

The Chosen—Season 5, Episode 4, “The Same Coin”

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

Introductory Notes:

1. “*” Indicates an extra-biblical character or incident.
2. **John’s Farewell Discourse: John 13:21-17:26** Contrasted to the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), which detail Jesus’ Last Supper by focusing on the Passover bread and wine, John’s Gospel focuses more so on Jesus’ foot washing (John 13:1-20). In fact, John’s Gospel places the Last Supper *before* the Passover—“Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father,” John 13:1.

(Remember from previous sessions: the Gospel writers—as with other contemporary historians of the ancient world—are less concerned with “the accidents,” the precise details of a particular incident and moreso the meaning of the incident. For example, in reporting a battle, the historian might write that “...500,000 fell by the king’s sword that day...”, and whether or not that number is accurate and true, the meaningful point—the “truthiness” of the report, thank you very much, Stephen Colbert—is that this king was mighty and victorious in battle. The number is less important to the historian than the point, the meaning.)

We can think of the Farewell Discourse as sort of a “last will and testament,” a final inclusion of the summation of Jesus’ teaching according to John. Included in this 4 ½-chapter-long monolog are some Jesus’ best-known and well-beloved words, some of which are included in this scene:

- **Jesus’ New Commandment:** Love One Another (13:31-35)
- **Foretelling Peter’s denial** (13:36-38)
- **Jesus’ departure to the Father and Jesus the Way to the Father** (14:1-14)—“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. ...I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (vs. 1-2, 6).
- **Promised assurance of the Holy Spirit as advocate and guide** (14:15-31)—“I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ...the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid” (vs. 18, 25-27).
- **Jesus the True Vine** (15:1-17)—“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ...No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if (when!—MEP) you do what I command you. ...You did not choose me, but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last...” (vs. 1-2, 13-14, 16).
- **The World’s Rejection** (15:18-27)—“If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you” (v. 1).
- **Reminders of the promise Holy Spirit and Jesus’ impending departure** (16:1-15)
- **A promise that their grief will turn to joy and peace** (16:16-33)—“A little while and you will no longer see me, and again a little while, and you will see me. ...Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn, but the world will rejoice; you will have pain, but your pain will turn into joy. ...Take courage; I have conquered the world!” (vs. 16, 20, 33).
- **Jesus prays for his disciples** (17:1-26)

Cold Open: The Last Supper

00:00:22 – 00:08:34	Scene Summary: We open again at the Last Supper, perhaps noticing, contrary to prior episodes, Judas is seated at the table with Jesus and the rest of the disciples, to Jesus’ immediate left. Jesus asks John “to start the Dayenu for us.” (See Note 1—The Dayenu , p. 2.)
---------------------	---

	John begins the prayer, “If he had brought us out of Egypt...”, and all answer, “It would have been enough.” As the prayer continues, the scene shifts from Jesus’ and the disciples’ Passover table to Laz’s table at his home in Bethany where we see Zeb and his wife Salome, Mary Magdalene (remember, she left Jerusalem last episode to “go find help” but had also said “there’s no one in Bethany who can help us now”), Mother Mary, and Joanna. At the conclusion of the prayer, Peter announces, “And now the bitter herbs.” (See Note 2—The Bitter Herbs, p. 2.) But before they can eat the herbs, Big James speaks up: “Wait. I have something to add. ...If he had built for us the Holy Temple and (tearfully) not sent the Messiah in our lifetimes...it would have been enough. We would have waited.” Jesus nods knowingly. Big James continues, “But you chose us. You chose now. And it is enough.” Big James openly weeps. Matthew, per usual, takes a second to catch up: “James, why are you crying.” But Big James replies, “If you don’t know by now, then...”. He can’t finish. Jesus moves them back on to the bitter herbs, “a reminder of the bitterness of slavery. Saltwater, a reminder of the tears of our people.” And they begin to pray together: “Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us in his commandments to eat bitter herbs.” They dip the herbs in the saltwater and eat. John then leans over to Jesus and whispers, “Lord, who is it? Is it Thomas?” (See Note 3—Who is it?: John 13:21-30, p. 3.) Jesus whispers something inaudible to us, and John looks concerned or troubled. Jesus reaches over, breaks off a piece of the matzo bread, adds some bitter herbs, and a scoop of the <u>charoset</u> and hands it to Judas, seated next to him. John looks alarmed, and Simon Peter seems to notice. Judas takes Jesus’ offering sheepishly, and Jesus dismisses him: “You do not have to stay anymore.” Judas stares at his plate for a few pregnant seconds before Jesus interrupts again, “Judas...” and Judas turns to look at Jesus. “He has you now,” Jesus says. Judas: Who? Jesus: Not God. This seems to steel Judas, who replies, “It didn’t have to be this way. ...But you can still stop things from ending badly,” but Jesus only replies, “What you are going to do... do it quickly.” Judas eats a bite of the morsel Jesus has given him and then gets up and leaves. Some of the disciples seem to notice, and Matthew asks, “Where did Judas go?” Andrew explains, “Passover tradition. Give alms to the poor. He is keeper of the purse.” Matthew seems confused that it’s happening in the middle of dinner and some of the other discuss the meal. Eventually, Jesus interrupts the meal, “My friends, I am with you just a little longer. ...A new commandment I give to you...”. (See Note 4—I am with you just a little longer: John 13:33-38a, p. 3.)
--	--

Notes:

- Note 1—The Dayenu** ...is a traditional, upbeat Passover song named for the Hebrew word, *Dayenu*, which simply translates, “*It would have been enough*” or “*It would have sufficed*.” (*day*, “enough” and *enu*, “to us.”) It is sung during the *Maggid*—the telling of the Exodus story at the Passover Seder.

The earliest full text of the song appears in the 800s. *The Chosen* imagines this as part of Jesus’ and the disciples’ Passover meal.

Here is a link to a video with a brief, modern interpretation of the Dayenu at a contemporary Passover Seder:

https://youtu.be/WAUZ9qqdpJ0?si=36aM1JU_HW07nZY2
- Note 2—The Bitter Herbs:** Known as *maror*, these are a symbolic commemoration of the harshness of the Egyptian slavery. During the contemporary Seder, participants eat the *maror* twice—once plain, along with the sweet *charoset* to soften the sting (See **Charoset**, below) and once dipped in saltwater, symbolic of the Israelites tears in captivity. The bitter herbs can also be included in a sandwich of sorts, using the unleavened matzo bread.

Charoset--a salad of various ingredients depending on the setting and context of the meal, but always containing some sort of fruit, nuts, spices, and sweet red wine. (The *charoset* is a symbolic reminder of the clay and mortar

used by the enslaved Israelites to make bricks for their slave drivers, but the sweetness symbolizes how God's covenanted promise of freedom and redemption can sweeten the bitterness of slavery and life in general.)

3. **Note 3—Who is it?: John 13:21-30:** *After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit and declared, “Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.”²² The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom he was speaking. ²³ One of his disciples—the one whom Jesus loved—was reclining close to his heart; ²⁴ Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom he was speaking. ²⁵ So while reclining next to Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” ²⁶ Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” So when he had dipped the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas son of Simon Iscariot. ²⁷ After he received the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.” ²⁸ Now no one knew why he said this to him. ²⁹ Some thought that, because Judas had the common purse, Jesus was telling him, “Buy what we need for the festival,” or that he should give something to the poor. ³⁰ So, after receiving the piece of bread, he immediately went out. And it was night.*
4. **Note 4—I am with you just a little longer: John 13:33-38a:** *“Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’” ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”*
- ³⁶ Simon Peter said to him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus answered, “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, but you will follow afterward.” ³⁷ Peter said to him, “Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” ³⁸ Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me?...”

Scene 1: Jerusalem: The Outer Temple Courts*

00:09:35-00:13:32	Scene Summary: This scene picks up almost exactly where the action from last episode ended—the Temple complex is still in a uproar after Jesus’ actions and confrontation with the Jewish leadership. Atticus*, per usual, is watching and taking it all in. We see Kafni*, approached by the lamb vendor we saw him provoking in the aftermath of the Jesus clearing the Temple and the vendor losing all his sheep. (Kafni* had suggested to him that perhaps the perpetrator should be made to pay “in other ways.”) The vendor observes, responding to Jesus’ words about taxes to Caesar from the last episode: “First the market, and now an endorsement of Rome’s taxation.” Kafni* responds somewhat gleefully, “He will not recover from this. Be assured, you will see justice for your lambs and your livelihood.” (It is unclear to me whether or not Atticus* overhears the conversation.) Enter Rabbi Yussif, still disguised as a commoner. He seems to notice Jesse* (Zee’s imagined formerly-paralyzed brother whom Jesus had healed from paralysis) and Veronica (the woman Jesus had healed from her 12-year hemorrhage) discussing the Jewish leadership’s attempt to entrap Jesus in his words when they questioned him. Jesse notes, “...for those expecting a <i>different kind of Messiah</i>” (See Note 5—A different kind of Messiah, p. 4.) The two notice Kafni* and his bunch with concern. Elsewhere, Mary Magdalene makes her way through the crowded streets. She seems to be looking for something... or someone. Encountering Rabbi Shmuel*, Gedera*, Zebadiah*, and Yanni*, she confronts Shmuel*, asking about Yussif. Shmuel* speaks of their initial introduction back in Capernaum and recalls the incident at Bethany when Mary, the sister of Lazarus washed Jesus feet with her hair, scandalizing Shmuel* by the intimacy and immodesty. Mary Magdalene responds, “...Think whatever you want about her. Just tell me where I can find Yussif.” Shmuel* continues, “You think he can help your cause?” (turning to his colleagues) This woman is from the Red Quarter in Capernaum, possessed by seven demons.” But Mary fires back, “I am from Magdala by the Sea, possessed by the creator of the universe.” Shmuel* responds, “And what do you practice now?” (we see Yussif lurking nearby) Allegiance to a man who just preached his own death sentence to a crowd of a thousand witnesses?” Mary seems puzzled and alarmed by Shmuel’s words, and he continues: “He has given us no choice. He will be silenced, shamed, and censured. And when people hear who stood by his heresies, you’d be better off in a leper colony.” (Now we see Yussif changing out of his disguise and back into his rabbinical garb.) But Mary replies firmly and bravely, “A leper colony, he would heal and redeem. The truth is, there is nowhere you can send us where Jesus is not Lord. I think what he said means something terrible for
-------------------	--

	you. And I think you know it. (looking to the other rabbis) They may not, but you do, and it drives you mad.” (See Note 6—Women in Jesus’ entourage, p. 4.) Yussif, now dressed as a rabbi, interrupts wondering what’s going on, and Shmuel* fully turns on him fully revealing his suspicions of Yussif’s allegiance, recalling Yussif’s silence in response to Mary the Sister of Lazarus washing Jesus’ feet at Bethany that they witnessed in S4E8. Gedera* reminds Shmuel* they have to report to the High Priest and the quartet depart. Yussif makes sure Mary Magdalene is all right, and she replies that her worst fears have been confirmed, Yussif reporting, “...things are getting out of control.” Mary reveals the help she is seeking is Yussif, and she knows the Jewish leadership is trying to kill Jesus, though Yussif says, “Nothing is official yet.” The Jewish Official With the Tall Hat (maybe a scribe?) arrives and alerts Yussif to “an emergency meeting first thing in the morning” and insists they go back to make a plan. Yussif seems torn between Mary and his duties back at the Sanhedrin, but the Official With the Tall Hat is insistent. The two leave Mary in spite of her pleas.
--	--

Notes:

1. **Note 5—A different kind of Messiah:** This has been and will continue to be teased out: what kind of Messiah are you expecting?
2. **Note 6—Women in Jesus’ entourage:** Scripture lifts up the presence and role of women among Jesus’ group, though with little actual dialog until after the resurrection. For example...

Luke 8:1-3: *Soon afterward he went on through one town and village after another, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, ² as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³ and Joanna, the wife of Herod’s steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered to them out of their own resources.*

The Chosen has stressed not only their presence but the vitality of their support, as well as their imagined words throughout.

Scene 2: Jerusalem—Phoebe’s House*

00:13:33-00:15:58	Scene Summary: Back at Phoebe’s House, Judas waits outside as Simon Peter, Andrew, Big James and John return from their conversation with Jesus on the Mount of Olives from the last episode. Judas addresses and approaches Peter, wondering if Jesus had said anything more, expressing his opinion that Jesus “needs to explain his speech” and his concerns over Jesus not “unifying the people” and “validating Rome’s authority.” Peter pushes back, “I didn’t hear any validation,” but Judas replies, “He legitimized their taxation by saying it’s funding roads and protection. ...They are the foreign invaders.” But Simon Peter is unstirred by Judas’ concerns, reminding Judas that the Romans are only “the latest in a succession of many. The Babylonians, the Persians, the Macedonians.” But now Judas begins to reveal his misunderstood allegiance and captivity to misplaced Messianic expectations, “He’s the Messiah. He’s supposed to give us Israel back” and that he would’ve preferred Jesus to denounce Roman taxation; to declare Caesar’s claim as son of god to be blasphemous; that their God-given income should not go to the oppressors; and that his arrival as Messiah should dethrone Caesar in order to become the King of Israel. Peter is unmoved and wonders with Judas, “Then what would have happened?” Angrily, Judas replied, “He walked on water, Peter” and goes on to remind Peter of the power they experienced, goading Peter, “But it seems you have forgotten.” Judas concludes, “You’re telling me that he couldn’t snap his fingers and make swords appear in the hands of every person in that Tempel?” Simon Peter replies, “Of course he could, but he didn’t” and goes on to upbraid Judas, “Why can’t that faith that believes so fully, knows so deeply, also allow you to trust that he knows what he’s doing?” Judas seems to suggest that his reason for being chosen by Jesus is to challenge him, but Peter interrupts, “No. That’s you again. That’s your ideas,” and then ends the conversation, “I love you, Judas. But your mind is so full of your own ideas, you shut off belief.”
-------------------	--

	Big James interrupts them and insists they come inside for prayer and to talk about tomorrow (the Passover meal preparations?), so Peter goes inside, leaving Judas alone out on the street.
Notes:	

Scene 3: Jerusalem—Caiaphas' Quarters*

00:15:59-00:19:28	Scene Summary: Rabbi Geder* and Caiaphas sit at a table across from each other, Geder* reporting on the questioning in the Temple courts from the day before. We see Malchus, the High Priest's servant, attending them. Geder* opines that Jesus is "of the Pharisee persuasion..." (See Note 7—The Jewish Factions of Jesus' day, p. 5.) "...He believes in a resurrection." Caiaphas responds with a bizarre observation, "A realm you tell me he described as being devoid of marital copulation. Who would want to go?" (See Note 8—Marriage in the Resurrection: Matthew 22:23-33, p. 6) Geder* continues to report on parts of the exchange between the Jewish leadership and Jesus, that he compared them to those who stoned and killed the prophets God sent. (See Note 9—Those who stoned and killed the prophets, p. 5.) Caiaphas dismisses concern about that but does reveal his apprehension over Jesus' words about the destruction of the Temple. Geder* informs Caiaphas of the emergency meeting of the Sanhedrin but also that the destruction of the Temple will likely not be at the top of the agenda but rather ways of continuing to undermine Jesus' authority before the masses. Caiaphas again dismisses that tack as nearsighted because of the enormous mass appeal of Jesus and his message. Rather, Caiaphas' focus continues to be appeasing Roman authority and the observation of the Passover, presumably with the intersection of those two at the point of revenue and taxes and the potential for a riot if the Sanhedrin fumbles their attempts simply to discredit Jesus. Instead, Caiaphas ends the conversation by revealing his plan: to arrest Jesus quietly. But Geder* pushes back, that Caiaphas' plan "is predicated upon the ability to find Jesus, something even his own followers often aren't able to do." Caiaphas simply responds sinisterly, "It looks like you understand your next assignment, Rabbi Geder.*"
-------------------	--

Notes:

1. **Note 7-- The Jewish Factions of Jesus' day (Review)**—There were four main ones:

Pharisees: (Nicodemus and Yussif* are Pharisees—but so are Shmuel* and Yanni*.) The Pharisees were a movement of common, lay people (rather than a movement of priests, like the Sadducees) who had more in common with Jesus' teaching than any of the other Jewish movements. (Here Geder* notes that similarity.) They acknowledged the entirety of what we today call the Old Testament. They believed in a resurrection of the dead and a dynamic and spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures. The Pharisees' response to the Roman problem was largely avoidance; practicing faithful interpretation of and response to Torah; and to look forward to eventual freedom from Roman rule.

Sadducees: Often foils and rivals to the Pharisees, the Sadducees did not believe in the supernatural; an afterlife of any kind; angels, spirits, demons, etc. They held exclusively to the written Pentateuch/Torah (5 Books of Moses). Their approach to Jewish faithfulness could be expressed, "*You get one shot at life, and faithfulness to the Law ensures a good life in the here and now.*" The Sadducees were usually the group from whom the priests and High Priest were selected and were often seen as collaborators with the Romans for the sake of keeping the peace.

Essenes: The Essenes were Jewish mystics or monastics whose response to the Roman problem—or their perceived problem of secularism in general—was to withdraw into their desert communities, chief of which was Qumran, on the NW shore of the Dead Sea. (The Essenes were the sect who collected and warehoused what we call "the Dead Sea Scrolls.") The Essenes' general beliefs and practices mirrored those of the Pharisees. There is no direct mention of them in the Scripture—most of what we have come to know about them comes from the Dead

Sea Scrolls themselves or the Jewish Roman historian Josephus (AD 37 – ca. 100). Some scholars have suggested that John the Baptism could have been an Essene, or had been influenced by them.

Zealots: As *Crazy Book: A Not-So-Stuffy Dictionary of Biblical Terms* puts it, “As vegans are to vegetarians, zealots were to Jews” (363). Faithfulness, to them, was a political-economic response of open, violent opposition to Rome as well as Jewish collaborators and the re-establishment of the Davidic Kingdom of Israel. The Zealots instigated the rebellion that in 70 AD led to the Roman destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Luke/Acts lists one of the disciples/apostles as “Simon the Zealot” (Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13).

2. **Note 8—Marriage in the Resurrection: Matthew 22:23-33:** *The same day some Sadducees came to him saying there is no resurrection, and they asked him a question: ²⁴ “Teacher, Moses said, ‘If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother.’ ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother. ²⁶ The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh. ²⁷ Last of all, the woman herself died. ²⁸ In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her.”*

²⁹ Jesus answered them, “You are wrong because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰ For in the resurrection people neither marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels of God in heaven. ³¹ And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, ³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is God not of the dead but of the living.” ³³ And when the crowds heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

- As the text reads, this is a trap question crafted by the Sadducees in an attempt to discredit not just Jesus, but the Pharisees’ understanding of a possible resurrection.
- It comes right on the heels of the question posed to Jesus about Caesar and taxes.
- I don’t think we heard this conversation about marriage at all.

3. **Note 9—Those who stoned and killed the prophets:** These words of Jesus come at the conclusion of his “Woe to you...!” tirade directed at the Jewish leadership: “*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!*” ³⁸ See, your house is left to you, desolate. ³⁹ For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.’ ”

As for the prophets themselves, the Scriptures do not record the final deaths for most the Old Testament prophets. However, since most of the prophets were lay people—that is, NOT educated Jewish authorities attached the Kings of Israel or Judah or the Temple—they were often rejected in much the same way that Jesus first and eventually his disciples will be.

Additionally, there are extra-biblical traditions that describe various fates, including death at the hands of their own Jewish leadership.

- One tradition describes Isaiah’s death as an execution under the authority of King Manasseh of Judah by being sawed in half inside a hollow cedar tree.
- Jeremiah’s warnings of coming tribulation as God’s response to the nation’s oppression of the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the alien stranger are largely met with rejection and derision. He was cast in to a well, even as Jerusalem was being destroyed by Babylon. Tradition says Jeremiah makes it to Egypt, only to be stoned to death by Jewish exile who rejected his message.
- 2 Chronicles 24:21 records the stoning of the prophet Zechariah ben Jehoida at the command of King Joash of Judah. (This is not the same Zechariah as the “Book of Zechariah.”)

Scene 4: *Jerusalem—Back at Phoebe’s House

00:19:29-00:25:02	Scene Summary: Back at Phoebe’s House*, John stands before one of the frescoes in the house’s sumptuous atrium that we’ve seen others taking in when Jesus walks in. “Well, the first commandment didn’t exactly make it into this home did it?” Jesus comments. (See Note 10—First Commandment: Exodus 20:1-6 , p. 7.) He asks John to tell him what the fresco portrays. John indicates that the story it portrays has some basis in their own Hebrew writings, “Remember in the period of the Judges, <u>the story of Jephthah</u> ?” Jesus acknowledges his knowledge of the story, as John continues with his review of the story, Jesus playfully correcting him as he speaks. At the end of John’s recounting, “And so, Jephthah followed through on his vow.” Jesus observes, “Something my Father never asked
-------------------	--

him to do.” (See **Note 11—Jephthah’s Daughter: Judges 11:30-40**, p. 7.) “Back then,” John replies, “There was no king in Israel,” and Jesus follows with, “**Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**” (See **Note 12—Everyone did what was right in his own eyes: Judges**, p. 8.) “People still do,” John says, “Take things into their own hands.” As John reviews the Greek version of the story, he concludes with the ramifications of Agamemnon’s family’s destruction, with Agamemnon’s son Orestes, being the only survivor: “Well, then the Furies hunt, haunt, and torment him.” Jesus asks, “And in the end? Does he ever find peace? Can he come to forgive himself for what he did?” After a few moments, John replies, “Rabbi, I’m starting to understand more. ...Everyone from our leaders to those of us who follow you, including myself, we’re seeing things and doing things from our own flawed perspective...” —he begins to weep—“...It’s going to cost us.” Jesus simply says, “You’re paying attention.”

Notes:

1. **Note 10—First Commandment: Exodus 20:1-6:** *Then God spoke all these words, ² “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; ³ you shall have no other gods before me.*
⁴ “You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me ⁶ but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.
2. **Note 11—Jephthah’s Daughter: Judges 11:30-40:** *Jephthah made a vow to the Lord and said, “If you will give the Ammonites into my hand, ³¹ then whatever comes out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return victorious from the Ammonites, shall be the Lord’s, to be offered up by me as a burnt offering.” ³² So Jephthah crossed over to the Ammonites to fight against them, and the Lord gave them into his hand. ³³ He inflicted a massive defeat on them from Aroer to the neighborhood of Minnith, twenty towns, and as far as Abel-keramim. So the Ammonites were subdued before the Israelites.*
³⁴ *Then Jephthah came to his home at Mizpah, and there was his daughter coming out to meet him with timbrels and with dancing. She was his only child; he had no son or daughter except her. ³⁵ When he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, “Alas, my daughter! You have brought me very low; you have become the cause of great trouble to me. For I have opened my mouth to the Lord, and I cannot take back my vow.” ³⁶ She said to him, “My father, if you have opened your mouth to the Lord, do to me according to what has gone out of your mouth, now that the Lord has given you vengeance against your enemies, the Ammonites.” ³⁷ And she said to her father, “Let this thing be done for me: grant me two months, so that I may go and wander on the mountains and bewail my virginity, my companions and I.” ³⁸ “Go,” he said, and he sent her away for two months. So she departed, she and her companions, and bewailed her virginity on the mountains. ³⁹ At the end of two months, she returned to her father, who did with her according to the vow he had made. She had never slept with a man. So there arose an Israelite custom that ⁴⁰ for four days every year the daughters of Israel would go out to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.*

Note:

- It’s an unusual text selection and fairly obscure—Jephthah, nor his story, are ever cited or referenced in any other text.
- The text is cited and debated in the *Talmud* and various Jewish *midrash*—some see this is as morality tale about rash vows or human sacrifice. (Contrast what happens in this story compared to **Genesis 22** and the near sacrifice of Isaac, which was asked for by God.) Other ancient writings debate whether Jephthah really sacrificed his daughter or simply offered her to the Lord in the manner that the child Samuel was offered to the Lord in service.
- **Midrash**—rabbinical commentaries organized sequentially following the order of the books of Scripture.
Talmud—rabbinical commentaries organized topically
- Jesus’ response to John’s review of the story—“...something my Father never asked him to do...” —might be the set-up for the inclusion of this obscurity, at the very least as commentary on traditions and pieties that take on a life of their own as assumptions of what God expects or demands? Are we going to see someone in *The Chosen* do something God hasn’t asked them to do?

3. **Note 12—Everyone did what was right in his own eyes: Judges:** This phrase is one that occurs a number of times in the book of Judges and becomes the eventual impetus for Israel's call for a king.
- I believe it is this phrase from Judges—"Everyone did what was right in his own eyes"—is becoming the set-up and explanation in *The Chosen* for Judas' story arc, especially with John's reply to Jesus' use of this statement, "People still do...take things into their own hands."

Further, I think this hunch is backed up by Jesus' and John's concluding conversation about the tragic Greek character Orestes— "...the Furies hunt, haunt, and torment him."—as well as Jesus' question, "Does he ever find peace? Can he come to forgive himself for what he did?"

Perhaps it's not only *Judas' story arc* that is being hinted at but **ALL** of the disciples'.

Scene 5: Jerusalem—The Temple Complex: Entry to the Sanhedrin*

00:25:03-00:32:08

Scene Summary: Rabbi Gedera* and Caiaphas are met at the entry way to the Sanhedrin's chambers by an official who informs them that the chief elders, Shimon* (the 5th rabbi we've seen occasionally with Zebadiah*, Shmuel*, Gedera*, and Yanni*, often speaking calmly and rationally against the 4) and Shammai* (the representative of the most conservative faction within the Sanhedrin "have requested a moment to organize their factions." (See **Note 13—The School of Shammai vs. The School of Hillel**, p. 9.) Yanni* appears and try to explain supposed bylaws and rules that support such a delay, and Gedera* begins to protest. But Caiaphas coolly concedes and agrees to wait outside while Gedera* and Yanni* enter.

Inside, Rabbi Shimon* speaks directly to Rabbi Zebadiah*, asking for the humility to lay aside their partisan differences. But Zebadiah still breathes fire, accusing Hillel sympathizers for the problem of Jesus. But Shimon* concedes that Jesus presents a common problem to both parties, interpreting Jesus as "dismissive of tradition and precedent [who] pushes the people's attitudes toward an uncharted realm of thought, alien to both our interpretations of Torah." Calling for unity, Shimon* opens the floor "for proposals that can be agreed upon and presented to the High Priest for immediate authorization." Shmuel* rises and declares that he has "documented Jesus' actions, teachings, and rumors of signs longer than anyone." But surprisingly, Yussif rises to object, declaring, "I have witnessed as much as Shmuel*" and goes on to retell the story of him, Shmuel*, and Jesus. But Shmuel* fires back that he has actually been documenting Jesus' work and wonders what Yussif has actually been doing about the Jesus problem. Shimon* tries to focus the two on "actionable proposals." Shmuel* recalls what he labels "the Ghost of Bethany"—the resurrection of Lazarus—and goes on to describe "the preposterous notion that Jesus the Nazarene called forth from the tomb a man four days dead and decaying, raised to life." Yussif wonders what Shmuel's* problem is about a resurrection? Shmuel* says he fears the distraction of Jesus' signs and wonders for the people, that Jesus' true intention is as a false Messiah fueled by the "elaborately constructed hoax" of raising a man from the dead. The two continue to argue back and forth, Yussif now showing more backbone than we've seen throughout *The Chosen*. But Shmuel's* argument also reveals his true intention: the murder, at least to begin with, of Lazarus, quoting Torah as grounds for such action: "From the Third Book of Moses, '**Whoever blasphemes the name of the Lord** shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him'." (See **Note 14—Blasphemy and more: Leviticus 24:13-17**, p. 9) Some within the group receive such suggestion with enthusiasm while others are outraged. Shmuel* continues, "It is written in the Second Book of Moses, '**You shall keep the Sabbath, for it is holy for you**. Everyone who profanes it shall be put to death. Whoever does any work on it, that soul shall be cut off from his people.'" (See **Note 15—Sabbath: Exodus 31:12-17**, p. 9)

As the two men go at each other, Zebadiah* calls for a vote. Stones are distributed and then collected, each recording each member of the Sanhedrin's vote.

Yanni* rushes outside to report to Caiaphas. Zebadiah* joins him and tells Caiaphas his presence would only draw things out longer with him in the room. Yanni* flatters Caiaphas, praising his murderous father-in-law Annas, but also using that flattery to try to outmaneuver Caiaphas by suggesting perhaps they consult one of Annas' blood sons in trying to resolve the Jesus matter. But Caiaphas recognizes Yanni's* strategy and gains the upper hand again

	by encouraging the two to consult Ananus, son of Annas, knowing that Ananus will agree with Caiaphas on actions related to Jesus.
Notes: 1. Note 13—The School of Shammai vs. the School of Hillel: We first heard of these factions way back in season 2 when Nicodemus appeared before the Sanhedrin to give a patient and tolerant account of Jesus' teaching and ministry. These were two actual competing schools of Jewish interpretation within the Pharisees' tradition during Jesus' day. It was said of these two schools of interpretation, "<i>The school of Shammai binds...</i>"—meaning he was seen to be the more conservative, restrictive interpretation—"and the school of Hillel looses"—leaning toward a more expansive understanding of faithfulness. So for example, when it came to saying one's evening prayers, including especially the <i>Shema</i> ("<i>Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is One. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind,</i>" Deut. 6), Shammai's opinion was that one should pray laying down in the evening and standing up in the morning, while Hillel's opinion was that anyone can say it in any position they prefer. Some scholars believe that Jesus himself might have been trained in—or at the very least found grounding and sympathy with the school of Hillel. 2. Note 14—Blasphemy and more: Leviticus 24:13-17: <i>The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ¹⁴ "Take the blasphemer outside the camp, and let all who were within hearing lay their hands on his head, and let the whole congregation stone him. ¹⁵ And speak to the Israelites, saying: Anyone who curses God shall incur guilt. ¹⁶ One who blasphemes the name of the Lord shall be put to death; the whole congregation shall stone the blasphemer. Aliens as well as the native-born, when they blaspheme the Name, shall be put to death. ¹⁷ Anyone who kills a human being shall be put to death.</i> I believe it's noteworthy that Shmuel's* piety and interpretation lifts up the prohibition and punishment for blasphemy while overlooking the prohibition and punishment for killing another human being. 3. Note 15—Sabbath: Exodus 31:12-17: <i>The Lord said to Moses, ¹³ "You yourself are to speak to the Israelites, 'You shall surely keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, given in order that you may know that I, the Lord, sanctify you. ¹⁴ You shall keep the Sabbath, because it is holy for you; everyone who profanes it shall be put to death; whoever does any work on it shall be cut off from among the people. ¹⁵ Six days shall work be done, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of solemn rest, holy to the Lord; whoever does any work on the Sabbath day shall be put to death. ¹⁶ Therefore the Israelites shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a perpetual covenant. ¹⁷ It is a sign forever between me and the Israelites that in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.'</i>" Again, it is noteworthy what Shmuel* focuses on in this reiteration of the Sabbath law (Exodus 31 vs. the original statement in Exodus 20.) He grabs on to the rule and punishment (a tendency of the school of Shammai?) as opposed to the sense of the <i>giftedness of Sabbath</i> and its intended rest and refreshment (a tendency of the school of Hillel?).	

Scene 6: Jerusalem—Back at Phoebe's House*

00:32:09-00:39:12	Scene Summary: Jesus lingers in the sumptuous atrium of the borrowed house, noticing the fruit trees there. Judas appears, greets Jesus, and indicates he's been wanting to speak to Jesus. Clumsily... awkwardly, Judas begins to reveal his perspective, "So we've arrived at the critical moment." He names the crowd ("all of Israel") and their readiness to crown Jesus as king. (Jesus seems to dismiss this notion with a "Humph.") Judas goes on to name Jesus' unparalleled popularity among the crowds and Rome's apparent idleness "hoping this will all blow over," adding hesitantly, "And they may even be delighted by what you said about taxes." He asserts his concern that Jesus' adversaries among the Jewish leadership will weaponize what Jesus has said "and spread ill will amongst the people like a disease. ...The window of opportunity is closing even as we speak." Jesus replies, "It sounds like you have some ideas." Judas goes on to recall his assumption that Jesus has called each disciple for a reason, his past vocation as "a successful businessman," and his "experience with human persuasion." Jesus pauses thoughtfully, sighs, and momentarily adopts Judas' business metaphor: "What is the deal you're proposing I close?" Looking Jesus straight in the eye, Judas replies, "Lay claim to your birthright. You are the Messiah. Son of David. The people are so convinced, they're singing songs in your name. It's time." (See Note 16—What kind of Messiah are you expecting?, p. 10.) But Jesus bottom lines it for him and Judas: "And if I don't do whatever big thing you've imagine I should do at this time, will you still believe?"
-------------------	---

	Judas face betrays an inner struggle before he answers... eventually..., "Of course I will." And then Jesus asks a rebuking question, "Then why are you suggesting that you know better than I do what should be the next best course of action?" The question irks Judas and seems to begin to erode not just the conversation but the very fabric of the relationship between Judas and Jesus, certainly from Judas' perspective, concluding with an explosive, "THEN WHAT AM I HERE FOR?" (See Note 17—What am I here for?, p. 10) Judas regathers himself and continues: "If I am no use to your kingdom..."—HIS interpretation, not Jesus'—"...then I am nothing." Jesus tells him, "You have a choice to make, Judas. ...Who you belong to. Who has your heart. I want it. And I've had it before. You followed me willingly." As Judas responds with hands outstretched to Jesus, "I want to continue. There's nothing more that I want than that." After a pregnant pause—Judas' hands outstretched, Jesus' on the table—Jesus grasps Judas' hand and says, "Then I will pray for you." Judas looks puzzled, and Jesus continues, "But for now, please leave me in peace," in spite of Judas' protests. As Judas stands to leave, he only says, coldly now, "Thank you for your time, Rabbi." Jesus weeps. Judas hurries out of the house, passing by a room from which Big James emerges, puzzled by the slammed door. Elsewhere in the house, Tamar* and Joanna conversing about the Passover, whether Tamar* had ever heard of it before, Joanna and her husband Chuza's avoidance of the crowds, etc. Tamar* confesses she wishes she could learn more, that she could argue on Jesus' behalf, and Joanna affirms her, "I think you have learned a lot..." Suddenly Mary Magdalene hurries into the room, frantically saying, "We have to pack. ...Jesus wants us removed from the city for the next two days... Something about spending time alone together, before...", she trails off. "Before what?" Joanna demands. Mary says she's uncertain, only "...that it sounds like we won't be spending Seder with him," which is disappointing to Tamar* and Joanna. Mary assures them that they'll figure something out.
--	---

Notes:

1. **Note 16—What kind of Messiah are you expecting?** We have been having this teased out for us almost from the beginning of the Chosen.

- What kind of Messiah is Judas expecting?
- What kind of Messiah is the school of Hillel (personified in Yussif and Nicodemus) expecting?
- School of Shammai?
- Caiaphas?

2. **Note 17—What am I here for?** John's Gospel has no temptation story the way the synoptics do (Matthew, Mark, and Luke—though Mark only mentions that Jesus was tempted without narrating it.) However, compare this imagined conversation between Judas and Jesus with the temptation stories:

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, ² where for forty days he was tested by the devil. He ate nothing at all during those days, and when they were over he was famished. ³ The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread."

⁴ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

⁵ Then the devil led him up and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. ⁶ And the devil said to him, "To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please."

⁷ If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours."⁸ Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'"

⁹ Then the devil led him to Jerusalem and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, ¹⁰ for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you, to protect you,'¹¹ and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'"

¹² Jesus answered him, "It is said, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

¹³ When the devil had finished every test, he departed from him until an opportune time.

Perhaps THIS is Judas' role?

Scene 7: On the Way to Bethany* (See **Note 18—Bethany in the Passion Narrative**, p. 11.)

00:39:13-00:51:49	Scene Summary: Jesus and the entourage cross a hilly savannah, with indistinct chatter from their traveling conversations. The point-of-view settles on a discussion between Judas and Peter, Judas expressing his irritation over the rest of the disciples' inability to see his perspective. Meanwhile at the head of the group, Jesus expresses hunger and wonders if anyone else brought any food. Andrew says they didn't because they figured there would be plenty at Laz's house. Jesus spots a fig tree and begins to approach it, but John comments to Big James and Andrew, "It's not the season for figs." As Jesus continues to search for fruit on the tree, Judas begins questioning Jesus all over again about the necessity of the trip to Bethany, that they're wasting time, etc. Jesus' ire builds—over a fig tree that has no fruit since it's not its season? Or because of Judas?—until he curses the tree, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" The disciples are baffled. (See Note 19—Jesus Curses the Fig Tree: Matthew 21:18-22, p. 12.) Annoyed and troubled, Jesus moves on down the road with the rest following behind. They arrive in Bethany, and Jesus asks for particularly more vigilance than usual—which puzzles some of the disciples, again wanting to know specifics. Jesus only reveals, "I'm aware of the reality of our situation, probably more than some of you know." (The camera's point of view shifts to Judas.) Later, the scene shifts to the dinner table at Laz's house where Jesus is dining with the women—Tamar*, Eden* (Simon Peter's wife), Joanna, Mary Magdalene, Mother Mary, Mary the Sister of Laz, and Martha the Sister of Laz. The mood is light and warm. Meanwhile outside, John keeps watch outside and eavesdrops on Jesus' conversation with the women as he recalls the many things he has asked of them over the course of the story: Mary Magdalene hosting Shabbat dinner, "when you thought you were not prepared or worthy or ready"; Mother Mary, "to be long-suffering and forgiving"; the sisters Mary and Martha, "to endure the pain of your brother's death"; Eden, "to put up with the implications of what it has meant for me to call first your Simon and now your Peter"; Tamar*, "to be a strangers in a strange land among strange people"; and Joanna, "for bringing Andrew to my cousin's prison... for supporting us out of your own means when we had nothing." (See Note 20—The Women, p. 12.) There is a moment of silence before Jesus speaks again: "And now I must ask you all for one more thing"—Mary Magdalene looks alarmed. He apologetically asks that they keep their distance from him in Jerusalem over these next few days. "...It's for the best," he says, "I think you will come to see that." Mother Mary speaks up, "You mean we won't observe the Passover seder with you?" Jesus acknowledges that pain, but concludes, "I have a few last words to impart to my apostles." (See Note 21—Disciples v. Apostles, p. 12.) Mary Magdalene notes the word "last." "Mary," Jesus addresses her, "You know because you have been listening." Mother Mary demands to know why, but Jesus simply replies, "Please don't ask me to answer that right now." Mary the Sister of Laz breaks the grieved silence by asking Jesus to pray the Dayenu with them, Mary Magdalene adding that they've prepared their own version—get your tissues ready.. (Review Note 1—The Dayenu, p. 2.) Finally, we see Mary Magdalene hurrying out into the night to go back to Jerusalem.
Notes:	1. Note 18—Bethany in the Passion Narratives: I have noted before that the Synoptics and John have differing timelines and locations during Passion Week. Matthew: <u>Sunday:</u> Triumphal entry (Palm Sunday), clearing the Temple, and returns to Bethany (Matt. 21:1-17)

Monday & Tuesday: Returns to Jerusalem, teaches in the Temple, questions on his authority by Jewish leadership and “Woe to you!”, private teaching to his disciples about “the End” while on the Mt. of Olives, Jesus’ anointing by an unnamed woman at home of Simon the Leper. (Matt. 21:18-26:13)

Wednesday (sometimes called Spy Wednesday): Judas meets with Jewish leadership and agrees on a price for his betrayal. (Matt. 26:14-16).

Thursday: Passover meal in Jerusalem; retreat to the Mt. of Olives; prediction of Peter’s denial; Jesus’ prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane and sleepy disciples; betrayal and arrest; trial before the Sanhedrin; Peter’s denial and disappearance. (Matt. 26:17-75)

Friday: Judas’ regret and suicide; Jesus’ trial before Pilate; (*Luke places Jesus’ appearance before Herod here, Luke 23:6-12—no mention of Herod in Matthew or Mark*); Pilate washes his hands and releases Barabbas; Jesus tortured by the Roman soldiers; crucifixion, death, and burial. (Matt. 27:1-61)

Saturday: Pilate orders the tomb sealed and guards posted.

John:

Sunday: Triumphal Entry; Greeks who want to meet Jesus via Philip; the thundering voice from heaven—no location given; some believe, some don’t. No indication of where Jesus is staying, other than, “...*Jesus went away and was hidden from them*” in 12:36 (John 12:17-50)

Monday & Tuesday: No details or timeline given. No indication of where Jesus is staying.

Wednesday: Last Supper—no bread and wine mentioned; foot washing; Farewell Discourse; retreat to the Mt. of Olives; betrayal and arrest—no mention of a previous clandestine meeting between Judas and the elders; trial at the High Priest’s house; Peter’s denial—no mention of Peter’s disappearance. (John 13:1-18:27)

Thursday: “The Day of Preparation for the Passover” (John 19:31); Jesus before Pilate—no mention of Barabbas; crucifixion, death, and burial (John 19:1-42)

***The Chosen* has been bouncing back and forth mostly between Matthew’s Gospel and John’s—so all of this is an attempt to rectify into a unified narrative what is actually not a unified narrative. (Review John’s Farewell Discourse: John 13:21-17:26 on p. 1, especially “Remember from previous sessions...”.)**

2. **Note 19—Jesus Curses the Fig Tree: Matthew 21:18-22:**

In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹ And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it, “May no fruit ever come from you again!” And the fig tree withered at once. ²⁰ When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, “How did the fig tree wither at once?”

²¹ Jesus answered them, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, ‘Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,’ it will be done.

²² Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.”

- In Matthew’s Gospel, this occurrence happens as Jesus and his disciples are coming back in to Jerusalem from Bethany—not as it’s portrayed here on their way to Bethany.
- It’s a weird story and might strike us as out of character for Jesus—except that this incident appears wedged in between a number of teachings related to productivity and fruitfulness:

The Parable of the Vineyard Workers (Matt. 20:1-16)

The Parable of the Two Sons (Matt. 21:28-32)

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants (Matt. 21:33-46)

- Perhaps what’s going on here is simply an object lesson of barrenness—and this seems particularly likely that this is why *The Chosen* places this story here juxtaposed with Judas’ theme.
- Parallel: **Mark 11:12-14** and **11:20-21**—the disciples don’t see the withered tree until the next day. **Note:** The disciple John’s observation that it’s not fig season comes from Mark’s account, and it’s the narrator who makes this observation, not a named disciple.

3. **Note 20—The Women**—Another acknowledgement not just of the women’s presence but their vital value.

4. **Note 21—Disciples v Apostles:** I believe this is the first time we’ve heard Jesus use this word, “apostle.” The word literally means, “one who is sent.” It is Luke/Acts that uses that word more than the rest—sometimes

interchangeably with “disciples” (“one who is disciplined by another”), sometimes signifying the intentional “sent” mission, sometimes using “The Twelve” to signify the leadership over other “disciples” gathered into the fold.