

The CHOSEN with Hosanna!



SEASON 3: EPISODE 7

SCHEDULE

July 28-August 16 - Watch Episodes 7-8

August 17, 6:45-8:00 - Discuss Episodes 7-8

WEBSITE

- Hosanna's Study Website: www.hosannatogether.org/chosen

BACKGROUND NOTES

- The episode opens with people celebrating the Festival of Purim. It is celebrated every year in the early spring (it was early March in 2023). It commemorates the salvation of the Jewish people in the ancient Persian empire from a plot to exterminate the Jewish people in a single day. It is called "Purim," which means "lots" in Persian, because the instigator Haman threw lots to determine when to carry out his plan. He is thwarted by God working through Esther--this story is the topic of the Book of Esther. During Purim, people tell the story in creative ways and celebrate the gift of life with joyous exchanges and celebrations. Learn more about the full story and celebration at <https://tinyurl.com/chosenpurim>, or read the book of Esther in the Bible.
- Jewish prayer tassels are brought up in the episode. They are called tzitzit. They are strings tied to each of the four corners of a prayer shawl. It is commanded in Numbers 37: "Instruct them to make for themselves fringes on the corners of their garments . . . Look at it and recall all the commandments of the LORD and observe them, so that you do not follow your heart and eyes in your lustful urge. Thus you shall be reminded to observe all My commandments and to be holy to your God."

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION

- What do you think about Judas (of all people) making packages of food for the homeless? Serving the homeless is not something new to us, is it?
- Andrew says, "Sometimes people respond better to stories better than teaching."
 - Why do we relate better to stories and parables than explanations and lectures?
 - How much of the Bible is made up of stories, and how much of it is lectures?
 - How can we tell the stories of faith in our day?

- The “story of the banquet,” Andrew and Philip told is recorded in Matthew 22:1-14.
- Matthew mentions that he’s been studying the genealogy of Jesus, including the fact that there are quite a few gentiles, such as the prostitute Rahab and the Moabite woman Ruth.
 - Read Matthew 1:1-17. Who else stands out to you?
- The flashback to Matthew’s past with the guy (also Matthew) who buys up his family’s debt is a fun one. Why is that?
 - He mentions that he is “ready to meet his maker...again.”
 - What does it take to have that kind of mentality? Can you be faithful without it?
 - He says, “These are the most valuable things I own . . . more valuable than gold, more precious than rubies . . .” Mary later explains to Matthew: “It wasn’t about the tassels. They’re just a symbol. That man wanted you to have his faith. That was the last thing he had. His most valuable thing in life.”
 - Why is faith so valuable to *you*? How does it benefit you?
- When talking to Matthew, Mary says, “Our lives are often painful, yes? So we think is full of scarcity and not abundance. But then there are those times when out of nowhere the world expresses it’s longing to be whole. And suddenly God steps in. And we are pulled out of our blindness and invited into redemption.”
 - When have you focused on what you *don’t* have, rather than what you *do* have?
 - What pulled you out of your blindness?
- Simon explains the phrase *shalom shalom*: “Once means peace. Twice means perfect peace. Complete wholeness.” When have you experienced *shalom shalom*?
- When healing the deaf and mute man, Jesus says, “Ephatha, be opened” (Mark 7:31-37).
 - When has God opened you up?
 - What do you think of the man’s reactions to the birds (which no one else hears), he’s son’s voice, and his own voice?
- One of the Jews says, “Your deafness was no doubt punishment for some ghastly sin by you or your parents.” Jesus replies, “It doesn’t work that way.”
 - How does it work? Does God punish people for sin? What is God’s response to sin (look to Jesus’s response as you consider your answer).
- The people who come from the Decapolis to see Jesus are:
 - Syrophenicians - people from north of Israel and Judah, a mixed group of people who are monotheistic (they have one God), but don’t get along with the Jewish people
 - Nabataeans - an Arab tribe of this time who come from Jordan and the Arabian Peninsula
 - Jews who live in the Decapolis - who have adopted some Greek ways and might not be as observant and orthodox as those in Judah
- Suddenly Simon is doubting everything. Why now? Why does suffering cause us to doubt what has been clear as day previously?
 - “I trusted Jesus . . . I trusted that Eden would be okay. Safe while we were gone . . . I’m furious, John. I’m so angry. Look, he is who he says he is. I don’t *believe* it. I *know* it. He is the first and the last. He can do anything. How could he let something like this happen to Eden, happen to me?!?”
 - Why is our suffering even harder and more painful *believing* in God, than having no faith at all? Is it because of everything we give up? Because God doesn’t work the way we want? Or something else?