



The Chosen

Episode #4 (Season #2)

“The Perfect Opportunity”

Creator and Director, Dallas Jenkins said this was the most complex and challenging episode of *The Chosen* to film (to that point), and it shows. This episode is our first extended visit to Jerusalem and introduces us to Simon the Zealot (a future disciple), as well as the invalid at the pool of Bethesda (who, in *The Chosen*, is the brother of Simon the Zealot). We're also introduced to one of the top three feasts in Judaism, the Feast of the Tabernacles (aka The Feast of Booths, also called “Sukkot”).

Scripture to read this week *(check the box when you've read the passage):*

- ☐ Zechariah 3:17-20; 8:20-23; and 14:16
- ☐ John 5:1-30
- ☐ Psalm 69
- ☐ Psalm 41
- ☐ Isaiah 57:14-19

Pool of Bethesda

Some think the Pool of Bethesda was a Jewish mikveh, a ritual purification bath, similar to the Pool of Siloam in the City of David. Siloam was used by Festival pilgrims to Jerusalem for purification before the ascent to the Temple. It's also the site of another of Jesus's healings in John 9:1-12.

But others think Bethesda was a place of worship of the pagan god, Asclepius. Those that think it was a pagan site believe that the text in verses 5:3b-4 was added by someone unfamiliar with the pagan beliefs surrounding the stirring of the waters.

Married under the Chuppah

A few years after the death of Jesse's mother, his father remarries. Their wedding scene shows them wed under a tall, wooden structure draped with fabric. This structure is known as a “chuppah” and are present in Jewish weddings even today. Its use dates back to the Old Testament. The Hebrew word “chuppah” is the “bridal chamber” mentioned in Joel 2:16, as well as the “chamber” in Psalm 19:5.



There are many meanings attributed to the chuppah, but the most significant is the presence of God. The cover over the chuppah represents God's covering over the couple's marriage and home.



ZEALOTS

The Zealots were a group of Jews who believed God had called them to overthrow the Roman Empire through violent, physical force. Some of these Zealots, known as *Sicarii*, would carry out terrorist attacks and assassinations of Romans and even Jews who cooperated with the Roman Empire. The word “zealot” means being an “emulator or (zealous) follower.”

In A.D. 66, the Zealots led a rebellion when Rome introduced Emperor cult worship. The Great Jewish Revolt overtook Jerusalem, but their revolt was ultimately unsuccessful. In A.D. 70, the Romans completely destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple. A remnant of the Zealots then took refuge in Masada. When the Romans breached the elevated fortress, they discovered there had been a mass suicide (and murders), leaving 960 people dead. Only 2 women and 5 children were discovered alive.

- ❶ Where did Simon the Zealot find his worth and identity in this episode?
- ❷ What was the stated goal of the Zealots? Why were they able to justify murder? How can someone be so passionate for God and be so wrong as to how to please Him?
- ❸ How could the Pharisees, Zealots, and others interpret the same scripture passages so differently? What do you rely on to help you interpret the scriptures??
- ❹ If Simon had gone through with his attempt to assassinate the Roman leader, it would have been foiled by the intervention of Atticus, the undercover Roman agent. After seeing his brother healed by Jesus, do you think he will continue to hope in violence to bring salvation?
- ❺ Jesus told Jesse the pool had nothing to offer him. What do you find yourself turning to time and again that cannot satisfy/ provide/help you? What kinds of things do people today put their hope in? In what ways do you turn to a “pool” instead of Jesus?



Thank your Heavenly Father for his desire for you to be whole, well and healed of all our infirmities. Ask Him to show you ways to be zealous for His holiness without becoming something of a modern-day Zealot, trying to bring about holiness by force.