reaching up to touch the hand of Tamar who is laying on her stomach on the roof, reaching her hand down to thank Jesus. He squeezes her hand and smiles at her.

Shmuel gathers up his breath for a bellow--

SHMUEL

Roman guards! A threat to the
public peace!

Pandemonium ensues.

GAIUS and MARCUS charge forward as the crowd flees.

IN THE HOUSE -- Simon bursts in through the backdoor.

SIMON

Teacher! This way!

Jesus follows Simon's suggestion.

James and John slam the bay windows shut and brace them. Zebedee closes the front door and bolts it.

MARY MAGDALENE runs to the back stairs.

NICODEMUS SEES Mary Magdalene disappearing from the roof. He scrambles toward the house as people fly past him going the opposite direction -- one of them is the Paralytic, who smiles at an astonished Nicodemus as he passes.

GAIUS and SOLDIER pound on the door.

NICODEMUS approaches the house just as Mary Magdalene is about to escape down the alley.

NICODEMUS

Mary!

(CONTINUED)

She turns.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Wait!

But she's not afraid, only elated.

MARY MAGDALENE

You saw it?

NICODEMUS

(in wonder)

I saw the paralytic walk past me on
two feet.

MARY MAGDALENE

You asked me before if I knew his
name. Now everyone knows his name
and I fear for his safety.

NICODEMUS

I mean no trouble for him, no
dishonor--

MARY MAGDALENE

Your friends tried to have him
arrested!

NICODEMUS

They're jealous. They're afraid.
But I'm not. I promise you.
Please, I must speak with him.

MARY MAGDALENE

I follow him, not the other way
around. He doesn't tell anyone his
plans.

NICODEMUS

Will you ask him for a meeting?

MARY MAGDALENE

I--

NICODEMUS

In secret. Under cover of night.
At a place of his choosing. I
don't care if it's a cave or a
ravine or even a tomb, I just need
to talk to him. Please, Mary.

She studies him.

(CONTINUED)

MARY MAGDALENE

I will try.

She turns and vanishes into the evening.

BEHIND ZEBEDEE'S the disciples split ways, directed by Simon.

MATTHEW ambles clumsily down from the roof. He looks around, in a daze.

*
*

ABIGAIL

Are you lost?

*
*

MATTHEW

Yes, I am.

*

And, with no urgency or direction, Matthew walks. He is lost. We all would be.

631 INT. ZEBEDEE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

631

Salome answers the door the Romans have long been pounding.

SALOME

Is there a problem, officer?

Gaius pushes past her, SEES the house entirely empty.

632 EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

632

Matthew rounds a corner. His eyes go wide --

Jesus stands ten feet away. They lock eyes for a beat. Just as suddenly, Simon rounds a bend with Andrew, James and John, ushering Jesus to safety.

Matthew watches them go. The longing in his heart palpable as we --

END EPISODE

THE CHOSEN

Episode #107

"Invitations"

written by

Ryan M. Swanson &
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PINK draft
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TEASER

701

INT. TENT - AFTERNOON

701

SUPER -- Sinai Peninsula - Sometime around 13th Century B.C.

MOSES (50s) stands before a cauldron over an open fire.

He carefully POURS gleaming red hot smelt into a crude mold.
Steam HISSES.

At the entrance of the tent -- a man arrives. JOSHUA (30s),
spy, militia leader and confidant of Moses.

He pauses. CLEARS his throat.

Moses is facing away from the entrance, hunched over his
work. Without looking up from his task --

MOSES

Joshua. How many more in the night?

JOSHUA

Some 300, sir.

MOSES

Where will you bury them?

JOSHUA

The men are trying to dig a trench,
but the ground is hard and rocky.

Moses doesn't respond.

JOSHUA (CONT'D)

With respect Moses, it's not the
dead I'm concerned for, but the
dying. Hundreds fall by the day.
For every serpent killed another
ten appear.

Moses CLANGS a hammer on moldable metal. CLANG CLANG
CLANG... Drops the hammer.

MOSES

Maybe we leave the bodies in this
cave.

JOSHUA

At the rate people are dying, there
won't be enough room even if we
stack them to the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

MOSES

Then we'll have to leave and find
someplace else.

JOSHUA

We're not leaving any time soon.
Too many are sick and cannot walk.

MOSES

After today the only Hebrews too
sick to walk will be those who
choose to remain so.

JOSHUA

Is there medicine in this bronze?
You told the people that you would
ask God to forgive their rebellion,
heal the serpent bites--

MOSES

I did.

JOSHUA

Then why are you hiding in a tent.

Turning on him, with fury --

MOSES

It wasn't my idea, Joshua!

JOSHUA

It's a pagan symbol. You didn't
ask him if he was sure? Maybe you
didn't understand him right.

MOSES

I've learned to do what he says
without questioning. You remember
what happened at Meribah.

JOSHUA

Just to be sure, we could send
messengers into Ezion-Geber, beg
for aid--

MOSES

(indicating)
Hand me that pole.

Joshua hands him a long pole standing against a wall. Moses
hoists --

CLOSE ON -- a coiled BRONZE SNAKE. He blows off a few flecks
of ore and sand. He indicates to Joshua to --

(CONTINUED)

Joshua threads the pole through one of the coils.

JOSHUA

The people will say it's some kind
of cruel joke.

MOSES

They can say that.

JOSHUA

Help me understand. It doesn't
make any sense.

MOSES

How do you explain the Red Sea?
The manna and quail? The pillar of
fire? Any Israelite who looks upon
this bronze serpent and believes in
the power of Adonai will be healed.
It is an act of faith, not reason.

Moses drapes the bronze snake on the pole, HOLDS it high. It
GLEAMS in the firelight. And that's about when we --

FADE TO BLACK.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN ON:

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX

DISSOLVE TO:

702 EXT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING MORNING 702

SUPER -- Capernaum - A.D. 30

703 INT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - MORNING 703

Matthew does his morning routine we've seen before, but this time his OCD is clearly escalated. Each decision takes him moments longer, even though his choices for wardrobe and sandals are identical.

704 EXT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS 704

Matthew exits his home, and he turns the lock of his door even more times than normal. DOG is sitting outside. Matthew nods at him, then turns and is startled -- it's GAIUS.

MATTHEW

Why are you here?

GAIUS

I'm escorting you.

MATTHEW

Because you feel indebted for your promotion.

GAIUS

You're complaining about safely walking the streets?

Defiantly, Matthew starts walking quickly. Gaius follows.

MATTHEW

I didn't help Quintus for you.

GAIUS

Oh, I know. You couldn't help yourself.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

I spoke up because I was right.

GAIUS

You got lucky.

MATTHEW

Luck doesn't exist.

GAIUS

So you knew Quintus wouldn't kill you?

MATTHEW

He was smart to go after fishermen, but he had to be desperate to enlist Simon.

Gaius snorts, still unsure if he likes Matthew or hates him.

GAIUS

I don't buy it. You were terrified.

MATTHEW

Gaius, what if you were suddenly the only Roman in Capernaum?

GAIUS

(jocular)

I think I'd change clothes.

MATTHEW

Exactly. When you realize that nobody else in the world cares what happens to you, you think only about yourself.

GAIUS

For a fool, your brain has taken you far. I admit it.

MATTHEW

I thought so, too.

Gaius throws Matthew a quizzical look -- *what's the mean?* -- when someone's wash hanging out to dry HITS him in the face.

Nicodemus reads. He glances at an hourglass where sand slowly drains down. Sweat beads his brow.

He looks again at the hourglass. He tries again to focus on his reading.

OFF -- the sound of a DOOR OPENING. Zohara sails in.

ZOHARA

Praise Adonai, he's healthy and alive!

NICODEMUS

What are you talking about?

ZOHARA

I received word from Jerusalem. Havilah gave birth to a son. You're a grandfather...again!

NICODEMUS

So soon?

She's already packing up the room.

ZOHARA

A month early, but thank heaven all is well. Oh blessed be He! We'll have the rest of our things sent.

NICODEMUS

But my work here is not yet finished.

ZOHARA

We have to make it back in time for the bris, we have only eight days. LESS than eight.

NICODEMUS

The circumcision can be performed by anyone trained.

ZOHARA

Nico, this is your own grandson!

NICODEMUS

FIFTH grandson. Havilah will understand.

NOT what Zohara wants to hear or will stand for. *He must just not get it --*

(CONTINUED)

ZOHARA

Do you know what people will say when they learn the Great Nicodemus missed his own grandson's name day because he was doing research in Capernaum, of all places?

NICODEMUS

Research that concerns not just one Jewish boy but all of Israel, past, present and future.

ZOHARA

There is nothing in Capernaum! Only demoniacs and insolent students. Come to your senses.

NICODEMUS

I have never been closer to my senses.

ZOHARA

That's not how it looks on the outside.

NICODEMUS

Many things are not.

ZOHARA

I'm ready to leave this place, Nico. I miss our children and grandchildren, including the one I haven't even met yet.

OFF - the DOOR opens. As BOTH TURN --

NICODEMUS

You can't just walk in h--

SEE - Quintus strides into the room.

QUINTUS

Oh I believe I can.

Nicodemus holds his tongue. BOWS. Compulsory.

NICODEMUS

Praetor Quintus.

Zohara puts her head covering on.

QUINTUS

Zohara, is it? A pleasure to see you again.

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS
I trust all is well.

QUINTUS
Why would you trust that?

NICODEMUS
Do sit down.

Quintus plops down on a sofa as if it were his own -- well, it is. Liking what he feels --

QUINTUS
We really will have to discuss the people's tithing.

NICODEMUS
This is why you've come?

QUINTUS
I need to know if we have a problem, Nicodemus.

NICODEMUS
I have complied with every request Rome has made of my office, even when it infringed on custom.

QUINTUS
Let me rephrase. You and I want the same thing...we want rules followed, we want order. Soldiers, money, votes -- that's my world. Demons, prayers, weirdos -- that's yours. I need to know if our worlds are on a collision course.

Nicodemus studies him.

QUINTUS (CONT'D)
The so-called miracle worker.

The beans. Willing to spill a few --

NICODEMUS
Jesus of Nazareth.

QUINTUS
Don't even know what Nazareth is, but yes, him.

NICODEMUS
Anecdotes and rumors.

(CONTINUED)

QUINTUS

And a *stampede* in the eastern ghetto that delayed Herod's envoy! That really made me look bad. I hate that.

NICODEMUS

The unrest began when soldiers rushed into the crowd brandishing weapons.

QUINTUS

It's not an isolated event. I've heard reports, and my source has an unwavering knack for accuracy and a compulsion for truth. So, I ask you again -- is there a problem?

A beat.

NICODEMUS

No.

QUINTUS

You don't seem sure. Maybe I'd get better information from this...

Shmuel?

(off his reaction)

He's very eager to see me.

The news is sandpaper. Nicodemus regains focus. He'll deal with it later.

NICODEMUS

The only way to learn this preacher's intentions would be to speak with him directly.

QUINTUS

So speak to him.

(already on his feet)

I hate dealing with crowds, it takes time and resources and then the cleanup is a pain. So when you arrange a private meeting, I want to know where and when.

Understand?

Faced with a choice to reveal the plot or stay silent --

NICODEMUS

What worries you about him?

(CONTINUED)

QUINTUS

Preachers have a habit of becoming politicians. They sprout up like weeds and spread. Your wife gardens. She understands.

NICODEMUS

Some flora spread their seeds when trampled. Who's to say you wouldn't be creating a martyr?

QUINTUS

And cause to say Caesar is not just? Time will tell.

Quintus exits, closes the door behind him with a THUD.

Nicodemus reels. Mind racing. Shmuel...Rome...Jesus...the meeting place -- is it safe?

PULL BACK to find Zohara watching her husband closely. Searching. She sensed something new and disturbing in this exchange. She goes ashen when she realizes what it is --

ZOHARA

You sympathize with the preacher.

Before Nicodemus can respond, Zohara exits. Nicodemus can only watch.

Thaddeus splits wood for the fire. Little James picks berries from a bush.

Jesus and John are stretching a canvas over a rope between two trees to make a tent.

JOHN

Will we be safe here?

JESUS

What do you mean, safe?

JOHN

They'll be looking for us because of what you said about forgiving sins.

JESUS

Ah. We won't be here long. After what happened yesterday we'll keep on the move from town to town.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Is that what you want?

JESUS

What do you mean?

JOHN

To roam about and not be able to
stay in once place? Do you want
that?

Jesus considers this.

JESUS

I want to do the will of my Father.
And I want to spread the message of
salvation. So yes, I am happy to
not stay in one place.

THADDEUS (O.S.)

Rabbi?

JESUS

Yes, Thad.

Indicating his pile --

THADDEUS

I should prepare firewood for how
many days?

JESUS

Five, I think.

JOHN

I thought you said we wouldn't be
here very long.

JESUS

Leaving some for the next weary
traveler. Hospitality isn't only
for people who own homes, John.Mary Magdalene arrives at the camp. She is clearly
overwhelmed and ANXIOUS.

Thaddeus and Little James exchange concerned looks.

THADDEUS

Mary?

LITTLE JAMES

Are you alright?

(CONTINUED)

Mary catches herself.

MARY MAGDALENE

Me? Yes, of course. May I speak with you, Rabbi?

JESUS

(dusting off his hands)
Of course.

Mary and Jesus sit on a log. At first, Mary has trouble making eye contact.

MARY MAGDALENE

I wanted to apologize for yesterday.

JESUS

For what?

MARY MAGDALENE

I was trying to help those people get closer to the sound of your voice. I didn't know they would open the roof and disrupt your teaching. I truly...

JESUS

You regret that a paralytic is enjoying his first full day on his own feet?

MARY MAGDALENE

No, only that I caused a scene and cut short your teaching.

JESUS

Who's to say it was cut short? With their faith, they were going to find a way whether you led them to the roof or not.

MARY MAGDALENE

There's more. When we were leaving, a Pharisee stopped me and asked for a private meeting with you. I told him I would ask.

JESUS

Do you know this man?

MARY MAGDALENE

He visited me...before.

JESUS

A Pharisee in the Red Quarter, hm?

MARY MAGDALENE

Rome sent him. I doubt he wanted to be there.

JESUS

No, I wouldn't think so.

MARY MAGDALENE

But then I saw him again, when I was better, and he wanted to know how I was healed. Of course I didn't tell him who you were, but he seemed...

JESUS

What?

She hesitates.

MARY MAGDALENE

Earnest. He wasn't offended to learn someone else had succeeded where he had failed. There was a hunger in his eyes, not fear.

JESUS

Not like the other Pharisees at the window yesterday.

MARY MAGDALENE

I'm sorry to have brought all this on you.

JESUS

No, there is a reason you met this Pharisee.

MARY MAGDALENE

Nicodemus.

JESUS

Of course. I've heard of him.

MARY MAGDALENE

I don't know who is known and who is not. It's all new to me.

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

Don't worry about which men others think are important. Send word to Nicodemus that I will meet him. Little James will know the location. Thank you.

MARY MAGDALENE

Yes, teacher.

He gets up.

MARY MAGDALENE (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

JESUS

To be alone. I need to think. And pray.

MARY MAGDALENE

I will pray also. That I haven't put you in terrible danger.

Jesus laughs.

JESUS

You have not. In fact, I've already made plans for tomorrow night.

MARY

Plans?

JESUS

Yes, spread the word. A dinner party. In the northern district, the tall house just past the arch.

MARY MAGDALENE

But that row of homes--

JESUS

I know the kind of people who live there. Trust me.

MARY MAGDALENE

I will tell the others.

As Mary scoots --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

708 EXT. HOME OF ALPHEAUS - AFTERNOON

708

Matthew hesitates before knocking on a door at a humble wood house in a row of houses.

After a beat, he turns on his heel, retreats. Dog follows.

Just as suddenly, Matthew turns again, returns to the door. Second verse, same as the first. Finally, Matthew squints his eyes like he's passing a kidney stone and KNOCKS.

The door cracks...a beat...then we the shocked face of ISABEL (40s) peer out at --

ISABEL

Matthew?

MATTHEW

Hello, Eema.

(catching himself)

...or Isabel, I mean. Hello.

ISABEL

Matthew.

A beat. She's shocked at this moment. An existential shock.

MATTHEW

I don't receive visitors, myself.

Is this a custom?

Isabel snaps out of her daze. Opens the door a few inches.

ISABEL

If your father were here, I couldn't do this.

MATTHEW

Where is Alphaeus?

But Isabel doesn't hear him. Her eyes stuck on Dog. In a shocked whisper --

ISABEL

I think a dog followed you.

MATTHEW

He's with me. He'll stay here if you'll let me in.

(CONTINUED)

708 CONTINUED:

Almost despite herself, she opens the door for her only son.

709 INT. HOME OF ALPHAEUS - AFTERNOON

709

Matthew and Isabel sit in awkward silence at a table with clay cups of water.

MATTHEW

Will Alphaeus be home soon?

ISABEL

He's away on a work trip.

MATTHEW

Where would work take him? Does he no longer make leather goods?

ISABEL

His shop was robbed. Many of the shops have been. Crime is rampant. It makes it very difficult to reopen. He's forced to make items on commission and travel.

MATTHEW

He loved his shop.

Matthew takes it all in. Feeling the sting of all the life he's missed..

ISABEL

But we still have a roof over our heads, which is more than some people can say.

MATTHEW

You can ask me for money if you ever need it.

ISABEL

How can you say that?

MATTHEW

It's quite common. I've seen many parents entirely dependent on--

ISABEL

Your father would sooner die than take your blood money.

MATTHEW

I know you are ashamed of me, but your decision is irrational.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Rome will collect no matter what.
I'm skilled with numbers--

ISABEL

Did you come here to justify
yourself?

MATTHEW

No!

Matthew stands, frustrated with his inability to communicate.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Everything's like...sand in a
flood. The things I thought I knew
to be true...

ISABEL

Are you in trouble?

MATTHEW

Do you think impossible things can
happen? That overturn the laws of
nature? That cannot be explained?

Her eyes light up at a memory. Just as quickly drown by
tears welling up.

ISABEL

That's what people asked when you
were a boy. Even the rabbis were
astonished at your talent for
reading, math, the way you could
think faster than any child. They
thought you'd become someone great.

She puts a hand to her mouth to cover the emotion.

MATTHEW

(honestly)

Great at what? I am rich. I have
an armed escort. I am trusted by
the Praetor of Galilee--

ISABEL

We never dreamed you would use the
talent God gave you to bleed your
people dry!

Matthew studies her face. He knows her words should hurt
him...but they don't. His mind goes immediately back to --

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

But have you ever seen anything
miraculous?

ISABEL

Matthew--

MATTHEW

My whole world -- everything I
thought I knew...what if it's
wrong?!

ISABEL

I think you should go.

He doesn't look her in the eyes as he stiffly makes his way
to the door.

ISABEL (CONT'D)

You didn't even ask about your
sister.

MATTHEW

She looks well.

(off her look)

I came to celebrate Shabbat a few
weeks ago. But then I left.

Isabel reacts. Sadness and regret.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Good bye, Eema.

Isabel watches him leave.

Eden and Jesus are working at the counter. Jesus fillets a
fish while Eden slices parsley and mint for tabbouleh. Simon
paces the room, anxious.

SIMON

I'm not so sure this is a good
idea.

JESUS

Why not?

SIMON

It could be a trap. Nicodemus
cooperates with Rome. They're the
ones who sent him to Mary when she
was possessed in the Red Quarter.

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

I'm well-acquainted with risk, Simon. So are you, if I remember correctly from our first meeting.

EDEN

Risk is his oldest friend, I'm afraid.

JESUS

Mary is an excellent judge of character. She has known the worst kinds of men in this world, and she finds him earnest. You should trust her instincts. And mine.

ANDREW (O.S.)

Rabbi, I've got it.

Andrew walks in with a large BLACK CLOAK.

Eema coughs off-screen and Simon clears his throat loudly to cover it, throwing a wild look at Eden.

JESUS

Ah, let's take a look.

As Andrew hands Jesus the cloak, Simon leans to Eden.

SIMON

(hushed)

Can you keep her quiet? No one needs to know Eema is sick.

EDEN

I can't tell her not to cough, Simon.

SIMON

I just don't want our burdens to become his. I don't want to be the one to distract him.

EDEN

He made up his mind about you. He's not going to kick you out of the group.

JESUS (O.S.)

It's perfect!

Jesus models the cloak, hamming it up.

(CONTINUED)

JESUS (CONT'D)

Well done. I could probably fit all of you in here with me.

ANDREW

You won't be recognized in that.

He's right. It's huge.

JESUS

Has the owner of the house given permission?

ANDREW

It's all arranged, Rabbi. And I'll be waiting at the door.

JESUS

Thank you. Go on ahead. But remember to relax. You're there to guide our guest, not to be my protector.

Andrew leaves.

SIMON

Are you sure you don't want me to come? The more eyes watching the streets for trouble the better.

JESUS

Not tonight, Simon. Stay with your wife and your mother-in-law.

Jesus leaves.

Simon immediately feels foolish for trying to keep a secret. Eden pokes him in the ribs.

EDEN

(aside)

You see?

SIMON

(she was right)

Mmhm.

CUT TO:

712 EXT. CAPERNAUM ALLEYWAY - NIGHT

712

An empty narrow alley. Then, a figure comes around the corner in a dark cloak, and as he passes a wall torch, we see it's a nervous and cautious NICODEMUS.

He approaches, turns out of the alley, and Andrew emerges from a door --

ANDREW
Welcome, Nicodemus.

Off Nicodemus's shock --

ANDREW (CONT'D)
Don't be alarmed. He's waiting for
you.

Andrew ushers Nicodemus inside. As the door closes --

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

713 EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

713

Andrew shows Nicodemus to the roof, then retreats back down the stairs, and Nico stands alone on the vast roof.

On the other side of the roof, Jesus sits looking out over the sea of Galilee in darker shades of clothing than we're used to. He blends into the night. Or would, if the moon gleaming on the water did not cast him in silhouette.

Nico steps forward.

JESUS

I asked the owner of this house for more lanterns, but he said they would draw attention.

NICODEMUS

Yes...I imagine they would.

JESUS

The human eye is drawn to light, we can't help it. It just happens.

NICODEMUS

There are many things...we are drawn to without our thinking, or ability to explain why.

Jesus turns to him with a tired smile that says, "I think I like you."

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Thank you for agreeing to meet.

JESUS

Thank you for trying to help Mary when you did.

NICODEMUS

I was no help.

JESUS

You were meant to be there.

NICODEMUS

Me? To fail miserably at an exorcism in the Red Quarter...?

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

If you had not been there that day,
would you be on this roof tonight?

He studies Jesus. Unlike his prior interrogation of John,
Nicodemus knows too well he doesn't hold the cards here.

NICODEMUS

I don't know where to start, I have
many --

JESUS

Shall we sit down first?

NICODEMUS

Of course, yes, I'm sorry.

They sit across from each other. Nicodemus leans in.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

The eastern slums... Many wandering
preachers have succeeded in drawing
crowds with their rhetoric and
their fiery tone.

JESUS

I've heard a few of them over the
years myself.

NICODEMUS

You know the type. But none of
them have ever told a paralytic to
get up and walk, let alone it
actually happens.

JESUS

What is your conclusion?

NICODEMUS

I believe you are not acting alone.
No one can do these signs that you
do unless God is with him. Only
someone who has come from God.

JESUS

And how is that belief going over
in the synagogue?

Nicodemus chuckles, implying "not great."

JESUS (CONT'D)

Which is why we're both here at
this hour.

(CONTINUED)

Crickets. The night wind.

JESUS (CONT'D)

What else?

NICODEMUS

What have you come here to show us?

JESUS

A kingdom.

NICODEMUS

(hushed)

That's what our rulers are worried about.

JESUS

No, not that kind.

NICODEMUS

Then what?

JESUS

The sort of kingdom that a person can't see unless they are born again.

NICODEMUS

Born again?

JESUS

Yes.

NICODEMUS

You mean a new creature, conversion from Gentile to Jewish?

JESUS

No, that is not what I'm talking about.

NICODEMUS

(chuckling)

Then what's "born again"? You don't mean when someone is old returning to his mother's womb? That's a problem for me, my own mother is no longer alive, may she rest in peace.

JESUS

Truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JESUS (CONT'D)

That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. That part of you is what must be reborn to new life.

NICODEMUS

How can these things be?

JESUS

The teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things...

NICODEMUS

I am trying, Rabbi.

JESUS

(loving)
I know.

He changes tactics.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Do you hear this?

NICODEMUS

What?

JESUS

Listen.

The wind rustles the branches of the olive trees. It blows dried leaves across the plastered roof.

JESUS (CONT'D)

What do you hear?

NICODEMUS

The wind.

JESUS

How do you know it's the wind?

NICODEMUS

I can feel it. I hear its sound.

JESUS

Do you know where it comes from?

NICODEMUS

I don't.

JESUS

Do you know where it's going?

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS

No.

JESUS

That's how it is to be born again of the Spirit. The Spirit may work in ways that are a mystery to you, and while you cannot see the Spirit, you can recognize his effect.

NICODEMUS

Hm.

(a pause)

My mind is caught up in thoughts of what a stir these words would cause among the teachers of the Law.

JESUS

Yes, and I don't expect otherwise. I speak of what I know and have seen, and it's not been received by the religious leaders.

NICODEMUS

It is difficult to receive.

JESUS

So if I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things?

NICODEMUS

I do believe your words, but I fear you won't get to speak many of them before you are silenced.

JESUS

I've come to do more than speak words.

NICODEMUS

More miracles?

A hint of sadness from Jesus.

JESUS

Yes, but even more than that. Do you remember when the children of Israel complained against God and against Moses in the wilderness of Paran?

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS

Yes, they said they wanted to go back to Egypt, and they cursed the manna God sent them.

JESUS

And then?

NICODEMUS

Fiery serpents bit the people, and they were dying.

JESUS

But...

NICODEMUS

But God made a way to be healed.

JESUS

Moses lifted a bronze serpent in the desert, and people only needed to look at it, and they were healed. So will the Son of Man be lifted up... so that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

*
*

NICODEMUS

Our people are not dying from snake bites. They're dying from taxation and oppression.

JESUS

I'm sorry to disappoint you, but I'm not here to deliver the people from Rome.

NICODEMUS

Then from what?

JESUS

From sin. From spiritual death. God loves the world in this way... that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

NICODEMUS

This has nothing to do with Rome? This is all about sin?

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

But God did not send his Son into the world to condemn it, Nicodemus...but to save it through Him. It's as simple as Moses's bronze serpent on the pole. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already.

714 EXT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

714

Andrew and John are listening intently, John is writing notes.

ANDREW

Have you ever heard anything like this?

JOHN

Shhhhh.

715 EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

715

Quiet. It's starting to hit Nicodemus.

NICODEMUS

When I met Lilith -- Mary -- that day...I told my wife and my students that she was beyond human aid. That only God himself could have... healed her. And then I saw her...healed. And here you are...the healer.

Jesus gives a slight smile of affirmation.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

My whole life I've wondered if I'd see this...

JESUS

Follow me. And you'll see more.

NICODEMUS

Follow you?

JESUS

Join me and my students. We're leaving Capernaum in two days' time. Come see the kingdom I am bringing into this world.

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS

But I can't leave my position in the Sanhedrin, I have a family, I'm an old man, I--

JESUS

The invitation is open.

NICODEMUS

Invitation to what exactly? A nomadic life? The calumny of my peers, the loss of my status?

JESUS

There's a lot you would lose. But what you would gain is far greater and more lasting.

NICODEMUS

Is that another one of your "born again" mysteries?

Jesus laughs.

JESUS

Maybe. I know mysteries aren't easy for a scholar.

Nicodemus seems both heartbroken and flustered. Jesus rises.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Take your time. Think about it. On the morning of the fifth day we're meeting by the well in the southern quarter at dawn.

Nicodemus rises.

NICODEMUS

So...is this really it? Is the kingdom of God coming?

Beat.

JESUS

What does your heart tell you?

NICODEMUS

(losing it)

My heart. Is swollen with fear and wonder and can tell me nothing except that I am standing on holy ground.

(CONTINUED)

Jesus holds his gaze in love, then his eyes sort of bounce to the plastered surface they are standing on.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Holy roof.

Jesus laughs.

JESUS

I hope you do come with us.

Nico slumps down to his knees. He kisses Jesus' hand.

JESUS (CONT'D)

You don't have to do that.

Nico kisses his hand again.

JESUS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

NICODEMUS

(quoting Psalm 2)

"Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and you perish in the way."

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

"Blessed are all who take refuge in him."

The two remain in a posture of supplicant and comforter as the sea glimmers in the moonlight.

Matthew and Gaius in their usual spots. They talk in between citizens paying their tributes with Matthew recording them.

GAIUS

Did you see the Parthian foot races last night? Darius ran like a gazelle.

MATTHEW

Jews don't go to the foot races.

GAIUS

Your old friend Simon himself used to run the wagering tables.

MATTHEW

We're not friends.

GAIUS

Ok fine, so you didn't go to the races. You stayed home?

MATTHEW

I went to see my mother.

GAIUS

That would put me out, too. She ask when you're going to give her grandchildren?

MATTHEW

She didn't ask.

GAIUS

I thought your parents don't speak to you.

MATTHEW

I had questions I couldn't ask anyone else.

GAIUS

A mother of a son with talent like yours should be proud.

MATTHEW

She's ashamed that I would use a talent God gave me against God.

GAIUS

You're good at something. You found a way to make money doing it. It's that simple.

MATTHEW

It must be nice to live in a world so simply ordered.

GAIUS

We live in the same world, Matthew. Besides, what else are you going to do with a mind like yours?

Jesus passes by with Simon, Andrew, Big James, John, Thaddeus, Little James and Mary.

Matthew stiffens. Gaius narrows his eyes as they pass, recognizing Simon and Andrew.

Matthew ever so slightly leans forward to watch as they pass.

Jesus PAUSES, turns back.

(CONTINUED)

Matthew jerks back out of sight. His heart thumps.
Breathing quickens. And then it happens --

JESUS (O.S.)

Matthew.

Gaius subtly puts a hand on his sword.

Matthew holds his arms across his chest. Did he just hear that?

JESUS (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Matthew, son of Alphaeus.

Unmistakable. Matthew leans back into the light. He locks eyes with Jesus. Searching.

MATTHEW

Yes?

JESUS

Follow me.

Matthew registers the command.

MATTHEW

Me?

JESUS

(chuckles)

Yes, you.

Simon steps forward to Jesus.

SIMON

Whoa, what are you doing?

MATTHEW

You WANT me to join you?

Gaius takes a half-step forward.

GAIUS

Keep moving, street preacher--

Jesus just keeps staring at Matthew, smiling.

SIMON

Do you have any idea what this guy has done? Do you even know him?

Matthew looks at Jesus, curious himself about the answer. Jesus maintains his gaze.

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

Yes.

In an instant, Matthew's burden, confusion, guilt...all leave him. He looks genuinely happy. He gathers his things.

The PEOPLE in line are stirring -- what in the world?

GAIUS

Listen --

Gaius is interrupted by the sound of Matthew unlocking the side door.

Matthew exits the booth, tablet under his arm.

GAIUS (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

Matthew locks the outer door, holds the key for Gaius.

Gaius seizes him by the shirt, tugging him back.

GAIUS (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're going?

MATTHEW

(way cooler than we've
seen him)

Gaius, let me go.

GAIUS

Have you lost your mind? You have money. Quintus protects you. No Jew lives as good as you. You're gonna throw it all away?

MATTHEW

(wrenching free)

Yes.

As Matthew approaches...

SIMON

I don't get it.

JESUS

You didn't get it when I chose you, either.

SIMON

I'm not a tax collector. This is different.

(CONTINUED)

JESUS
Get used to different.

This silences Simon. Andrew is shocked but loves it. The others aren't sure what to think as Matthew arrives.

JESUS (CONT'D)
I'm glad I passed by your booth today, Matthew.

MATTHEW
Yes.

JESUS
Shall we? We have a celebration to prepare for.

The group walks.

GAIUS
(calling after them)
You will regret this, Matthew!

Mary smiles warmly at Matthew, who blushes. As they walk-

SIMON
What's the tablet for?

MATTHEW
I grabbed it without thinking. I can put it down.

JESUS
No, keep it. You may yet find use for it.

MATTHEW
Where are we going?

MARY MAGDALENE
A dinner party.

MATTHEW
I am not welcome at dinner parties.

JESUS
Well, that's not going to be a problem tonight.
(to Matthew)
You're the host.

(CONTINUED)

716

CONTINUED: (5)

35.
716

Matthew gives his usual "processing" look as it takes him a moment to understand, but this time it slowly turns to a smile as we --

CUT TO BLACK.

END EPISODE

THE CHOSEN

Episode #108

"I Am He"

written by

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PINK draft
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TEASER

801 EXT. OUTSIDE SHECHEM - DAY

801

SUPER -- Canaan, 1952 B.C.

An old but sturdy man we'll soon know as JACOB drives a stake into the rocky earth -- the last of four identical stakes, marking an eight foot by eight foot square on the ground.

JACOB turns to THREE MEN -- Jacob's sons -- standing nearby, awaiting his orders when he spots something --

POV - of a middle-aged man named YASSIB in the distance, heading this way.

Jacob gives the order --

JACOB

This is the spot, my sons.

Without another word, Sons set to work. Son 1 and Son 2 secure a heavy spike. Son 3 SWINGS a sledgehammer -- CLANG

As the Sons HAMMER away at the spike, Jacob leaves them to meet the approaching Yassib.

JACOB (CONT'D)

Shalom, friend!

YASSIB

I don't know that word.

JACOB

It's something we say in my family.
It's a greeting of peace.

YASSIB

You won't have much of that here,
I'm afraid.

Jacob's eyes him... Decides to play cordial.

JACOB

I'm Jacob.

YASSIB

I'm Yassib.

JACOB

Yassib, I'd offer you something to drink, but as you can see we've just begun work on our well.

(CONTINUED)

YASSIB

You bought this land from the sons
of Hamor?

JACOB

For only one hundred gesitah. Can
you believe it?

YASSIB

I believe it every time the princes
of this land cheat another
foreigner. You'll curse the day
you paid that hundred gesitah.

OFF - the rhythmic CLANG of hammer on iron CONTINUES.

JACOB

Oh? And what do you think would
have been a fair price?

YASSIB

Are you blind? Look around. This
place is barren and dry.

JACOB

It won't be once we reach water.

YASSIB

No one has ever struck water out
here. Not this close to the
mountain.

JACOB

Perhaps they did not have ten
strong sons as I have to work in
shifts, day and night.

YASSIB

It's over a mile from town. There
are jackals at night, and Perizzite
raiders. Ten sons or fifty...it
won't matter to them.

JACOB

Our God protects us.

YASSIB

This is Canaan. The gods aren't
nice here.

JACOB

We won't be here that long. We're
sojourners.

(CONTINUED)

YASSIB

What are you looking for?

JACOB

A land our God promised to my
grandfather, Abraham.

OFF - the CLANG of hammer on iron CONTINUES.

YASSIB

Your grandfather? You ever notice
how the gods are always promising
things to people, but somehow you
never really see it happen?

JACOB

Sometimes it takes generations.

YASSIB

Suit yourself. What do you call
this god of yours, anyway?

JACOB

El Shaddai.

YASSIB

Never heard of him.

JACOB

Not many people have. But I think
someday they will.

YASSIB

You have no home. Where is your
temple to this god?

JACOB

He has no temple.

YASSIB

Then where do you worship him?

JACOB

We build altars. Wherever we go.

YASSIB

You don't carry him with you?

JACOB

No, there are no carved idols of
him.

YASSIB

He's invisible?

(CONTINUED)

JACOB

Yes.

(catches himself)

Well, usually. There was one time
he broke my hip.

Yassib throws his hands in the air.

YASSIB

I've heard enough. Of all the gods
to choose from. You pick an
invisible one who makes promises
that take generations to come true,
sends you to sojourn in a strange
land and *breaks your hip?* Strange
choice.

(shaking his head)

Immigrants...

OFF - the CLANG of the hammer CEASES.

JACOB

(a sad smile)

We didn't choose him.

He's about to say something else when he is interrupted --

SON 1 (O.S.)

Father!

Jacob and Yassib turn to the CRIES of victory.

801A EXT. OUTSIDE SHECHEM - JACOB'S WELL - MOMENTS LATER 801A

Jacob and Yassib look as water breaks through. Jacob turns
to Yassib and smiles...

JACOB

He chose us.

REVERSE POV - Water gurgles up toward the screen as we --

MATCH FADE TO:

802 EXT. OUTSIDE SHECHEM - DAY 802

POV - the face and torso of a WOMAN framed by the irregular
oval of the well's opening. Hand over hand, she pulls on a
rope. The SLOSHING, louder with each tug.

She kneels at the edge of...Jacob's well. Now fully realized
-- ancient, in fact -- baking under the midday sun.

(CONTINUED)

SUPER -- A.D. 30

Worn, rounded brick steps lead to the spot where we watched Jacob and his sons break ground two millennia ago.

Woman suddenly drops to her stomach, straining to pull the final meter of slick, wet rope before...a bucket emerges at last. She collapses, exhausted.

This woman is named PHOTINA (30s). And as we watch her pour the contents of the community bucket into a teardrop shaped vessel, we might NOTICE a few things about her --

She's decked out in filthy work robes but...she wears EARRINGS. Even...yeah...some cracked EYE SHADOW. STYLED HAIR, matted with sweat, emerges from her scarf in places.

After filling her vessel, she drops the bucket with disdain. Scowls at the dirt on her hands. *I hate this place.*

Soon her scowl falls. A shiver runs down her spine, realizing the work's not halfway done --

POV -- the town of Shechem, far below in the distance. This water won't carry itself.

Photina grits her teeth, steeling herself. She hoists the vessel onto her shoulder in one motion...steady...now, onto her head. She takes a step. And one more. She's got it.

The sun is merciless. The walk is gonna be long and lonely.

The opening credit MUSIC begins as we --

END TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN ON:

CREDIT SEQUENCE:

XXXXX XXXXX XXXXX

803 EXT. HOME OF NERIAH - DAY 803

Photina approaches an ornate door. She sets the vessel down and ducks out from under the yoke. She fishes out a gold key and lets herself in.

804 INT. HOME OF NERIAH - CONTINUOUS 804

NERIAH is in his 70s, but looks 90. He is lying propped up on a bed next to the crackling fireplace under a blanket. It's summer, and he shivers under a blanket next to a fire. The man is not well.

NERIAH

You know, when the door opened I honestly hoped it was a thief or a murderer, come to put me out of my misery.

PHOTINA

Sorry to disappoint you, but there's something I need from you first.

He coughs and hacks.

NERIAH

Come closer. I can't see you.

She approaches the bed.

NERIAH (CONT'D)

Your hair is matted and your face is red. Why?

PHOTINA

You know why.

NERIAH

You know, if you came back to live with me you could go to the well with the other women in the cool of the morning.

(CONTINUED)

PHOTINA

You're wrong about that. I could go with them if I had stayed with Ramin.

NERIAH

Out with it. How much do you need?

PHOTINA

I'm not here for money. I've brought a bill of divorce. All you need do is sign it.

NERIAH

Only a man can divorce his wife, not the other way around, Photina.

PHOTINA

Which is why the certificate is in your name, Neriah.

NERIAH

On what grounds am I to divorce you?

PHOTINA

I'm living with another man.

NERIAH

So what? That's all you did with me. Live here.

PHOTINA

You knew why I married you.

NERIAH

Stability. The shine wore off quick, didn't it?

PHOTINA

The Pentateuch makes provision for a husband to divorce his wife if she lies with another man.

NERIAH

Listen to you, talking about Pentateuch.

PHOTINA

What do I have to do? Bring him here?

(CONTINUED)

NERIAH

Yes, I'd like to see the latest shade of drooling tomcat you've cast your spell on. Hurry before he gets bored like the others.

PHOTINA

Will you sign it or not?

He extends a frayed hand.

NERIAH

Give it here.

He reads it over. She bites her lip.

NERIAH (CONT'D)

No.

PHOTINA

Please.

NERIAH

Please?

*

He casually slips it into the fire. It blazes brightly.

NERIAH (CONT'D)

You're my property, Photina, and I don't part lightly with my possessions.

Speechless, Photina trembles with rage. She finally whirls around to leave as we cut to--

805 EXT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - EVENING

805

A big house, recognizable by its wooden front gate -- Matthew's. Tonight, the gate is OPEN. And from the SOUNDS of it, he's not alone inside.

806 INT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - EVENING

806

A dinner party in full swing.

JAMES/JOHN, MARY, SIMON, ANDREW, LITTLE JAMES, JESUS, SHULA, BARNABY, RIVKA, and others we'll know as tax collectors are present.

Guests sit on pillows, RECLINED before a low table.

Food plates are passed freely. Candles and oil lamps burn.

RIVKA

(laughing)

The way he ran from the Red
Quarter! Nearly tripping over his
robes.

SHULA

A Pharisee running. Somehow...I
can't see it!

Everyone laughs. Barnaby back slaps her.

BARNABY
Shulaaaaaaa!

RIVKA
I thought for certain he would trip
and fall and *I* would be arrested.

JESUS
And I'm glad he didn't fall when he
ran away, Rivka, for your sake and
his.

RIVKA
I thought Lil was gone forever that
day.

MARY MAGDALENE
It's Mary now.

JESUS
It always was.

Matthew comes through with plate.

MATTHEW
Does anyone want more grapes?
Barnaby, you eat a lot.

Matthew loads Barnaby's plate.

BARNABY
Very observant, Matthew.

MATTHEW
Thank you. Simon?

Simon shakes his head. This tension will last awhile.

BARNABY
You know, Matthew, when your face
isn't striped by the shadow of iron
bars, you're quite handsome.

RIVKA
I agree.

MARY MAGDALENE
Rivka!

YUSSIF (O.S.)
What is going on?

(CONTINUED)

806 CONTINUED: (3)

10.
806

Everyone turns to see Yussif and another PHARISEE standing at the window.

807 EXT. MATTHEW'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

807

Matthew emerges, suspicious of the new arrivals.

MATTHEW

May I help you?

YUSSIF

We were just on a walk and we heard voices and I thought it sounded like...but surely not.

PHARISEE

And yet it is you.

JESUS

Would you like to come in?

YUSSIF

We would never. Never be caught dead in a--

JESUS

In a what? A tax collector's house?

YUSSIF

Not only that but with...a...
(indicating Rivka but not looking her in the eye)
Do you know what she...and he... they're...

SIMON

You seem to be having trouble finding your words, man.

YUSSIF

Why does your master eat with tax collectors and sinners?

JESUS

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.

YUSSIF

I must say I am shocked.

(re: Rivka)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YUSSIF (CONT'D)

She is from the Red Quarter, much of what is done there cannot even be spoken by my tongue or cross my lips, it is so unholy. The mere mention of it would defile me.

SIMON

Sounds like a personal problem.

YUSSIF

(indicating Matthew)

But him. And the others he works with. They betray our people for money. And they're not even sorry.

ANDREW

If you're so offended then leave.

JESUS

Let him speak, Andrew.

YUSSIF

They've never offered guilt sacrifices in the temple.

LITTLE JAMES

What?

PHARISEE

The priest keeps records, we check them.

MATTHEW

Tax collectors are not welcome in the temple.

JOHN

You would like them better if they made the proper sacrifices?

YUSSIF

This is not about me, this is about what God wants.

JESUS

You are forgetting the scroll of Hosea. Go and learn what this means -- "I desire mercy more than sacrifice."

YUSSIF

There are righteous men on the lookout for you, and they are weighing every word you say.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

Is that a threat?

JESUS

Please let them know this -- I did not come to call the "righteous," but sinners.

Gaius appears behind the Pharisees on the street.

GAIUS

Is everything under control here?

Big James and John tense up, start to rise from their seats. Mary subtly stops them with a look. *Easy.*

PHARISEE

Yes, we were just going on our way, centurion.

GAIUS

That's Primi Ordine to you.

YUSSIF

(bowing)
Primi Ordine.

MATTHEW

You all keep eating. I'll talk to this man.

Matthew leads Gaius into the kitchen. Matthew immediately starts slicing flatbread.

GAIUS

You're making a mistake. You can walk away from this.

MATTHEW

I made my choice.

GAIUS

Look at that room. Other than Rom and Jahaz, whom I know to be law-abiding tax collectors, everyone else in there...the dregs of Capernaum.

MATTHEW

Lower your voice.

GAIUS

The bottom of the barrel.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

Germanic, correct? Isn't that what you told Quintus?

GAIUS

Don't change the subject.

MATTHEW

Your people surrendered. I'm surrendering, too.

Gaius stares at him. Matthew heaps olives on a plate.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

Your promotion was well-earned. You will do well without me -- better, even.

GAIUS

How? You're the one who got me promoted.

MATTHEW

That is untrue.

GAIUS

Don't play dumb. You know how this all happened.

MATTHEW

You could say thank you.

GAIUS

I'm not going to do that.

MATTHEW

If you can't say it, then there's something you could do to show it.

Gaius studies him.

MATTHEW (CONT'D)

I will pay you if necessary.

GAIUS

I don't want your money.
(resigned)
What's the favor?

Zohara dresses Nicodemus in ceremonial garb in front of a mirror. She is upbeat and cheerful as she grooms him.

(CONTINUED)

ZOHARA

You haven't rehearsed your speech
for me.

NICODEMUS

It's nothing.

ZOHARA

They want to honor you for the
great things you've done here, give
them a thrill.

NICODEMUS

My comments will be extemporaneous.

ZOHARA

You are one of those rare men who
excels both in rehearsed and
unrehearsed speech.

NICODEMUS

And you're not guilty of any bias.

ZOHARA

Those are not my words.

NICODEMUS

Oh?

ZOHARA

Caiaphas said that about you. At
our last Shabbat dinner.

NICODEMUS

Caiaphas? He was only flattering.

ZOHARA

There's no one above the high
priest but God. What has he to
gain from you by flattery? He's
never complimented my cooking.

Nicodemus laughs. Mind dances back to memories of Caiaphas.

ZOHARA (CONT'D)

Do you remember, at that final
dinner, Havilah sang the Tzur
Mishelo? Her voice all the sweeter
for the child in her womb?

NICODEMUS

It brought tears to my eyes.

(CONTINUED)

ZOHARA

Can you picture Moshe and Gideon?
The way their little chins rest on
the table while they listen to you
say the Eshet Chayil?

He can't help but CHUCKLE at the thought.

ZOHARA (CONT'D)

That's the way Shabbat was meant to
be. Family knit together around a
table. My mother's gilded plates.
Your grandmother's candlesticks,
may she rest in peace.

NICODEMUS

I do miss her.

ZOHARA

If your grandmother could see you
today, receiving the highest honor
this order has ever bestowed. She
would burst with pride.

NICODEMUS

I remember she had an inscription
over the door of her room --
"Adonai El Roi."

Zohara stops her working for a moment.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

The Lord...

ZOHARA

The God Who Sees Me.

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

The God Who Sees Me.

ZOHARA (CONT'D)

The words of Hagar?

NICODEMUS

She always loved that Hagar was
caught up in something complicated
and fraught, not of her own
choosing. And yet God saw her. He
knew the path she was forced to
take would not be an easy one.

ZOHARA

When we stumble onto hard roads, he
find us and comforts us.

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS
(far away)
Or does he call us to them?

(CONTINUED)

He tilts his head up. She spritzes his neck.

ZOHARA

Persian myrrh and camphor. To
commemorate our last day in
Capernaum.

NICODEMUS

(true either way)
One. Last. Day.

She sets the perfume down. Touching his arm --

ZOHARA

Nicodemus.

NICODEMUS

Hm?

ZOHARA

I love our life.

NICODEMUS

(absently)
As do I, my dear.

ZOHARA

Take me back to it.

Her message suddenly clear.

NICODEMUS

Of-of course.

She stays on him. He can't return her gaze. To get rid of
her --

NICODEMUS (CONT'D)

Maybe I will prepare my remarks. I
should take a moment.

Zohara rises to go. Her face a mask of uncertainty and fear.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

809 INT. ROMAN AUTHORITY - DAY

809

In the hallway just outside Quintus' office, Gaius walks with other SOLDIERS as they return from a shift.

QUINTUS (O.S.)

Gaius.

GAIUS

(bows)

Praetor.

QUINTUS

Just the man I wanted to see. Get in here.

Gaius NODS to Soldier who exits with purpose. Gaius follows Quintus into --

810 INT. QUINTUS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

810

QUINTUS

What methods are we using to quell and disperse mobs that obstruct traffic?

GAIUS

(not ready for this)

Uh, regular patrols...Mounted officers... When necessary, force--

QUINTUS

Not enough force. And what use are mounted officers if the people have never seen anyone trampled?

GAIUS

Praetor?

QUINTUS

Herod's envoy was delayed. He was a childhood rival-- you were here. I asked Matthew, he said show him infrastructure plans... Which was really my idea, all along.

GAIUS

I hope it was effective, dominus.

(CONTINUED)

QUINTUS

Very. Until Silvius was delayed by a stampede. I had to endure a very smug lecture. Don't let it happen again!

GAIUS

Yes, praetor.

Quintus opens a parcel on his desk.

QUINTUS

You're here alone. I assume that means you found a replacement to watch our little friend.

Gaius stiffens.

GAIUS

A new soldier has been trained and installed.

QUINTUS

Good.

No way to sugarcoat this --

GAIUS

And I am reviewing applications for a new publicanus for that district.

QUINTUS

What district?

GAIUS

The collection district previously assessed by Matthew.

Quintus drops the package. Takes a hard look at Gaius.

QUINTUS

Why are you doing that?

GAIUS

Matthew...left. He quit, dominus.

QUINTUS

What do you mean, he quit? How could you let him quit?

GAIUS

H-He's a contractor. I had no recourse.

(CONTINUED)

QUINTUS
Quit to do what?

GAIUS
He's to become a student.

QUINTUS
(after a beat)
Of what?! Do not make me keep
asking questions, primi.

GAIUS
To study the Jewish God...he left
to follow a holy man -- the man
from the eastern ghetto. That's
all I know.

Quintus is floored. At a total loss. All he can muster --

QUINTUS
I really don't like that man.

As Quintus seethes --

Jesus and some of his followers dismantle Jesus' camp outside
Capernaum. Jesus rolls a canvas with Little James and
Andrew.

Big James and John arrive and hold up bags like the spoils of
war.

BIG JAMES
Brothers --

JOHN
Rations for the road!

BIG JAMES
Our Eema is convinced we will
starve along the way with six days
of walking.

JESUS
Three.

JOHN
Three?

THADDEUS
Are we going to run all the way to
Jerusalem?

ANDREW

That won't work for Simon -- he's a terrible runner.

SIMON

I have bad shins.

BIG JAMES

Maybe if you didn't get in fights with Abe and Jehosaphat every week--

JESUS

Easy, easy.

SIMON

My brawling days are over.

Jesus' eyebrows go up. Self-deception can be amusing in mortals.

JESUS

You've been quiet this morning, Simon.

SIMON

We have a long journey ahead.

ANDREW

Apparently only half as long as we thought.

JESUS

I'll explain later. Simon, what troubles you?

SIMON

Nothing. I'm excited for the trip, I--

JESUS

You can tell me the truth.

SIMON

You're telling me you don't already know what's in my head?

JESUS

That's a conversation for another time. But for now...

Simon works up the courage.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

I'm the only one among us who is married.

JESUS

Do you think I should have called only single people?

SIMON

Of course not. And I'm glad you didn't. But Eden will be alone with her Eema.

JESUS

And you are scared things could get worse and you wouldn't be there.

SIMON

See? That's what I mean, you already know anyway.

JESUS

Simon, everyone here knows what you're thinking most of the time. It doesn't take God's wisdom.

The others give a "Yeah, pretty much" look.

Post ceremony. Nicodemus, still in ceremonial dress and holding an expensively decorated scroll, takes in the solitude of the same grassy clearing where he gave his first address here in Capernaum.

Yussif, passing by, pauses on his way. Obsequious --

YUSSIF

Congratulations on your profound contribution, Rabbi. We are forever in your debt.

NICODEMUS

Praise Adonai.

YUSSIF

Praise Adonai.

Yussif goes on his way.

CLOSE ON Nicodemus. Moments after Yussif departs, his countenance shifts dramatically.

He's weary, torn. Spirit in chaos. Exactly the wrong moment to receive --

SHMUEL (O.S.)

The ceremony was glorious, teacher.

Shmuel materializes. His affect is matter-of-fact. Giving away nothing.

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

Your acts of faithfulness and discernment have been duly recorded for all history.

NICODEMUS

Thank you, Shmuel. I am grateful for your service as well.

This is the part where Shmuel usually fawns over Nicodemus. But he doesn't. Responding simply --

SHMUEL

Thank you.

NICODEMUS

I foresee you will be an important leader of this order for many years to come, Shmuel.

SHMUEL

Maybe not just here in Capernaum, rabbi. Perhaps, I will one day teach across Judea. Maybe even in Jerusalem.

The bold statement snaps Nicodemus out of his thoughts. He regards Shmuel, mildly amused by his *chutzpah*.

NICODEMUS

Perhaps you will, Shmuel.

SHMUEL

It's not such a ridiculous notion, is it, rabbi? I have studied under your venerated tutelage, after all. As your reputation grows, so too do my own prospects.

NICODEMUS

I think it is, perhaps, bold to assume outcomes. Our work is for God. He chooses where it takes us.

(CONTINUED)

SHMUEL

You are right as always, rabbi.
But under your guidance, I've found
a matter of law I'm deeply
passionate about. One that
resonates among many others, even
as far away as Jerusalem.

NICODEMUS

(genuine)

Shmuel, I'm delighted to hear your
fervor. Tell me, what is it that
you've become so passionate about?

SHMUEL

False prophecy.

Nicodemus turns slowly to look upon his former student.
Suddenly -- and fully -- aware of Shmuel's intentions.

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

When I heard the man from Nazareth
tell the paralytic his sins were
forgiven, I thought, "only God can
forgive sins." At that very
moment, he turned to me and recited
my thoughts as if reading them from
a scroll.

Nicodemus' breath is taken away by this revelation.

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

I felt the same. Did he use
divination, I wondered? But it's
obvious -- *of course*, I would think
this thought.

Unwilling to reveal any more, Nicodemus steps away.

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

He called himself the Son of Man --
as if from the prophet Daniel.
Here, in the town of my order.

NICODEMUS

He comes from Nazareth, not heaven!

SHMUEL

(harshly, reciting from
memory)

"...to him was given dominion and
glory and a kingdom, that all
peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him--"

(CONTINUED)

NICODEMUS

But he is simply a man. I don't understand it anymore than--

SHMUEL

"His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed."

Shmuel faces Nicodemus. A reckoning.

SHMUEL (CONT'D)

The man claimed to be God and you said nothing. I will petition Jerusalem requesting permission to search the archives for all matters pertaining to such false prophecy. Will you oppose my petition, rabbi? The first question on the mind of any man who reads my account will have to be, what did Nicodemus do?

Nicodemus studies Shmuel.

NICODEMUS

This is all about politics and promotion to you, isn't it? It's not to serve God.

SHMUEL

On the contrary, teacher, it's about the law. And the law...is God. If I am rewarded for that, it's because I learned from the very wisest.

The truth stings. Nicodemus is broken. For now anyway --

NICODEMUS

I will not oppose your petition. And, Shmuel -- you've learned nothing from me.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

813 INT. SIMON'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

813

Eden lifts a towel from Dasha's glistening forehead and feels her temperature. Dasha COUGHS.

DASHA

Where is Simon? Can he build us a fire?

EDEN

He's away, eema.

DASHA

Fishing?

EDEN

No, something else. Lie still.

814 INT. SIMON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

814

Eden enters the kitchen, weary and devastated. She STEADIES HERSELF. She's out of options and knows it.

She covers her mouth to keep from crying out when --

JESUS (O.S.)

Eden.

She turns. Her EYES go wide at the sight of --

EDEN

Jesus? I wasn't expecting you.

JESUS

People usually aren't.

EDEN

Can I make you something warm to drink? I was just stoking the fire, I--

JESUS

You saw it first, you know?

EDEN

(off guard)
What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

What I see in Simon. You were the first person to notice, when no one else did.

A wave of emotion hits her, but she stuffs it down.

JESUS (CONT'D)

That's something we have in common.

EDEN

My mother said I was drawn to his wildness and I would regret it. I wonder what she will say now?

Dasha coughs in the other room. Simon and Andrew appear at the door with fishing nets.

SIMON

We're going into market to sell these nets, we'll be right back.

JESUS

Stay here a moment, Simon.

SIMON

I just want to leave behind some extra money for Eden and Eema while I'm away.

JESUS

Put your nets down, and go sit with your mother-in-law.

Simon looks at Eden and Jesus, then does what he's told. Andrew follows. Jesus takes Eden aside.

JESUS (CONT'D)

I told Simon to make sacrifices and leave things behind in order to follow me. You are one flesh with Simon. He cannot make sacrifices that are not also yours. You have a role to play in all of this.

EDEN

(breaking)
Do I?

JESUS

You will know in time. Now, I can't make everything about this easier for you.

(CONTINUED)

EDEN

That wouldn't be our people's way.

JESUS

It has not been. Nor will it continue to be. But I see you. Do you understand? I know it's not easy to be at home when your husband is out doing all this, even when you're excited about it and proud of him. So I wouldn't ask you to do this without taking care of a few things for you.

Dasha coughs again and we hear Simon's muffled voice soothing her. Eden's eyes widen as she realizes what he's saying. She is almost afraid to believe it.

EDEN

You mean--

JESUS

Plus, normal Simon is difficult enough, you think I want to travel with a worried Simon?

814A Eden laughs through her tears, then follows Jesus into the 814A room where Dasha lies.

SIMON

The fever has spiked. Her forehead burns my hand to the touch.

ANDREW

We should call a doctor.

JESUS

There is no need.

Jesus kneels. Eden grips Simon's arm. Jesus touches Dasha's hand.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Leave her.

Dasha gasps, her eyes open. It's that fast.

Jesus smiles at her.

DASHA

Who are you?

Eden covers her mouth to keep sobs from coming out.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

This is Jesus of Nazareth.

SIMON

You've never met him before.

DASHA

Welcome to my son-in-law's home.
What am I doing lying here--

ANDREW

You had a terrible fever.

DASHA

--and all of you sitting there
staring down... Why is everyone
standing around when--

ANDREW

Dasha don't.

But it's too late. Dasha rises to her feet with the ease of a teen Olympic gymnast, wiping matted hair out of her face. She sails into the kitchen.

DASHA

None of you move. I'll be right
back with some drinks.

Jesus gives a "welp, there she goes I guess" look to Eden and Simon. A dam bursts in Eden. Simon holds her for a moment.

DASHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Andrew, be a dear and stoke this
fire.

ANDREW

I'm coming.

Andrew goes into the kitchen while Simon and Eden go in for a big group hug with Jesus who cradles their heads in his palms.

EDEN

Thank you. Thank you.

DASHA (O.S.)

(to herself)

Let's see -- rye and butter for
Simon, pomegranate arils, goat
cheese...

(calling out)

Does your friend like goat cheese?

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

Yes, goat cheese would be lovely.

Eden pulls back from Simon, looks up at him.

EDEN

Thank you.

SIMON

Me? For what?

EDEN

For obeying and following him. It brought him here.

DASHA (O.S.)

Nectarines or plums?

After a pause they break into resigned smiles. Surrender to the Jewish mother.

815 EXT. SYCHAR MARKETPLACE - DAY 815

SUPER -- Sychar, Samaria

A crowded marketplace ancient market. A little grittier, a little more threatening than what we've seen in Capernaum.

An ARGUMENT between VENDORS threatens to turn into a fight.

Into this chaos comes Photina. As she moves through the market WOMEN turn away in disgust, contempt. A few of the MEN do not.

Photina finally sees what she's looking for -- the orange stand. An ORANGE SELLER turns away as she approaches.

SELLER

Sorry, we don't serve your kind.

PHOTINA

And what kind is that?

SELLER

You know what you are.

PHOTINA

Well, lucky for you, I can serve myself.

She slaps down the coins on a wood plank and takes an orange. Seller bristles with annoyance. He refuses to turn to her.

(CONTINUED)

815 CONTINUED:

PHOTINA (CONT'D)

You know, to stop me you'd have to
look at me.

He lifts his nose higher, eyes calmly shut. She purses her
lips and nods slowly, then walks away with the orange.

816 INT. ROMAN AUTHORITY - QUINTUS' OFFICE - DAY 816

Quintus paces the room. Nearby a SCRIBE sits at a mini-desk.

QUINTUS

Take down this decree in Aramaic,
Latin AND Greek, so no one can
plead ignorance.

817 EXT. CAPERNAUM MARKET - DAY 817

A CENTURION dismounts from horse. From a saddlebag,
Centurion retrieves a rolled parchment and a hammer.

QUINTUS (V.O.)

By order of Rome, and punishable by
detention and imprisonment...

Centurion marches toward a post.

QUINTUS (V.O.)

Religious gatherings outside the
synagogue and Hebrew school are
strictly prohibited.

Centurion nails decree to post.

QUINTUS (V.O.)

The teacher known as Jesus of
Nazareth is sought for questioning.

As the first CITIZENS move in to read the post, WE --

FADE TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A) Matthew steps out of his giant wooden door. He locks the
door and carries a tablet and stylus.

B) Salome and Zebedee kiss Big James and John goodbye,
loading their knapsacks with food and supplies.

C) Andrew leaves his home with a meager rucksack.

(CONTINUED)

817 CONTINUED:

D) Mary Magdalene steps out into the day.

E) Zohara oversees servants loading suitcases out of their house.

Nicodemus slips out of the house carrying a bundle wrapped in purple.

F) Simon kisses Eden goodbye, and hugs Dasha.

G) Jesus, Little James, and Thaddeus arrive at the fountain in the southern quarter with small rucksacks. They look around.

END SERIES.

818 EXT. SOUTHERN FOUNTAIN - GOLDEN HOUR

818

UNKNOWN POV -- Matthew and Jesus greet Mary, Little James, and Thaddeus.

Matthew COUNTS bags and supplies.

PULL BACK to discover -- Nicodemus, watching from an ALLEY a half block away, back against a stone wall.

He ducks out of sight. Eyes glistening. He anxiously strokes his tallit as he PRAYS silently.

AT THE FOUNTAIN, Matthew hands out bags as --

Simon, Andrew, and the Brothers Thunder arrive.

THADDEUS

This should be everyone.

JESUS

(scanning)

Everyone's here?

ON NICODEMUS - breathing quickens. The moment of truth.

MARY MAGDALENE (O.S.)

Yes, this is all of us.

JESUS turns to the empty square and throws his voice in a way clearly meant to be heard beyond the group.

JESUS

Is there anyone else?

NICODEMUS - Eyes GLOW, saying YES...but his body...as though held in place by an unseen force, he cannot move.

(CONTINUED)

AT THE FOUNTAIN -- Simon SEES a small purple bundle sitting on the edge of the fountain, as though placed there...

SIMON

Look here.

THADDEUS

What is that?

Simon opens it. Hardly believing his eyes --

SIMON

Gold.

Of course, Matthew winds his way through the others to see. SCANNING the bounty --

MATTHEW

It's enough for two weeks of food and lodging.

While MURMURS and a BUZZ of excitement pass through the disciples --

JESUS looks sullen, sight of the gold fills him with sadness.

NICODEMUS has the same look from his hiding place. The RUSH of excitement has given way to despair. He is not going to emerge from this place.

JESUS raises his head and looks to the empty square. Almost in a whisper --

JESUS

You came so close.

Only Mary hears.

MARY MAGDALENE

What do you mean?

SIMON

We need to go, if we're to make it to a camp in Tiberias by nightfall.

JESUS

Simon is correct. Let's go.

Simon looks at Matthew, who is clearly over-dressed.

SIMON

You gonna wear that on a trip?

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

These are my clothes. Should I
have others?

Simon rolls his eyes and takes off.

The group hoists their rucksacks and bags and departs. As
the sounds of the disciples AD-LIBBED CONVERSATIONS recede --

ON NICODEMUS - inert. Shrunken. Resigning himself that he
may never forgive himself for his inaction.

819 EXT. HOME OF ALPHEUS - GOLDEN HOUR

819

A fist KNOCKS on a door. A beat and the door is OPENED by
Matthew's mother, ISABEL. Her eyes go wide with anxiety.

REVERSE POV -- finds Gaius on the front step.

ALPHEUS (O.S.)

Who is it, Isabel?

ISABEL

(urgent aside)

A Roman.

OFF -- a CLAY plate breaks. Footsteps THUD before ALPHEUS
(40s) emerges, steps protectively in front Isabel.

ALPHEUS

What's wrong? What's happened?

820 INT. HOME OF ALPHEUS - GOLDEN HOUR

820

They sit at a table.

ALPHEUS

What did it mean -- "Follow me?"

GAIUS

That's all he said. Matthew didn't
hesitate.

ALPHEUS

Follow him where?

GAIUS

Look, I'm sure he'll come to his
senses.

ALPHEUS

Senses? Do you know my son?

(CONTINUED)

GAIUS

Do you? At the moment he believes
this man to be a prophet.

Isabel CLUTCHES her husband's arm, excited. Almost
involuntarily --

ISABEL

The man who healed the paralytic at
Zebedee's house!

GAIUS

I'd be careful with that word
"healed." We don't know what sort
of trickery or illusion may have
been involved.

ALPHEUS

Matthew has no interest in
illusion.

GAIUS

Nor in your God...or so I thought.

Alpheus rises, paces the floor, gripped with an exciting
thought.

ALPHEUS

Matthew has upended his life to be
with him. His wicked life...

ISABEL

He does not make decisions lightly.

GAIUS

That's true.

ISABEL

When I saw him two days ago he did
not seem himself. But I would
never have guessed he was preparing
for this.

GAIUS

He asked me to deliver to you some
of his personal effects.

Isabel is vaguely distraught.

ISABEL

Adonai in heaven...

GAIUS

The key to his house.

(CONTINUED)

ALPHEUS

Luxury bought off the backs of my people... I will not accept it!

GAIUS

He suspected as much. Sell it, give it away, burn it down -- I don't care.

Presenting Alpheus the key then...pulling it back at the last moment --

GAIUS (CONT'D)

Do not burn it down.

Alpheus NODS, takes the key.

GAIUS (CONT'D)

The other is just outside.

Alpheus, Gaius, and Isabel stand on the front step of the house, eyes fixed on something knee high. You guessed it.

ISABEL

Matthew, no.

ALPHEUS

What? Why?

Gaius stands with Dog.

GAIUS

Matthew said thieves forced you to close your business?

ALPHEUS

Yes, but...

GAIUS

And you've been going on long journeys for your business?

ALPHEUS

Yes. I have all my permits.

GAIUS

Don't you get it? The roads are dangerous. Your wife is left for long periods of time alone.

(spelling it out)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

GAIUS (CONT'D)

People with bad intentions hate
him.

ALPHEUS

I... how does it work?

Last straw. Gaius dons his helmet.

ISABEL

He wanted you to be safe, Alpheus.

GAIUS

One last thing -- if you hear from
him or receive any word of his
whereabouts, contact me
immediately.

This catches Isabel and Alpheus off guard. Suddenly
concerned --

ALPHEUS

Is he wanted?

GAIUS

Not officially. But if Jesus of
Nazareth returns to Capernaum, the
Praetor would like to...*question*
him. It would be in everyone's
best interest if you contact me.

ALPHEUS

We understand.

GAIUS

And I just...well, I know some
people were mildly fond of your
son.

Alpheus and Isabel exchange curious looks. *Did Matthew make
a friend?*

Gaius hates this. Can't take another second.

The couple watches Gaius walk away in silence. After a beat,
they share a look of joy. Hug.

OFF - Dog whines. They FREEZE.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

822 EXT. CAMP - SUNRISE

822

Another sunrise on a long journey.

At the top of a hill, Matthew holds a map. Andrew points at something far off.

ANDREW
What is that city?

MATTHEW
Jezreel. The southernmost town in
Galilee. From there we veer east
to the Jordan River.

Jesus breezes past them, going a different direction.

SIMON
Rabbi, where are you going?

ANDREW
Do you need something?

JESUS
This way, friends!

They scramble to catch up.

MATTHEW
I'm sorry, but, uh, the map shows
Jezreel is two miles southeast of
here, and is met by a road east to
the Jordan. We need to adjust our
course thirty degrees to--

JESUS
We're not going to the Jordan.
We're going through Samaria.

Disbelief ripples through the group. Jesus is cheerful.

ANDREW
Are you telling a joke?

JESUS
There's a place I'd like to stop.
Plus, it makes our journey shorter
by almost half.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

And our odds of violent attack more likely by double.

JESUS

Is that an exact figure?

ANDREW

Forgive me, Teacher, but it's safer to go around Samaria by way of the Jordan in the Decapolis.

JESUS

Did you join me for safety reasons?

BIG JAMES

But Rabbi, they're Samaritans.

JESUS

Good observation, Big James. What is your point?

BIG JAMES

Rabbi...these are the people who profaned our temple with the dead bones, they --

JOHN

They fought against us with the Seleucids in the Maccabean wars, I've never spoken to a Samaritan --

JESUS

And we destroyed their temple a hundred years ago. And none of us here were present for any of these things. Listen...if we are going to have a question and answer session every time we do something you're not used to, it's going to be a very annoying time together for all of us.

He turns to leave.

(CONTINUED)

822 CONTINUED: (2)

JESUS (CONT'D)

We'll be fine. If we get attacked,
Simon will be happy to show you
what to do.

SIMON

Absolutely!

They take off, some still confused.

823 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY

823

Under a scorching sun, Jesus and the disciples trudge along a
dusty path.

824 EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

824

The disciples walk up a hill in a straight line. In the
front. Andrew takes a bite of a pear and, without looking,
THROWS it over his shoulder --

Where it's CAUGHT by Thaddeus who takes a bite and similarly
tosses it over his shoulder to --

Mary. She takes a bite, laughing. She looks back to Matthew
who puts hands up to wave her off --

MATTHEW

Please -- I don't want to ruin
another one.

She chuckles. Mary turns and HANDS him the pear with a
smile.

825 EXT. OUTSIDE SYCHAR - DAY

825

The group arrives at the edge of a clearing.

Jacob's Well sits in the distance. The disciples are hot,
sweaty, red-cheeked, beleaguered. Thaddeus goes through his
rucksack.

THADDEUS

We ate the last of Salome's bread
last night.

SIMON

Master, we need to go into town for
food.

(CONTINUED)

ANDREW

We can use the gold that was left
for us at the fountain.

JESUS

Very well.

MATTHEW

(looking at map)
There should be a town about a mile
west -- Sychar.

JESUS

You all go. I'll wait here.

BIG JAMES

Someone should stay with you in
case--

JESUS

I'll be alright. Meet me at that
well when you come back.

The disciples leave.

Jesus looks up at the raging sun, feeling its heat. He sets
his eyes on the well, takes a breath and sets out toward it.

EXT. JACOB'S WELL - NOON

Jesus sits down with fatigue on a stump and waits.

Insects BUZZ. The wind RUSTLES the acacia trees.

Eventually, we see Photina coming with a yoke on her
shoulders, a bucket hanging on each side.

She does not wear a head covering. She's way past that. She
arrives at the well and ducks out from under the yoke,
letting it thump to the ground in a clatter.

She wipes the sweat from her brow and takes a breath,
assessing the work ahead of her.

JESUS

Will you give me a drink?

She gives him a half-glance and ignores him, back to her
process loading up the bucket on a rope.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Did you hear me?

(CONTINUED)

PHOTINA

That bad, huh?

JESUS

What.

PHOTINA

You, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a Samaritan? And a woman?

JESUS

I'm sorry. I should have said please.

PHOTINA

You know, it's not safe for you to be alone out here.

JESUS

Nor you. Why haven't you come with others? And why so late in the day? Don't women go to the wells in the cool of the morning?

PHOTINA

Yeah, well, none of them will be seen with me, so I have to come at noon in the heat, as you have so kindly reminded me.

JESUS

Why won't they be seen with you?

PHOTINA

Long story.

JESUS

I'd still like a drink of water, if you can spare it.

PHOTINA

Amazing what a parched throat will do. Aren't I unclean to you? Won't you be defiled by this vessel?

JESUS

Maybe some of my people say that about your women, but I don't.

PHOTINA

Yeah? And what do you say?

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

I say if you knew who I am, you would be asking ME for a drink.

PHOTINA

Really.

JESUS

And I would give you living water.

PHOTINA

Would. Except that you have nothing to draw water with. And this is a deep well.

She lets down the first bucket. Jesus watches.

PHOTINA (CONT'D)

Besides. What do you need from me if you have your own supply of "living water"?

JESUS

Long story.

PHOTINA

But Jewish water is better than Samaritan water, hm?

JESUS

That's not what I said.

PHOTINA

Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob who dug this well? Your water is better than his?

JESUS

I know Jacob. But everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again. Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again.

PHOTINA

Wouldn't that be nice.

JESUS

The water that I give will become inside a person a spring of water welling up to eternal life.

(CONTINUED)

PHOTINA

Really.

JESUS

Yes, really.

She draws up the first bucket.

PHOTINA

Prove it.

JESUS

First go call your husband and come back. I'll show you both.

PHOTINA

I don't have a husband.

JESUS

You're right. You've had five husbands, and the man you're living with now is not your husband.

She freezes a moment. Then covers it with a tired laugh, not wanting to give anything away.

PHOTINA

Ahaaa. Ah. I see. You're a prophet. You're here to preach at me.

JESUS

No.

PHOTINA

Usually the one good thing about coming here alone is I can escape being condemned.

JESUS

I'm not here to --

PHOTINA

I've made mistakes. Too many. But it's men like you who have made it impossible for me to do anything about it.

JESUS

How?

(CONTINUED)

PHOTINA

Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you Jews insist Jerusalem is the only place for true worship.

JESUS

They say that because the temple is there.

PHOTINA

Yeah, exactly where we're not allowed.

JESUS

I'm here to break those barriers. And the time is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

PHOTINA

So where am I supposed to go when I need God? I've never received anything from God, and I couldn't thank him even if I did.

JESUS

Anywhere. God is spirit. And the time is coming, and is now here, when it won't matter where you worship, but only that you do it in spirit and truth. Heart and mind. That's the kind of worshiper He's looking for. It won't matter where you're from...or what you've done.

She stands up under the yoke. It's uncertain if she'll run or weep.

JESUS (CONT'D)

Do you believe what I'm telling you?

She turns to walk away.

(CONTINUED)

PHOTINA

Until the Messiah comes, and explains everything and sorts this mess out, including me, I don't trust in anyone.

We catch a glimpse of the disciples approaching from a ways off. She walks away. Jesus speaks to her back.

JESUS

You were wrong when you said you've never received anything from God.

She turns back--

JESUS (CONT'D)

This Messiah you speak of. I am he.

She doesn't know what to think.

JESUS (CONT'D)

The first was named Ramin. You were a woman of purity who was excited to be married, but he wasn't a good man. He hurt you, and it made you question marriage and even the practice of your faith.

She freezes.

PHOTINA

(a whisper)

Stop it.

JESUS

The second was Farzad. On your wedding night his skin smelled like oranges, and to this day every time you pass the oranges in the market you feel guilty for leaving him, because he was the only truly godly man you've been with, but that made you feel unworthy.

She drops the yoke from her back and the water buckets land hard on the ground. She turns to him near tears.

PHOTINA

Why are you doing this?

(CONTINUED)

JESUS

I have not introduced myself as the Messiah to the public. You are the first. It would be good if you believed me.

(CONTINUED)

PHOTINA

You picked the wrong person.

JESUS

I stopped in Samaria just to meet you. Do you think it's an accident I'm here in the middle of the day?

PHOTINA

I am rejected by others.

JESUS

I know. But not by the Messiah.

*

That hits her.

PHOTINA

And you know these things because you are the Christ.

He nods.

JESUS

The Lord draws near to the brokenhearted.

*

*

*

PHOTINA

(through tears)

I'm going to tell everyone.

JESUS

I was counting on it.

She backs away, not breaking her gaze with Jesus.

PHOTINA

Spirit and truth?

JESUS

Spirit and truth.

PHOTINA

It won't be all about mountains or temples?

JESUS

(nods)

Soon. Just the heart.

PHOTINA

You promise?

JESUS

I promise.

(CONTINUED)

The disciples arrive from town with food. They stop abruptly and take in the scene -- Jesus and this woman standing at a distance facing each other.

826

CONTINUED: (9)

Blue Rev. (mm/dd/yy)

46A.
826

She turns to run, and when she sees them, she yells.

(CONTINUED)

PHOTINA

This man told me everything I've
done! He must be the Christ!

They stare. Mary smiles. Photina takes off.

ANDREW

Hey wait!

BIG JAMES

Your water!

JOHN

You forgot your--

But she doesn't hear. In the distance we hear her shouting--

PHOTINA

Come see a man who told me
everything I ever did!

Jesus laughs beautifully as he watches her run.

LITTLE JAMES

Rabbi, we got food, what would you
like?

JESUS

Ah, I have food to eat you do not
know about.

(Simon is still staring at the woman as she runs off.)

ANDREW

Who got you food?

SIMON

Wait a minute. You told her? And
she can tell others?

THADDEUS

What food?

JESUS

My food is to do the will of him
who sent me and to accomplish his
work.

SIMON

You told her who you are?

Jesus looks at Simon and smirks and nods. Simon starts to
get excited.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON (CONT'D)

So does that mean...

JESUS

It means we're going to stay here for a couple days. It's been a long time of sowing, but the fields are now ripe for harvest.

SIMON

And so it's time?

JESUS

Let's go.

As Jesus starts walking...

SIMON

YES!!

They walk as a group, headed towards town, following Jesus.

FADE TO BLACK.

END EPISODE

END SEASON