

The CHOSEN with Hosanna!



SEASON 4: EPISODE 5 Sitting, Serving, Scheming

SCHEDULE

November 13-25 - Watch Episodes 5-6

November 26, 6:00-7:15 - Discuss Episodes 5-6

November 27-December 9 - Watch Episodes 7-8

December 10, 6:00-7:15 - Discuss Episodes 7-8

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

BACKGROUND NOTES

We begin to see the differences between the beliefs and practices of different Jewish sects. Here is a brief summary:

- **Sadducees:** A priestly, upper-class elite who were politically powerful and involved in the Temple, its festivals, and its sacrifices. They believed in free will and that people were responsible for their own status in life. They did not believe in an afterlife, and that God rewards and punishes people in the present. They only accepted the Torah as authoritative.
- **Pharisees:** A middle-class group who were less politically powerful. They believed in free will and fate, and in the resurrection of the dead and an afterlife. They were more concerned with observing their oral traditions and the Law of Moses than with temple worship and sacrifices. They accepted both the written Torah and oral traditions ("the traditions of the elders") as binding law. They emphasized personal piety and strict adherence to religious practices.
- **Essenes:** Kind of like Christian monks, they were a more secluded community known for their strict asceticism (simple living) and ritual purity. They believed in fatalism and that everything was predetermined. They believed only in the immortality of the soul, but not necessarily a bodily resurrection. They are also associated with the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- **Scribes:** Primarily functioned as scholars and legal experts, responsible for interpreting and copying the Torah. They could be associated with either the Pharisees or Sadducees, depending on their individual beliefs.
- **Zealots:** This is the sect that Simon the Zealot was a part of. They were revolutionary nationalists who used violence and sabotage to overthrow Rome.
- **Herodians / Hellenized Jews** - Jewish leaders who bowed to Herod and Rome, looking to secure influence and power.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- One of the Sadducees says, “If all your work is only to receive a reward in the afterlife, it makes you blind to the realities of the one you’re living in now.”
 - Do you think this statement has merit? Do we sometimes focus our faith too much on the afterlife, at the expense of this life?
- How did you feel about the soldiers asking Jesus and the disciples to carry their things? About the things they said to them? What do you think about how Jesus and the disciples responded?
 - What was the impact on the soldiers when they went the extra mile?
How does this impact how you hear Jesus’ advice to go the extra mile?
 - Read Matthew 5:38-42 again. How do you hear this now? What difference does it make?
 - Where do you see this type of humiliation of people today?
 - How do you respond to bullies?
- Schmucl says, “Throughout history men have called their age confusing times, troubled times. Ours is no different, I suppose.” We complain about how bad things are today. Is our age any different than all the others?
 - If our time really isn’t all that different, what do all the other ages say to us about getting through this one?
- Jesus tells the parable of the vineyard workers, which is found in Matthew 20:1-16. What stands out in this parable to you today?
- When Jesus tells the parable, Judas asks: “Is the Kingdom of Heaven unjust?” He responds, “I suppose to earthly eyes, it looks unfair. I didn’t say the kingdom of this world; I said of Heaven. It’s a different calculus, where people are not measured by what they deserve.”
 - Do things always need to be fair? Why or why not?
 - When have you been shown “unfair” grace? When have you shown “unfair” grace?
- Jesus tells Martha, “The best way to serve me is to pay close attention to my words.”
 - Can you relate to Martha? Why or why not?
 - Do you feel judged by Jesus’ words? Why might that be?
 - Jesus says, “Acts of service are beautiful. Action is good . . . Your actions are valuable.”
If acts of service are not the problem, what is he concerned about?
 - When do you get caught up in making things just right that you miss what’s most important?
- What do you think about Jesus consulting his mother on how to do things? How does this humanize Jesus?
- Jesus laments that, “The human desire to avoid difficult news sometimes makes one deaf.”
 - When have you been deaf to difficult news? Why didn’t you want to hear it?
What was the consequence of not listening?