

# The CHOSEN with Hosanna!



## SEASON 4: EPISODE 1

### SCHEDULE

Before October 29 - Watch Episodes 1-2

**October 29, 6:00-7:15 - Discuss Episodes 1-2**

October 30-November 11 - Watch Episodes 3-4

**November 12, 6:00-7:15 - Discuss Episodes 3-4**

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](http://www.hosannatogether.org/chosen)

### BACKGROUND NOTES

- The episode opens with a flashback to the time when Mary, pregnant with Jesus, is arriving at home of Zechariah and Elizabeth, who is pregnant with John the Baptist.
- Because we traditionally think of Jesus being born in 0 A.D., the timing seems off. However, the Gregorian calendar we use today was created in 1582 by Pope Gregory XIII, and scholars have determined that it is off by three years, so Jesus would have been born in 3 B.C.
- The dancer is Salome, the daughter of Herodias, wife of King Herod. Herodias dislikes John the Baptist for his criticism of the marriage between Herod and her, who was once the wife of Herod's brother Phillip. This story is found in Mark 6:17-29.
- Herod Antipas is the 1st-century Roman ruler of Galilee and Perea. He is referred to as both "Herod the Tetrarch" and "King Herod." He is the son of Herod the Great, who met with the Wise Men and had all the babies killed at the time of Jesus for fear of the Messiah.
- The episode moves to Ramah and Tamar, along with Zechariah and his sons James and John.
- We also witness Joanna, who has taken an interest in Jesus and John the Baptist. She is a rich woman who is in the court of Herod, and is talking with her husband.
- Doing laundry is Judas Iscariot and Simon the Zealot.
- James, John, and Zebedee meet with the synagogue administrator Jairus (whose daughter was healed) and Rabbi Yusef (who is coming around to Jesus).
- After Salome's dancing, we see a series of flashbacks to John the Baptist as a baby.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Consider familiarizing yourself with the story of Elizabeth, Zechariah, Mary, and the birth of John the Baptist by reading Luke 1:5-25, 39-45, 67-80.
- When Simon the Zealot and Judas wash clothes, Judas suggests paying someone to do it so they can focus on more lofty things. Simon responds, “This is what the people we talk to do. Laundry. If we appear too lofty or important for daily tasks, we will be no longer relatable.” What difference does this make, really? How does it convey God’s love and nearness?
  - How does Jesus’ and his disciples’ willingness to engage in normal and laborious work make them different than other self-help gurus and evangelists?
  - What do you feel makes a witness to the Gospel relatable? What makes God relatable?
  - How do you witness to God’s love and nearness through daily tasks?
- Simon the Zealot says, “There is a lesson in everything Jesus shares. And asks.” What lessons and questions of Jesus have meant the most to you?
- Simon the Zealot says, “You have dedicated your life to a teacher,” to which Judas responds, “He walks and water and commands the wind and the waves. But, sure, he’s a teacher.” What is Judas missing when he focuses only on the miracles?
- Judas wants to move fast. What is his goal? How is it similar or different to Jesus’ goal?
- John is beheaded for speaking truth. What is the cost for speaking truth in our world today?
  - Do a little research on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who wrote “The Cost of Discipleship.” What did he do and what was the cost? What does he say is the difference between “cheap grace” and “costly grace”?
- As he’s about to be killed, John the Baptist says that he is on his way to a wedding banquet. What is he referring to? Why use that metaphor?
- Why does Zechariah get his voice back when he confirms John’s name?
  - John (Johanán) in Hebrew means “YHWH has been gracious.”
  - Does this give any perspective to John the Baptist’s last moments?
- Zechariah’s prayer of thanksgiving when John was born (often referred to as the Benedictus) is written in Luke 1:67-79. What is the significance to this prayer? Why have Christians found hope and meaning in this prayer?
  - Part of the prayer goes: “We, being delivered from the hands of our enemies, might serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness before God all our days . . . The sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace.”
  - How has God delivered you from “enemies” in the past?
  - What fears do you still live with? What might help you put aside those fears?
  - Zechariah anticipates good things from God. Does the fact that his son is beheaded at a young age mean he was wrong? Where is *your* hope?
- When the disciples hear of John the Baptist’s death, Andrew says, “We should have been prepared.” Another disciple says, “We were. John came to prepare the way. And he did. He’s not the Messiah. But John came to bear witness that he would be here soon.”
  - How has God prepared you for the tough parts of life, including the death of loved ones?