

The Chosen—Season 5, Episode 5, “Because of Me”

“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 more so 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—A Bombshell Has Been Dropped (See **Note 1—Narrative Timeline**, p. 2)

00:00:22 – 00:06:38	Scene Summary: The scene opens with Jesus grasping a cup and Little James offering instead to pour him a cup of water. Thaddeus enters the scene claiming, “Master I would never betray you.” He continues, “But if there’s something you know that I don’t, and it is me, tell me,
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and I'll throw myself out this window." Jesus, of course, tells him, "Don't do that, Thaddeus," which only prompts more questions about what to do from Little James and Thaddeus.

The camera pans the room, and we pick up snippets of conversation from some of the disciples, wrestling with the apparent bombshell of news about Jesus' betrayal. The camera lands on the trio of Judas, Philip, and Zee all speculating on the identity of the betrayer. Judas wonders out loud if it could be Thomas, noting his lengthy anger after Ramah's* death. (S4E3, "Moon to Blood") But Zee notes, "If it's him, he hasn't done a good job hiding it," and then looking at Judas observes, "You haven't exactly been happy either." "Careful," Philip whispers as Judas grasps his arm in indignation, explaining, "I want him to unite our people, and show more of his power. Lazarus' raising did not upset me the way it did Thomas."

The camera continues to pan the room, again catching snippets of conversations among the huddled groups of disciples. Thomas moves from the trio he has been standing with (kind of hard to tell who in the dark? Peter and Big James?) to Jesus. "Is it me, rabbi?" he asks, "Because of Ramah*?...Is my anger the betrayal?" But Jesus places a hand on Thomas' shoulder and assures him, "You have been faithful in spite of your anger."

Next the camera pans to Nathanael, John, and Andrew. "He said it has to be someone in this room," Nathanael remembers, followed by John and Nathanael trading accusatory questions. Andrew breaks them up, "...Let's start with who it definitely is not," and he lists both Peter ("...the Rock,' our leader, and the foundation of Jesus' church...") as well as himself as "...the one who brought Peter to Jesus, back when he was still Simon." John retorts, "Yes, and I'm sitting at Jesus' right hand." (See **Note 2—Sitting at Jesus' Right Hand: John 13:21-25**, p. 3) This provokes Nathanael, heatedly remembering Jesus' rebuke of John and his brother Big James for asking to sit in seats of position and authority. (S4E4, "Manna from Heaven"—See **Note 3—One at Your Right and One at Your Left: Matthew 20:20-28**, p. 3)

Finally Jesus angrily interrupts all the side conversations, dismissing their speculations and possible rankings as "Foolishness" and demands they return to their seats at the table. (You might see Matthew sitting alone at the table, apparently not engaging in the conversations among the various factions.) Slowly, hesitantly the disciples begin to return to their seats, as Jesus, irked, continues to reflect on their arguments. (Review **Note 3—One at Your Right and One at Your Left: Matthew 20:20-28**, p. 3.) Peter—before returning to his seat—is seen whispering something in John's ear. (Review **Note 2—Sitting at Jesus' Right Hand: John 13:21-25**, p. 3)

Peter interrupts, asking for forgiveness and grace, "...when you just informed us one of us might betray you." Jesus admits he is "giving you so much to understand. And I know that it doesn't all make sense to you" and goes on to categorize what he is trying to convey to them as needed for the immediacy while some is for the proverbial "tomorrow" and "distant future." He continues to try to teach them and encourage them to trust in the Father, saying, "I will assign to you, as my father assigned to me, a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the Twelve Tribes of Israel." (See **Note 4—That You May Eat and Drink at My Table in My Kingdom: Luke 22:21-30**, p. 3.) Judas wonders aloud, "The Twelve Tribes of Israel? One for each of us?" and Peter wonders about the betrayer, "...He gets to judge one of the tribes too?" Jesus is silent for a moment before saying, "You'll sort that out."

Jesus concludes the conversation by drawing them back into the Passover observation, "The ten drops of wine in remembrance of the ten plagues on Egypt and our Exodus from it." Jesus and his disciples dip their fingers into the wine and spill the droplets onto their plates for each of the plagues, some using their pinky finger, others using their index finger. (See **Note 5—Ten Drops of Wine**, p. 3)

The Cold Open concludes as we saw the previous episode begin with Jesus asking, "John, will you begin the Dayenu for us?" (See **Note 6—The Dayenu**, p. 4) And so John begins, "If he had brought us out from Egypt, and not carried out judgments against them..." and the group responds, "It would have been enough."

Notes:

1. **Note 1—Narrative Timeline:** The timeline of this scene can be a little confusing, especially since in the previous episode (S5E4, "Th Same Coin") revealed Jesus dismissing Judas to complete his act of betrayal, and now we see

Judas still among the Twelve. This scene, then, apparently takes place AFTER Jesus has revealed that one of the disciples will betray him but BEFORE last week's dismissal.

I have speculated all along that we will eventually see these snippets of the Last Supper woven back together into a narrative whole. Perhaps chopping it up and presenting it to us in the way that it has been highlights the confusion and lack of understanding that the disciples themselves have been experiencing and expressing.

2. **Note 2—Sitting at Jesus' Right Hand: John 13:21-25:** *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?"*

It is generally accepted tradition that "the disciple whom Jesus loved" is John, the author of the Gospel.

3. **Note 3—One at Your Right and One at Your Left: Matthew 20:20-28:** *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him.*²¹ *And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."*²² *But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to him, "We are able."*²³ *He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."*

²⁴ *When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers.*²⁵ *But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them."*²⁶ *It will not be so among you, but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant,*²⁷ *and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave,*²⁸ *just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many."*

Probably intentionally, this episode is placed by Matthew almost immediately before Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the beginning of his passion.

4. **Note 4—That You May Eat and Drink at My Table in My Kingdom: Luke 22:21-30:** *Jesus said, "...See, the one who betrays me is with me, and his hand is on the table."²² For the Son of Man is going as it has been determined, but woe to that one by whom he is betrayed!"²³ Then they began to ask one another which one of them it could be who would do this.*

²⁴ *A dispute also arose among them as to which one of them was to be regarded as the greatest.*²⁵ *But he said to them, "The kings of the gentiles lord it over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors."*²⁶ *But not so with you; rather, the greatest among you must become like the youngest and the leader like one who serves.*²⁷ *For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.*

²⁸ *"You are those who have stood by me in my trials,"²⁹ and I confer on you, just as my Father has conferred on me, a kingdom,*³⁰ *so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."*

I have noted a few times over our viewing that *The Chosen* draws mostly from Matthew's and John's Gospels. Here is a rare connection to Luke—a theme that can be traced throughout Luke's Gospel, that of how power, wealth, and service are to be wielded in the Kingdom of God.

5. **Note 5—Ten Drops of Wine:** In contemporary observations of the Passover Seder, participants, using either their pinky finger or their index finger, spill 10 drops of wine from their cups onto a plate, napkin, or bowl as they recite the Ten Plagues upon Egypt. This observation carries with it deep symbolism and teaching, including...

- **Diminishing Joy and Empathy for Others Who Suffer**—While wine is a traditional symbol of joy and celebration throughout the Scriptures, the removal of these drops symbolically lessens the worshippers own happiness, remembering that the Israelites freedom came at the cost of suffering and pain of innocent Egyptians, hurt by the Pharaoh's stubbornness.
- **Not rejoicing even over the fall of one's enemies** —**Proverbs 24:17:** *"Do not rejoice when your enemies fall, and do not let your heart be glad when they stumble."*

This Christ-like teaching and symbolism should be noted throughout even these ancient Old Testament/Hebrew Scripture traditions.

6. **Note 6—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

Scene 1: Jerusalem*

00:07:40-00:12:52

Scene Summary: The scene opens on a busy Jerusalem street. We see Jesus’ opponents walking and talking about the status of the Temple, whether it has been restored, the damage Jesus cause, some of the vendors refusing to return, the speculation that they had been accused of being swindlers, etc. One of them—one we haven’t seen or met before—observes, “Money is more powerful than words bandied about by radicals”

Suddenly, Barnaby* (the older fellow from Capernaum) starts upbraiding them, “We all have setbacks! They can be hard to swallow!” while his friend Shula* (the blind woman Jesus healed in S3E6, “Intensity in Tent City”) tries to quiet him. He continues to tease them, “Jesus said the tax collectors and prostitutes are entering the Kingdom before them. I know it stings a bit, but you’ll get over it.” Rabbi Yanni* responds angrily, much to Barnaby’s* apparent amusement, until Yanni* reveals the new character is Ananus, son of the High Priest Annas. (See **Note 7—Ananus, Son of Annas**, p. 5.) Barnaby is unperturbed by Ananus, teasing him all the more, “I know how you feel. My abba chose my brother-in-law over me to inherit the family farm just because I had a limp.” Rabbis Gedera* and Zebadiah* order silence and call Barnaby* an “insolent fool.” Rabbi Yanni* dismisses Barnaby’s* story of his limp, noting, “His leg is just fine.” Barnaby* responds, “It’s better than fine now, thanks to you-know-who.”

Still irritated, the group of rabbis walk away, Rabbi Gedera* observing, “Jesus’ comments about the prostitutes entering the Kingdom of Heaven before us are damning,” but Zebadiah* reminds him, “You don’t believe in the Kingdom of Heaven.” (See **Note 8—The Jewish Factions of Jesus’ Day (Review)**, p. 5.) The group continues to talk about Jesus and his contention with them, Ananus telling them he believes they are stirred up over nothing, noting, “We are agents of God. You must remember we are dealing with mortal beings, full of shame, frustration, fear of the unknown. They will be driven back to the known, the familiar, tradition. ...Jesus’ credentials are thin. From what I understand, he’s a homeless tradesman. He can offer them nothing. Once this euphoria they experienced from his unhinged screeds against us fades, reality will set back in. ...Taxes. Rome is not going to magically disappear because he’s a compelling wordsmith. And those taxes he’s telling us to pay aren’t going down. ...Their memories will return. The actions of previous people who claimed to be Messiah have led to massacre and loss of loved ones...” (Remember Kafni*, Ramah’s* father, is still lurking in the story.) Ananus continues, “All we need to do is nudge them toward those painful memories.” (See **Note 9—Previous people who claimed to be Messiah: Acts 5:36-39**, p. 5) “Fear will motivate them to police themselves,” Ananus concludes. Yanni* and the rest respond, “Yes! This is wisdom.”

As they arrive at the home of Caiaphas, Ananus ominously tells the group, “My brother-in-law has no understanding of the most basic human impulses. When he inevitably mismanages this, my father will seethe with disappointment, disdain, regret for choosing someone outside the bloodline of the family for the role of High Priest.”

Next the group is greeted by Ananus’ sister, Shoshana*, wife of Caiaphas, who invites them inside.

Inside, Caiaphas greets Ananus warmly, wondering why Ananus brought the rest of the group with him. (We’ve seen Ananus undermining Caiaphas to the group.) But Ananus quotes Proverbs to him: “In an abundance of counselors, there is safety” (Prov. 11:14). As the two power brokers test each other, Shoshana* interrupts, though Yanni* and Gedera* seem to exchange a knowing glance of this additional plot by Ananus to undermine Caiaphas. Shoshana* reveals that their father Annas, the former High Priest, wants the two

	to collaborate. But now Ananus openly berates Caiaphas, Shoshana's* husband, "Why the need for collaboration? Because your husband can't handle it by himself?" As Caiaphas seems to realize what's going on, he plays the power of his hand: "...I'm afraid you've come here under false pretenses. I've already made the decision to arrest Jesus." Looking down on Ananus, Caiaphas continues, "I received approval from Annas early this morning." "And then what?" retorts Ananus, as Geder* adds, "Our law prohibits trials from being held on Shabbat or High Holy Days. The Passover begins tomorrow night." Yanni* chimes in, "And capital trials must last more than one day to allow for purposeful consideration on the part of the judges." But Caiaphas now reveals, "I have operatives currently scouting his location." Ananus continues to berate and tease.
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Notes:

1. **Note 7—Ananus, Son of Annas:** We have heard passing explanations and allusions to these characters.

Annas had been high priest before Caiaphas but had been deposed by Pontius Pilate's predecessor, Valerius Gratus, who then gave the office to Caiaphas, rather than one of Annas' sons—the Jewish custom was that a son of the High Priest would inherit the role. Though out of office, Annas—and his son Ananus—still exerted an extraordinary amount of influence over the office and proceedings of the High Priest.

2. **Note 8—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: (Geder* is a Sadducee—likely so is Caiaphas and his family) 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).

3. **Note 9—Previous people who claimed to be Messiah: Acts 5:36-39:** *[Peter had testified to the Jewish Council who had arrested him, bearing witness to Jesus' resurrection...]* ³³ *When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them.* ³⁴ *But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up and ordered the men to be put outside for a short time.* ³⁵ *Then he said to them, "Fellow Israelites, consider carefully what you propose to do to these men."* ³⁶ *For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him, but he was killed, and all who followed him were dispersed and disappeared.* ³⁷ *After him Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census and got people to follow him; he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered.* ³⁸ *So in the present case, I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone, because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail;* ³⁹ *but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them—in that case you may even be found fighting against God!"*

Scene 2: On the Way Back to Jerusalem

00:12:53-00:17:27	Scene Summary: Meanwhile, we see Jesus and the disciples on the road back from Bethany on their way back to Jerusalem for the Passover. Passing the fig tree Jesus cursed in the previous episode, Peter notices that it has completely withered. (See Note 10—Jesus Curses the Fig Tree: Matthew 21:18-22 (review), p. 6.) Stopping to observe the fig tree, Jesus begins to teach: “I know you’re confused about why I would curse a fig tree. ...Have faith. You’ve heard many of our rabbis talk about moving mountains. Obstacles or impossible situations that get in our way of pursuing or trusting God. And truly, whoever says to this mountain right here, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, it will be done for him.” (The disciples don’t seem to be quite as sure.) Jesus continues, “Whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.” “Sounds great,” says Nathanael dismissively. But Jesus is undeterred, “You need to understand that, as you face mountains the rest of your life. But. I didn’t just do this to the tree to prove I can do anything. Why else did I curse this tree?” he poses and calls on Philip. “It did not bear fruit,” he says, and Jesus replies, “But as John pointed out yesterday, it wasn’t in season anyway. What was I expecting?” The disciples seem to be thinking about the question, until Andrew answers, “There were leaves,” and Jesus praises him, “It’s not in <i>full</i> season, but fruit usually comes before or along with leaves. Leaves promise fruit, even if just the beginning of growth. And there was nothing. The tree gave the appearance of fruit, but lacked anything good. Does that remind you of anything?” Again the disciples seem to be thinking—Peter replies: “The temple.” Jesus goes on to tell the Parable of the Fig tree, pointing out that everything they have seen thus far this week is but a sign of something approaching. (See Note 11—The Parable of the Fig Tree: Matthew 24:32-35, p. 6.) That something is not just the arrest, tribulation, and death of the disciples—part of Jesus’ extended teaching in Matthew 24 & 25—but also his own. (See Note 12—Jesus speaks openly about his coming death: Matthew 26:1-5, p. 7.) But the disciples protest.
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Notes:

1. Note 10—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.

2. Note 11—The Parable of the Fig Tree: Matthew 24:32-35: *From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ³³ So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁴ Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³⁵ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.*

Note: Jesus' use of this parable comes in a much longer section, sometimes called "the Apocalypse of Matthew," because the tone and topic of this extended teaching of Jesus—basically all of Matthew 24 & 25—seems to be focused on the End Times. But much of that teaching could also be applied to Jesus' impending passion and death.

3. **Note 12—Jesus speaks openly about his coming death: Matthew 26:1-5:** *When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ²“You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.”*

³ *Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the courtyard of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, ⁴and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. ⁵But they said, “Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people.”*

Scene 3: Jerusalem—Pilate's Headquarters*

00:17:28-00:23:03

Scene Summary: The scene opens with a small musical ensemble performing for Pilate's wife, Claudia. (Note: she is mentioned in Scripture—just not by name. See **Note 13—Pilate's Wife: Matthew 27:19**, p. 7.) They conclude their tune, and Claudia simply says, "Again."

Elsewhere, Pilate is trying to work but seems irritated by something. (We hear the music being played for Claudia in the background.) Suddenly he rises and storms through the door where Claudia and the musicians are. Claudia is a wreck, as Pilate pleads with her to tell him what's wrong. "Coiled," she says haltingly, perhaps her sobriety in question, "A garden. Olives. A lion. Curtain. Horses. Broken graves." "None of this makes any sense!" Pilate exclaims. Claudia lunges toward him from her bed, "We have to leave!...Let's leave this city and never come back!...We can't stay!" Pilate continues to look for an explanation, noting that "a city is not the thing causing your indisposition." And Claudia replies, "It's not the city. ...It's... It... I can't." Pilate explodes, "I AM THE GOVERNOR OF JERUSALEM! We cannot return to Caesarea Maritima during this momentous week for reasons that we both know! (See **Note 14—Caesarea Maritima**, p. 7.) Claudia shouts back for Pilate, then, to let her go. But Pilate is concerned about appearances.

Abruptly, Claudia clutches her stomach and realizes she can't go, "Who knows what you might do to him," she says. Pilate isn't sure who she's talking about—but we know—and Claudia goes on to speak of Pilate's murderous history. Pilate storms out of the room, and Claudia signals for the musicians to resume.

Back in his office, Pilate finds Atticus* standing there waiting for him, much to Pilate's chagrin. Atticus* reveals to him, "At this very moment, the Pharisees are plotting to arrest Jesus of Nazareth." Pilate responds, "They don't have the authority. It's illegal. Who would arrest him?" "They have a temple guard," Atticus* replies. But Pilate, irritated, retorts, "They guard the temple. It's in the name. They don't arrest citizens. Only we do that." Atticus* says, "They hoped you might do it, but that plan didn't work..."—he seems to be speaking of the attempted trap to get Jesus to say something against Roman taxation—"...Now they're planning to do it, the law be damned." Pilate, flustered, spits out, "Well, then we'll slap them with a colossal fine, to both remind them of their place and make up for the lost revenues from the incident in the temple market. Problem solved."

But Atticus* storms over to Pilate, grabs him by the front of his tunic, (much to Pilate's shock) and says, "Listen to me, Pontius. I have served you like a grateful son, and at times, a protective father...". Looking him square in the eyes, Atticus* continues to lecture Pilate, in spite of his protests, ending with a charge of dereliction of duty and that he is "going to take care of some of these things myself. When the time comes, you better be ready to take the reins." Atticus* storms out, leaving Pilate bereft, caught between the potential for riot, his wife, and the duties and expectations of his office.

Notes:

1. **Note 13—Pilate's Wife: Matthew 27:19:** ¹⁹ *While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him."*
2. **Note 14—Caesarea Maritima:** (See **Map—Israel at the Time of Jesus** handout.) The port city that served as the capital of Roman Judea and was a far preferable residence due to its coastal climate than Jerusalem. It figures prominently throughout the New Testament.

- **Acts 10**—Peter visits there, preaches to the Roman centurion Cornelius, baptizing him and his whole household, marking the opening of the Gospel mission to Gentiles.
- **Acts 8**—After baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch, Philip the Deacon (not Philip the disciple) settles there and later hosts the apostle Paul and his companions.
- **Acts 23-26**—Paul spent two years imprisoned there and stood trial before the Roman governors Felix and Festus, as well as King Herod Agrippa II (part of the family of Herod Antipas who we've seen in *The Chosen*), before appealing to Caesar as a Roman citizen and transported to Rome from there.

Scene 4: *Jerusalem—the Court of the Sanhedrin

00:23:04-00:28:13

Scene Summary: Addressing the Sanhedrin, Rabbi Gedera* asserts, "There is only one solution to this endless strife in our community. Jesus the Nazarene must be put to death." Rabbi Yussif looks alarmed, and Rabbi Shimon* asserts that this would only create more strife. Representatives of various factions speak in opposition or wonder how they would possibly get Pilate to sanction the execution. Shmuel* rises to assert that Pilate wants this thorn removed as they do, but Yussif opposes him, "You'd be lying to say you haven't marveled at his teaching, Shmuel.*", but Shmuel* says he's "marveled at his audacity" and "at his contempt for Torah, tradition, and us."

The arguments for and against the plot continue to circulate, with Yussif becoming more and more bold in his defense of Jesus.

As the arguments continue to go back and forth, one of the Pharisees wonders how long this is going to take with the clock ticking down toward sundown and the start of the Passover, flippantly saying, "Speaking of death, my wife will kill me if I leave her alone to search and purge the home of leaven all by herself," eliciting laughter from some of the council. (See **Note 15—Search and purge the home of leaven: Exodus 12:14-15, 19-20**, p. 8.) But Yussif reminds him not to make light of any of this, "We are debating an actual human life here, not your marriage."

But Caiaphas finally speaks and asserts that they are running out of time with the approach of Passover. At his wits end—or at least acting so—he says, "The only answer is prayer." So he begins to pray, inserting various psalms here and there: "Adonai, our God, King of the Universe, may the Lord of Justice spread a Sukkah of wisdom over this nation, in the face of imminent destruction. (See **Note 16—A Sukkah of Wisdom**, p. 8.) Your eternal word has been slandered. The holy temple, your dwelling place among men, maimed, ravaged, and violated..." (Yussif and Shimon* look around outraged at Caiaphas' excesses.) "...Your Chosen People, seduced, bewitched, and deceived by a sorcerer and necromancer, who has declared himself higher than you. There is none higher than you. Do not remember against us our iniquities, or the iniquities of former generations, but let your compassion come speedily to meet us, for we are brought very low. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name. Deliver us for your name's sake. Why should the nations say, 'Where is their God?' Send us wisdom, guidance, aid, and revelation. We beseech you. Arise, and show mercy to Zion. Blessed be our God. Blessed be our Lord. Blessed be our King, our Savior. Amen." (See **Note 17—Taking God's Name in Vain**, p. 9.)

As the council begins to adjourn, Shmuel* seems particularly troubled, which Yanni* notices.

Notes:

1. **Note 15—Search and purge the home of leaven: Exodus 12:14-15, 19-20:** *"This day shall be a day of remembrance for you. You shall celebrate it as a festival to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as a perpetual ordinance. ¹⁵ Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread; on the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day shall be cut off from Israel. ...¹⁹ For seven days no leaven shall be found in your houses, for whoever eats what is leavened shall be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether an alien or a native of the land. ²⁰ You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread."*
2. **Note 16—A Sukkah of Wisdom:** We have heard a form of this word before—way back in S2E4, "The Perfect Opportunity"—when Jesus and the disciples celebrate the feast of booths, commemorating God's providence for the Israelites over the course of the Exodus.

In this instance, what Caiaphas is praying is that God would provide a “booth” or “shelter” of wisdom as they try to figure out what to do with regard to Jesus.

What do tyrants and authoritarians do to get their way? They justify their actions by stirring up fear of destruction and the need for the nation’s defense. They create a spirit of victimization and offense, aiming the cause of such on those who will become the scapegoat.

3. **Note 17—Taking God’s Name in Vain:** If you want to know what the Second Commandment about taking God’s name in vain is all about, you could do worse than this prayer.

Remember, Caiaphas is a Sadducee, and what we have come to know about the Sadducees is that they “did not believe in the supernatural; an afterlife of any kind; angels, spirits, demons, etc.” (Review **Note 8—The Jewish Factions of Jesus’ day**, p. 5.) So why on earth would Caiaphas (a) pray and (b) pray in the way that he is for divine intervention?

Scene 5: Jerusalem—Back at Phoebe’s House*

00:28:14-00:36:53

Scene Summary: The disciples arrive once again back at Phoebe’s house.

As they gather around, seemingly aimlessly or lost in thought. Little James begins to weep, and Thaddeus comforts him.

Peter notices Matthew reviewing his notes and summons him over to him. Handing Peter his notebook, Matthew grasps him in an emotional embrace. After Matthew releases Peter, Peter opens Matthew’s notebook.

Meanwhile the camera pans to various viewpoints of the disciples and the emotional loads they are carrying and sharing.

Peter breaks the silence, observing, “He’s going through a hard time,”; John sarcastically responds, “You think so?”; but Big James silences John. Peter goes on as he scans Matthew’s notes, “He can’t mean the things he says,” and Philip replies, “I don’t think that’s possible.” But Peter says, “I’ve come to learn everything’s possible.” The disciples continue to try out different theories—anything but Jesus meant what he said.

John accuses the rest of not paying attention, that if they had been none of this would have come as such a shock. “You’re all acting as if he’s never intimated, hinted, or even said these things to us outright.” But Andrew responds again, “He was testing us. He was testing us to see if we would still believe.” John dismisses Andrew’s theory as “the dumbest thing I’ve ever heard come out of your mouth.”

Finally Peter exclaims, “Everyone!”...and then gathering himself again simply says, “Stay focused.”

Matthew now speaks, suggesting “a thought experiment...What if we take him at his word? That it’s not a test. It’s not metaphorical language. It’s straightforward, literal information.” Thomas replies, “Then we’ve all been deceived. He’s not the Messiah, and we’ve wasted the past three years.” But Thaddeus responds uncharacteristically emotionally, “How can you say that?!” But all Thomas can say is, “How, Thaddeus? You want to ask me how?” But Philip interrupts them to stop.

John circles back around to Matthew’s theory, that they take Jesus at his word and still can’t believe the others who can’t. But Peter reminds John that Jesus often speaks in parables. Nathanael replies, “‘Delivered up to be crucified’ does not sound like a parable to me.” Again, Peter responds, “Right after he told us to move mountains, based on a fig tree he cursed to represent the temple.” Which Nathanael concedes.

Judas breaks his silence saying he also agrees with Matthew. And with Thomas. Matthew asserts, “Judas, my views and Thomas’ are not the same.” “But they are connected,” Judas replies, “...Hear me out. Suppose Thomas is right. The prediction is literal. And he is not only delivered up but consequently crucified. Then we have our answer. And we can go on looking for the real Messiah.” The disciples erupt once again in anger and disbelief in what Judas is suggesting but Philip simmers them down to let Judas continue: “Or, in a variation of Matthew’s interpretation... we take him at his word, and it’s literal, and he’s delivered up, but... But in that hour, because he is all-powerful, he evades death, with the almighty

	capabilities we have witnessed him to possess. And that moment we have all waited for finally occurs. He will strike down his enemies, and usher in the Messianic Age.” Again, the disciples—more subdued this time—continue to debate Judas’ theory. Until things start ramping up again. Zee storms out, and as he does, he painfully steps on a rock. Turning to see it, he kicks it, hurting his foot even more. As he sits down to tend to his foot, he turns to see a detachment of Roman soldier approaching, with Atticus* in the lead. Alarmed, he hides behind a column as the soldiers approach, but they turn down a different street. Once the soldiers have passed, he stealthily follows. The squad of soldier approaches a door, and at Atticus’* signal begin battering it with their shoulders, swords drawn. Finally, they kick in the door, and enter. A melee ensues, and we discover it is Kafni* and his group who are the target of Atticus’* and his soldier’s search. With Kafni* subdued, one of his colleagues breaks free from a soldier’s grip, grabs his sword and rushes at Atticus*, who coolly parries his attacker’s attempt, striking him in the face and back into the grip of a waiting soldier. Atticus* approaches Kafni*, first with an ominous smile that cools into a glare. Kafni* appears terrified.
Notes:	

Scene 6: Jerusalem—Caiaphas’ House*

00:36:54-00:43:19	Scene Summary: A solid knock at the door stirs the High Priest’s servant Malchus, who hurries to the door. On the other side stands Shmuel* demanding to see Caiaphas. Malchus rebuffs Shmuel’s* demand, until Shmuel* reveals, “It’s about Jesus of Nazareth. His whereabouts.” Excusing himself to fetch Caiaphas, Shmuel* continues to appear distressed. Malchus returns and bids Shmuel* to come inside where Caiaphas meets him. Shmuel* reviews Caiaphas’ prayer from the assembly earlier, “that God should send us help, aid, and answers that we so desperately seek. ... I believe your prayer, our prayer, may have been answered. ...I know someone who, with almost complete certainty, would be able to give us the whereabouts of Jesus. An asset, if you will.” Caiaphas commands, “Send and have this asset, this answer to our prayers brought to me at once.” Elsewhere in Jerusalem, we see Mary Magdalene making her way through the darkened streets. (Last we saw her, she was hastening away from Bethany back to Jerusalem for an unknown mission or errand.) Suddenly, we see her apprehended by the Mysterious Watcher, now without his hood. He warns her, “Listen carefully, Mary of Magdala. This is not an assault. As long as you don’t fight, you will not be harmed. Trust me.” Mary questions the stranger’s intent, and he calls out, “Reuben!” and a second man emerges from the shadows. Mary begins to cry out for help, but the first man tries to assure her: “No, don’t. We are here to help you. We are here to help. He told me you’d be difficult, so I had to prepare with help.” Mary is confused and questioning. The man releases her and says, “I cannot tell you anything more, but you will soon have answers.” The man turns to Reuben his colleague, who hands him a bag, as the Mysterious Watcher continues, “Would you agree things are getting quite tense and dangerous in this city at the moment?” Mary only nods as the stranger continues, “No one wants to make this worse than
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it needs to be. I'm going to put this over your head and put you in that cart. I know it's scary, but it is for everyone's safety, including yours. Please. Do not resist. Do you understand?" Mary nods, and apologetically, he places the bag over Mary's head and the two men escort Mary away.

Back at Caiaphas' home, Shmuel* seems to be concluding his report to the High Priest. "There is one other thing, Your Honor," he says...

...And the scene shifts back to Mary's point of view as she struggles to see through the bag as she is loaded into the cart.

"...obtaining the information from the asset, may require some...", Shmuel* continues...

Back to the cart with Mary in the bed as it is pulled through the darkened streets, the Mysterious Watcher, now hooded again...

We don't hear...but we know what Shmuel* was suggesting... to which Caiaphas replies, "I think we can handle that."

Shmuel* turns to leave.

The cart with Mary in it continues through the city.

Caiaphas sits down at his desk.

The cart stops outside an apparently wealthy person's home.

At the same time, Malchus announces someone's arrival.

Mary's two captors unload her from the cart, and guide her toward their destination.

The door to Caiaphas' home is opened, and there stand Shmuel* and Judas.

Elsewhere, the doors open to wherever it is the Mysterious Watcher and Reuben* have taken Mary Magdalene. They remove the hood from her head, and Mary urgently questions where they have taken her and what is going on. The Mysterious Watcher assures her she is not in danger.

Back at Caiaphas' home, the High Priest welcomes Judas in.

Meanwhile, Mary is escorted through the home where she has been taken. A figure sits before a hearth and a blazing fire. The Mysterious Watcher announces Mary's presence, and the seated figure, an old man, rises and approaches out of the shadows...

Notes: