

Explaining The Chosen: Season 2, Episode 3: Matt. 4:24

From HebrewRootsMom.com (copyright 2023, all rights reserved)

The Chosen is a wildly popular series by Angel Studios. They're unique in that they consult multiple sources in writing for the show. Instead of having just one point of view, they consult a Bible scholar, a Roman Catholic Priest, and a Messianic Jewish Rabbi to get the most accurate cultural and historic picture possible. It's also immensely entertaining, with clever Bible-based humor and excellent character development.



If you haven't seen The Chosen, [click here to watch](#).

Looking for what I've written on another episode? Read more in the [Explaining The Chosen series](#).

In this episode, we learn why the disciples expected Jesus to overthrow the Romans and get a little peek into the Jewish lifestyle. Many characters tell more of their story, allowing us to get to know them better. Here's what I found particularly impressive in Episode 3.

He's always right here

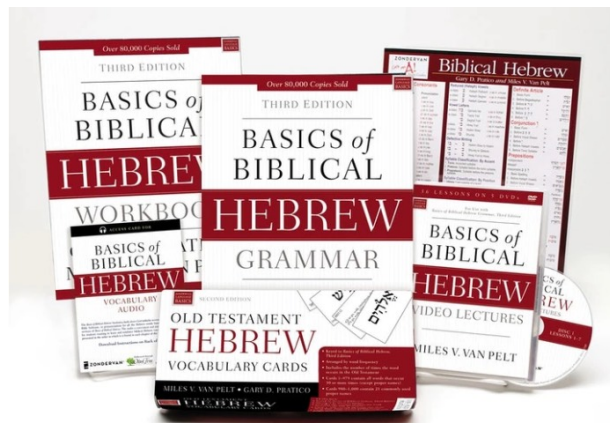
When Philip and Matthew talk while they walk along the long line of people waiting to be healed by Jesus, Philip teaches Matthew Psalm 139:8. What a beautiful verse! We have a God that's with us anywhere. What a fantastic blessing!

I love the verses and the lesson here, but I'm afraid I have to disagree with Philip on one thing. He says, "No amount of learning can bring you closer to God." I fully agree that we need to have a relationship with God in our hearts, not merely in our intellect. Where I disagree is that learning cannot bring us closer to God.

It's through learning the Scriptures that I became close to God at first. I have heard about God all my life in the church, but I didn't get to know Him until I chose to delve into the Bible and learn who He is. It's a privilege to have a document we can hold in our hands and study that tells us about the Living God!

Through Bible study, we can learn of God's character. We can see how He deals with His faithful servants, as well as His enemies. The Bible teaches us how God wants His people to live and what role we have in this grand story of His. We learn how He loves, saves, and keeps His promises throughout the ages.

One thing I'm saddened by currently about my believing brothers and sisters is Biblical illiteracy. As followers of God and of our Savior, it should be our life's work to study and know all the Almighty has given us as far as the Scriptures go. We should aspire to be the most knowledgeable people on earth regarding this book full of truths given to us by the God of the universe.



[Learn Biblical Hebrew Pack 2.0](#)

I'm not suggesting we read books others have written about the Bible or listen to what our pastors say, although those are things we should include in our studies. Take advantage of the incredible access you have to the words of God and delve in for yourself! Read the whole stories in the context of the surrounding Scripture and be discerning about consulting others for deeper understanding. If you haven't yet committed to **learning the original Biblical languages**, use a tool like **Blue Letter Bible** to find out what the original texts said. Pray for the Spirit's guidance throughout your studies. You'll be amazed at how close to God you become when studying the Bible this way!

Overthrow the Romans

In the opening scene, Jesus's followers discuss their expectations concerning the coming Messiah. They expected that he would be the one to free them from their Roman oppressors.

Sometimes the disciples get a bad rap for this. We tend to note that they missed the point of Jesus coming because they sought physical salvation rather than spiritual.

But according to Biblical prophecy, in order to be the messiah, Jesus has to save us in earthly and spiritual ways. The following verses show us that the prophecy about the messiah is clear about him physically ruling.

There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace,

On the throne of David and over his kingdom,

To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness

From then on and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this.

Isaiah 9:7 (NASB)

“And to Him was given dominion,

Glory and a kingdom,

That all the peoples, nations and men of every language

Might serve Him.

His dominion is an everlasting dominion

Which will not pass away;

And His kingdom is one

Which will not be destroyed.

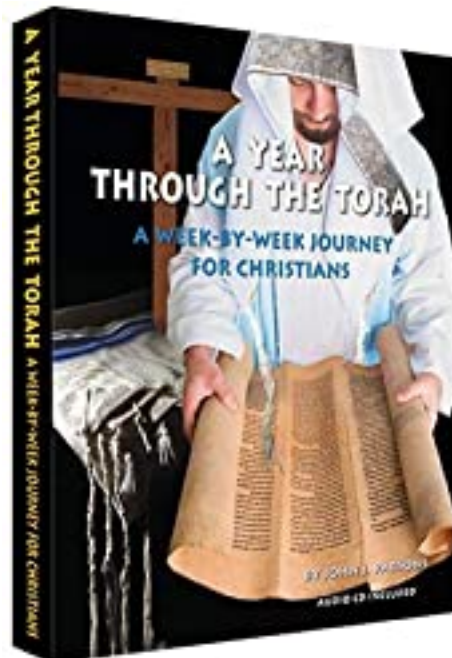
Daniel 7:14 (NASB)

And the verses quoted by Thomas in this episode:

For I will gather all the nations against Jerusalem to battle, and the city will be captured, the houses plundered, the women ravished and half of the city exiled, but the rest of the people will not be cut off from the city. Then the LORD will go forth and fight against those nations, as when He fights on a day of battle. In that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which is in front of Jerusalem on the east; and the Mount of Olives will be split in its middle from east to west by a very large valley, so that half of the mountain will move toward the north and the other half toward the south.

Zechariah 14:2-4 (NASB)

Since Jesus didn't fulfill these prophecies when he came to earth the first time, we know he will eventually complete them because he said he would (Matt. 24:27-31). He is the Messiah that will save - both spiritually and physically. The disciples knew that Biblical prophecy requires this of him, and we should look forward to the fulfillment of this promise as well.



[A Year Through the Torah: A Week-By-Week Journey for Christians](#)

If He Wasn't Healing Them

As James and Thomas discuss the day's events, James points out that the Samaritans only praise Jesus because he's healing them. While people may have been drawn to Jesus just because he healed them, healing is just another wonderful thing we can expect from the Messiah, according to prophecy.

Say to those with anxious heart,

"Take courage, fear not.

Behold, your God will come with vengeance;

The recompense of God will come,

But He will save you."

Then the eyes of the blind will be opened

And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.

Then the lame will leap like a deer,

And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy.

For waters will break forth in the wilderness

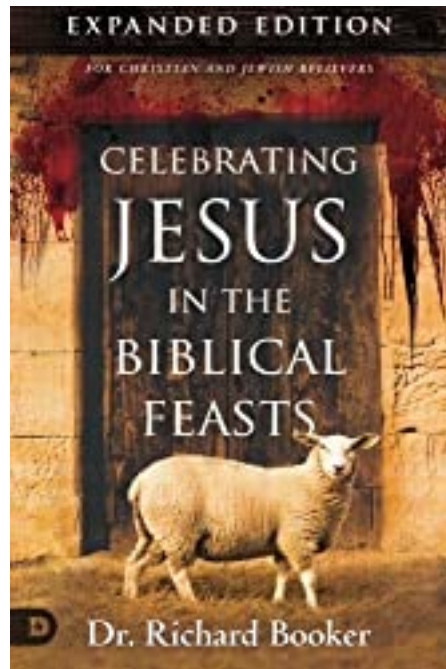
And streams in the Arabah.

Isaiah 35:4-6 (NASB)

One of the ways we can recognize that Jesus is the Messiah is that he healed people. Healing was the sign to confirm that Jesus was indeed the Messiah when John the Baptist asked him. In Matthew 11:2-5, Jesus tells his disciples to report to John with the evidence that fulfilled the prophecy in Isaiah. Jesus knew that John would have his answer when he heard that Jesus was healing people just as Isaiah said the messiah would.

People may have been drawn to him out of selfish motivation for healing, but their miraculous healings showed the world that Jesus was the messiah they had been waiting for.

The Feast



[Celebrating Jesus in the Biblical Feasts](#)
[by Dr. Richard Booker](#)

Mary, Jesus's mother, responds to the disciples' question about how long she will be with them by saying, "Through the Feast, and then we'll see."

The "Feast" Mary refers to is **Sukkot**. According to the Bible, there are **seven Feasts** that God claims as His Feasts and commands His people to keep forever. These can be found in Leviticus 23 as well as in other places. Here are links to information about each of these Feasts.

[Passover](#)

[Unleavened Bread](#)

[FirstFruits](#)

[Shavuot](#)

Yom Teruah

Yom Kippur

Sukkot

God says that, for three of these Feasts, known as the Pilgrimage Festivals, the men of Israel must “appear before the LORD” in observance of them (Ex. 23:14-17). “Appearing before the LORD” means appearing as close to His earthly presence as possible – in the area of the Temple.

Even to this day, Jewish people (not just men) travel to the Temple Mount for each of the three Pilgrimage Festivals, and this seems to be why Mary was able to travel with friends during this time and why the timing of her visit was in relation to the Feast.

Messiah sent to the Jews

When Mary and the disciples are talking around the campfire, she discusses the unique position of being Jesus’s mother. She also says, “As a Jew, I’m excited to see all he does for our people.”

Since most Jewish people don’t recognize Jesus as the messiah, it’s easy to think of Jesus as the savior sent for Christians. But Biblically, God sent the messiah to the Jewish people, not the nations. It’s through our faith in him that we even have a chance to take part in the blessings God gives to his people.

But wasn’t Jesus sent for all people? How can this be?

First of all, the Bible is clear that the Jewish people are God’s chosen people. God chose them out of all other people on earth to belong to Him, as this verse says (as well as others).

For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

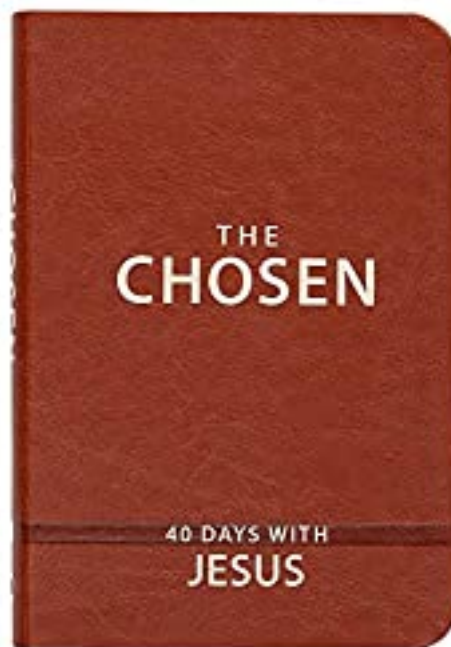
Deuteronomy 14:2 (NASB)

Why are the Jews so special? God can only fully answer that, but His choice to favor them seems to have started with His relationship with Abraham. God favors them

because He chose to, not because of anything they did, and because of His promise to Abraham.

“The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 (NASB)



[The Chosen: 40 Days with Jesus Devotional](#)

Before Jesus heals the Syrophenician (Canaanite) woman's daughter in Matt. 15:21-28, he tells the woman that he was sent only to the "lost sheep of Israel" and that "it is not good to take the children's bread and feed it to the dogs"! Wow! Why would Jesus say such a thing?!

He wasn't just trying to be mean or arrogant. He was merely stating that, as the messiah, he was there for the Jewish people, noting their claim to him and his healing powers as above that of the Gentiles. Those of us who are not Jewish need to recognize that we are similar to this Canaanite woman in our non-Jewishness, whether we like it or not.

But the end of the story is important. Jesus did heal this Gentile woman's daughter, and he said that he did so due to her faith. We may be Gentile like this woman, but we can also be like her in that our faith in Jesus can bring us under the umbrella of the blessings that come through him.

Gentiles do, by the grace of God, have an opportunity to have access to the Savior and to God's promises as we are grafted into the "tree" of God through our faith. Paul explains this concept so well in Romans 11. The whole chapter is a beautiful explanation but verses 17-27 sum it up. We are not natural branches of the tree of God but wild branches. Therefore, we don't have access to the nourishment (promises) that come from the tree. But our faith in God and the messiah He sent allows us to be grafted into the tree and receive its benefits.

Paul urges us to maintain humility as Gentiles, knowing God's mercy and kindness give us this slim chance at what He gave to the Jewish people. As Believers today, we need to discipline ourselves to see the Jews as God sees them – as His chosen people.

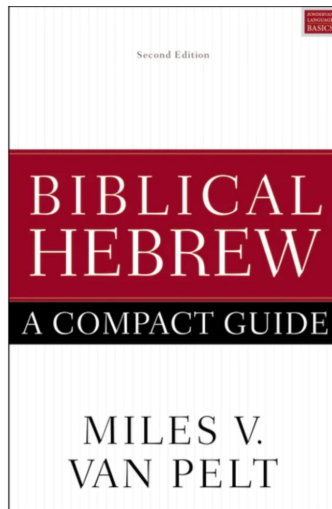
"You could recite half of Torah if you had to"

Still around the campfire, the disciples discuss their knowledge of Scripture (only the Torah and Prophets at this time). John tells Big James that he could "recite half of Torah if he had to."

We live in such an amazing time where we can access the Bible in many ways! So many languages, translations, and platforms make God's Word available to so many more than ever before, so we have no excuse not to delve into Scripture!

But ancient times were very different. Not everyone had access to the scrolls, and those that did had limited access for the most part. Those in higher positions in Jewish religious practice had the most access and were like gatekeepers to the Word.

So, how did the people gain access to Scripture in that time? They memorized it! Many Jewish boys spent their early years memorizing the Bible's first five books in school. Torah cantillation, a musical chanting of the Hebrew texts, has been done since Bible times and is a great way to memorize Scripture.



[Biblical Hebrew: A Compact Guide: Second Edition](#)

While we currently have the privilege of digging into Scripture with little effort, this hasn't always been the case. Let's take full advantage of this blessing we've been given and drink deeply from the wisdom of the Bible and allow it to penetrate every aspect of our lives!

We can do this by [studying the Bible through the Torah Portions](#) or by [learning the original languages of the Bible](#) to increase our understanding of Scripture. It's a miracle that the God of the Universe gave us words we can read to understand his mysteries, wisdom, and who He is! What a gift we've been given!

Bet Midrash

John tells Mary that he doesn't think any of them went to the Bet Midrash. A Bet Midrash (meaning "house of study") is a place Jewish people (primarily men) study the Torah.

It's in this place that Jewish youngsters learn via a teaching method called "Midrash." Midrashic teaching is a way of studying Scripture intensely. Jesus's parables, as well as much of Paul's writing, is Midrashic teaching, and it's found throughout the Bible.

Even today, studying Midrash can expose many of the mysteries in Scripture and bring a more precise understanding to those whose traditional methods of Bible study may leave with confusion. Approaching Scripture with an ancient perspective allows us to see it through the eyes of the culture and method of teaching from when it was written, allowing us to have a more accurate perspective. Interested in learning more? [Intermediate Midrash in the New Testament from BibleInteract](#) will help you delve in.

Meat with Cheese

Thomas said he tried meat with cheese once when his parents were asleep to see what it was like. Traditionally, Jewish people don't eat meat and cheese together. This comes from the command in Ex. 23:19, 34:26, and Deut. 14:21, where God says not to boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

While this sounds like a strange way to prepare meat, it's thought that this was an idolatrous practice of the Canaanite people surrounding the Israelites after the exodus from Egypt. Others believe this Law was given simply to foster respect for animals and the parent-child bond.

For whatever reason the Law was given, some Jewish people take this very seriously. Many even have separate dishes for cooking meat and dairy to ensure they never mix.

I know some of you reading this are taken aback by this practice but consider this. We desire to be people that obey God, even if we don't understand why He told us to do or not to do something. We all look back to Adam and Eve and know that they should have just obeyed God's command not to eat from the tree in the middle of the Garden. None of us think they were justified in disobedience since God hadn't given them a thorough explanation. We all know they should have taken Him at His word and obeyed no matter what.

As Believers, we tend to diminish God's Commands in light of grace. But we also know that our Creator made us and knows what's best for us and that His wisdom is far above ours! If He tells us **what to eat** and how to live, we should be eager to have that info so we can live our best life as God's people.

Is Keeping the Law Exhausting?

Later, Thaddeus admits to trying pork once in a Gentile marketplace, which leads to a conversation about how difficult it is to adhere to the Law. Living in a world where everything is relative and there aren't any concrete values can make it difficult to hear that there are some people who, believe it or not, see keeping God's Laws as a joy and a privilege rather than a burden.

Seeing the Law as a good thing is Biblical. Many places in the Bible say we are to love God's Law, delight in it, and that following it will bring blessing to us (Ps. 1:2, 112:1, 119:1-2, 35, 128:1; Prov. 8:32, 29:18; Rom. 7:22; Prov. 8:32; Is. 56:2; Matt. 5:6, 10; Luke 11:28; James 1:25; Rev. 22:14, and others). The Bible also says explicitly that God's Law is not burdensome but following it is a way we can show our love for God.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

1 John 5:3 (NASB)

Because it's a foreign concept for traditional Christians to think of following the Commandments in the Bible shouldn't dissuade us! God promises blessing if we follow His Commands and we can take Him at His word. It's difficult to see how anything good can come from following the Law, but throughout the Bible, it's clear that it does.

Most Believers will be surprised to see how much of the Law they already follow. Love your neighbor (Leviticus 19:18), monogamous marriage (Genesis 2:24), and loving God with all your heart (Deuteronomy 6:4) are all parts of the Law that most Believers consider things they should be doing.

When I talk to Believers that are convicted of starting following more of the Commandments in the Bible yet are overwhelmed by them, I tell them to start just following one Law for a month. For example, keep the Sabbath for just one month or eat Biblically clean foods for just one month. The exciting thing is that anyone whose taken me up on this challenge has noted blessings in their life after even a short time and has continued in that practice because of it.

If you're curious about Christians following the Law and know a Hebraic Believer, ask them how that lifestyle – **keeping the Sabbath**, eating a **Biblically clean diet**, or observing **the Biblical Holy Days** – has brought blessing to their life. I bet you'll be surprised at the answer!

Jewish Law

During the same conversation about following the Law, Simon brings up the difficulty of following Jewish law. Sometimes people confuse Jewish law with God's Law, which may explain why people think it would be difficult to follow God's Law.

Many think Jesus disobeyed the Law when he and the disciples picked grain on the Sabbath in Matthew 12:1-7. But not picking grain on the Sabbath isn't one of God's Laws. It was a Rabbinical Law based on the Commandment not to work on the Sabbath, which is why the Pharisees were upset with Jesus about it.

Why would Jewish leadership make their own laws when they already had God's? Well, they did it with good intentions. They created what they call "fences" around the Law so that they and those they disciplined wouldn't even come close to breaking a Law. It's similar to when Christians avoid alcohol. There's no commandment that we're not

to drink, but many Christians see the destruction alcohol can cause and choose to avoid it altogether to keep sin out of their lives and those around them.

Even Jesus kept some of these Jewish Rabbinical laws, like when he blessed the food before the meal (Matt. 14:19 and 26:26) or had the custom of going to the synagogue on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16). However, sometimes, they elevated their laws to a position higher than that of the Laws of God, and that's where Jesus drew the line.

Jesus had an issue with Jewish law when they elevated it to a position it shouldn't be. Matt. 23, when Jesus said to do as the Pharisees say but not as they do and Luke 11:37-54, when Jesus rebuked them over hand washing, show that he considered at least some parts of Jewish law optional and all of them in a lower position than the Laws given by God.

"Do you even know what it's like to be Jewish?"

Simon fires this question at Matthew out of anger, but I've talked to some Jewish people who feel this way. They say a history of harsh persecution has caused them to be wary of non-Jews. As Gentiles, we have no idea what it's like to be persecuted in the ways they have or to have family members who have endured what the Jewish people have.

Jewish people often avoid Christians because, historically, Christians are at fault for some of this violent persecution. I'm not too fond of it either, but it's true. If you'd like to look more into this dark history, you can start with [Antisemitism in History: From the Early Church to 1400](#) on the Holocaust Museum's website.

While we need to recognize what happened in the past to understand why the Jewish people avoid us, I don't support the claim that we owe them something because of this or must remain in a continual state of apology. What we must do (and should have been doing all along) is delve into our Bibles and see how God views the Jewish people, strive to see them in the same light he does, and take no part in diminishing them in our lives or faith.



[Shema Mobius Silver Bracelet](#)

Bedtime Prayer

As I mentioned in my article on [Season 1, Episode 3](#), this is the first part of the Bedtime Shema, the prayer many Jewish people pray before going to bed each night.

Here's the prayer he prayed:

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who brings sleep to my eyes, slumber to my eyelids.

May it be Your will, Lord my God and God of my ancestors, that I lie down in peace and that I arise in peace.

Let my sleep be undisturbed by troubling thoughts, bad dreams, and wicked schemes.

May I have a night of tranquil slumber.

May I awaken to the light of a new day, that my eyes may behold the splendor of Your light.

Praised are You, Lord, whose glory gives light to the entire world.
The Shema follows this blessing in response to the command to "talk of these words when you lie down..." (Deut. 6:6-7).

This episode gave us a glance into the Jewish lifestyle of Jesus and his disciples and showed us, from a Jewish perspective, what was expected of the Messiah. I look

forward to Episode 4 to see what intriguing aspects of the life of Jesus and his followers the makers of The Chosen included!

© 2023 Hebrew Roots Mom, all rights reserved