

# Explaining The Chosen: Season 2, Episode 4: The Perfect Opportunity

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The Chosen, a series about Jesus's life and ministry, is well-made and so much fun to watch! It shows what the lives of Jesus and his disciples may have been like in an entertaining and authentic way. If you haven't seen it, click [here](#) to watch.



In Episode 4 of Season 2, we meet the paralytic from John 5:1-17. We also meet the Zealots and get an intro to the Festival of Sukkot. Honestly, this episode was difficult to watch. The story of the paralytic, Jesse in *The Chosen*, was heartbreaking, but I'm sure it's not a far stretch as all of those events occurred in some capacity or another in ancient times.

## Jesse, the paralytic

In the opening scene, Jesse falls from a tree and becomes paralyzed. Then we see his mother die, giving birth to his brother, Simon. Jesse and Simon watched as their father was beaten in the streets by Roman soldiers, and then Jesse discovered his brother had left during the night to join the Zealots, and he was alone. What a story!

Although the Bible doesn't give this much detail about the paralytic in John 5, we can see how desperate of a situation a person with this type of disability could be in during these times. It's still difficult to be disabled in our day, but they didn't have benefits like public assistance or handicapped accessibility, so being paralyzed would have been extremely difficult or even lead to your death!

## Married under the chuppah

A few years after the tragic death of Jesse's mother, his father remarries. Their wedding scene shows them wed under a tall, wooden structure draped with fabric, and this structure is known as a "chuppah."

Even today, in Jewish weddings, marriage occurs under the chuppah. A chuppah can be beautiful or simple, but the deep meaning they convey is the most intriguing.

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 marriage and the home that results from it. Sometimes, the chuppah is covered by the prayer shawl of a family member or ancestor for added meaning to the couple.

Many modern traditions surround the chuppah, but its use dates back to the Old Testament. The Hebrew word "chuppah" (חֻפָּה) is the "bridal chamber" mentioned in Joel 2:16, as well as the "chamber" in Psalm 19:5.



[The Scriptures Bible, Duotone Purple](#)

## The Pool of Bethesda

As an adult, we find Jesse at the Pool of Bethesda. Its mention only takes up a few verses in the Bible, but the Pool of Bethesda is an interesting place. It has been excavated and is a site you can visit today in Jerusalem!

Here's how it's described.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters; for an angel of the Lord went down at

certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]

*John 5:2-4 (NASB)*

If you're not astonished by those verses, reread them. An angel of the Lord stirred the water, and whoever stepped in first was healed?!

Notice the brackets in the verse above, though. I didn't put those there. They're in the NASB translation, as well as others. The reason is that those verses aren't in the most reliable texts of the Book of John. Here's why the brackets matter.

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.

Whether the pool actually had healing power or not, many people with ailments would hang out there, waiting for the supernatural stirring of the waters. Who would be healed was a first-come, first-served type situation; everyone wasn't healed, just the first to step in. You can see how there would be a slim chance of being the first in, especially if you're paralyzed. It's no wonder the paralytic (named Jesse for the show) had been waiting for his chance for thirty-eight years. How discouraging that must have been for him!



[The Messianic Passover Haggadah](#)

## The Zealots

Meanwhile, as Jesse's continually passed up for a chance at being first into the pool, his brother, Simon, was training as a Zealot.

Simon the Zealot is mentioned only a few times in the Bible, and we don't learn anything about him other than his name and that he was one of Jesus's disciples.

The Zealots were dedicated to the Torah and hated the Romans and the Roman pagan influence on the Jewish people. The creators of The Chosen portrayed Simon as belonging to the Zealot party called the Sicarii, also known as "dagger-wielders." The Sicarii were a group of trained assassins who used curved daggers called "Sicari" to carry out assassinations.

According to historian Josephus, the Sicarii were instrumental in countering the Romans in the First Roman-Jewish war. This group led the rebellion against the Romans and eventually committed mass suicide when surrounded by the Romans at the fortress of Masada.

## The Feast of Tabernacles

The disciples are building a structure in preparation for the Feast of Tabernacles. Why are they doing this?

In Leviticus 23, God tells Moses to tell His people to celebrate seven Feasts or Moedim in Hebrew.

These seven are:

Passover

Unleavened Bread

FirstFruits

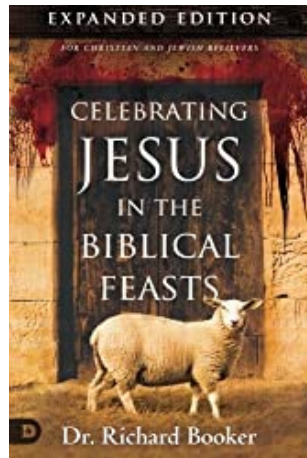
Shavuot

Yom Teruah

Yom Kippur

## Sukkot (the Feast of Tabernacles)

When God gave the Command to observe the Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot in Hebrew), he said to build a temporary dwelling.



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

‘On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. You shall thus celebrate it as a feast to the LORD for seven days in the year. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations; you shall celebrate it in the seventh month. You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, so that your generations may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.’”

*Leviticus 23:39-43 (NASB)*

Living in a temporary dwelling, or sukkah (translated as “booth” here), during Sukkot reminds us that God brought His people out of Egypt into freedom and provided for them. They depended on Him for all their needs, and He gave them exactly what they needed.

There are other themes celebrated during Sukkot. The one I find most relevant is that God was physically with His people in the Tabernacle during their time of wandering in the wilderness. God “tabernacled” with His people. Now, if the physical presence of

God with mortal people He created isn't enough, He then sent His Son, a representative of Himself, to "tabernacle" with us on earth.

Biblically, Sukkot is a time of rededication. God says that we're to observe Sukkot to remember a time when the Hebrew people were free of their Egyptian captors and could worship their God in the way He desires.

In Ezra 3:4 and Nehemiah 8:14-18, the people celebrated Sukkot when they decided, as a nation, to turn back to God. They reinstated reading the Torah and rebuilt the Temple.

When King Solomon completed the Temple in 1 Kings 8:1-12, he had the Ark brought in during Sukkot. When the Ark entered the Temple, the glory of God filled it.

Remember that kind of strange response Simon Peter had to Jesus's transfiguration in Matt. 17:1-13? Jesus's face shined like the sun, and his garments became white as light. So, what did Simon do? He suggested he build tabernacles.



[Silver Circular Aaronic Blessing Necklace](#)

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

*Matthew 17:4 (NASB)*

While his response may seem strange, it's not for a Jewish audience familiar with practicing Sukkot. They would recognize, like the disciples, that the Messiah's arrival calls for a rededication, a Sukkot-like celebration.

Do you know who else recognized that Jesus could be the Messiah with a Sukkot-like response? The crowd who witnessed him ride into Jerusalem on a donkey. But instead of building Sukkot, they waved palm branches.

These palm branches (or lulavot, lulav is the singular term) were one of the four species to be used in the celebration of Sukkot, as specified in Leviticus 23. So, by waving palm branches as opposed to their hands or something, they acknowledged that Jesus could be the Messiah and that this would be a type of Sukkot, a time of rededication, even though it was just before Passover!

But would you like to hear the most amazing thing about Sukkot? We're to celebrate it someday with our Messiah. Yep. That's right. Believers like you and I will be celebrating Sukkot along with Jewish Believers!

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude [this term includes Gentiles!] which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palm branches [lulavot] were in their hands; and they cry out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

*Revelation 7:9-10 (NASB)*

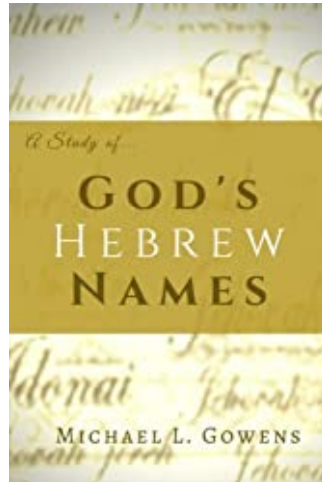
And, later in this episode, during the meal in the sukkah, Big James asks Jesus about the verse in Zechariah, which says that the enemies of Jerusalem will celebrate Sukkot with the Jewish people someday. It also said that they will be expected to observe Sukkot and will experience famine if they don't!

Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths. And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them. If the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths. This will be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.

*Zechariah 14:16-19 (NASB)*

During this same conversation at the table, John brings up a great point. He says, "But the booths won't mean anything to them." He's correct concerning most Gentiles; however, some of us have begun celebrating Sukkot yearly, which has significant

meaning to those of us who do! If you haven't celebrated Sukkot, I encourage you to take a look at some of the resources on [HebrewRootsMom.com](http://HebrewRootsMom.com) and try it this year. You won't regret it!



[God's Hebrew Names by Michael Gowens](#)

## **El Shaddai**

When Simon the Zealot is given his assignment, his answer to the question "To whom do you serve?" is "El Shaddai, God of power and might."

Although it's often translated as "God Almighty" in English, we find the name "El Shaddai" in Scripture when God calls Himself this name in Genesis 17:1 and again in Numbers 24:4. Would you like to learn more about the names of God in the Bible? Check out my series of articles on [The Names of God](#).

## **Scroll of Moses: Shemot**

The names of the books of the Bible you may be used to (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, etc.) aren't what they were called in the days of the original texts. They were named the following names originally.

Genesis - Berisheet, meaning "In the beginning"

Exodus - Shemot, meaning "Names"

Leviticus - Vayikra, meaning "and He called"



Numbers – Bemidbar, meaning “in the wilderness”

Deuteronomy – Devarim, meaning “words”

The books above, the first five books of the Bible, are often called the “Books of Moses.” They were called the “Scrolls of Moses” when they were scrolls. You can read more about Torah scrolls in my article, [Explaining The Chosen: Season 2, Episode 1: Thunder](#).

Simon recalls a verse from the book of Shemot (Exodus) as the reason for his mission.

Whoever sacrifices to any god, other than the LORD alone, shall be devoted to destruction.

*Exodus 22:20 (ESV)*

As Simon is on his way out to carry out his orders, he passes the Zealots-in-training, reciting Scripture. They’re reciting Zephaniah 3:15-18. The rest of this chapter will be read later in this episode by the Levite in the colonnade.

### **Blessings for situations**

As Yanni and Shmuel prepare for Yanni to teach in Jerusalem, they say the Birkat HaGomel – the blessing for life-threatening situations. When Shmuel expresses concern, Yanni leaves him with a more positive blessing, the HaTov Ve’ahamitiv.

If you’re around a practicing Jew, it won’t take long to notice that they invite God into every aspect of life. There are blessings said for nearly every action throughout the day, keeping them in constant connection and conversation with God.

The Birkat HaGomel is said when someone survives a dangerous situation.

In Hebrew, it’s:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַגּוֹמֵל לְחַיִּיבִים טוֹבוֹת שְׂגִמְלָנִי כֹּל טוֹב

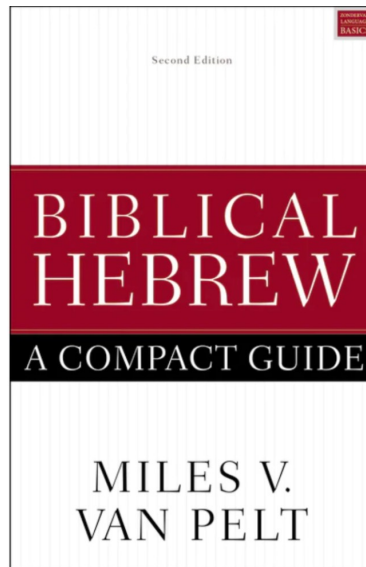
Pronounced:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-gomel l’chayavim tovot sheg malani kol tov

In English:

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who rewards the undeserving with goodness, and who has rewarded me with goodness.

The HaTov Ve'ahamitiv is a joyful, thankful prayer said when something happens that benefits the community. Here it is:



[Biblical Hebrew: A Compact Guide by Miles V. Van Pelt](#)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַטוֹב וְהַמֵּיטִיב

It's pronounced:

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu melech ha-olam, ha-tov v'hametiv

The English translation is:

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who is good and bestows good.

### **Motzi-Shabbat**

When Simon is in the underground tunnels, he speaks with two other Zealots. The first one, Honi, says they've been tracking Rufus's every move. The other, Ithran, then says they even know that after Shabbat, at the start of Motzi Shabbat, Rufus goes to his favorite restaurant.

**Shabbat is the Sabbath**, and Motzi Shabbat is the time in the evening just after the Sabbath is over. Motzi Shabbat is literally “going out of the Sabbath.”

When the Sabbath is over after sundown on Saturday, some Jewish families and Hebraic Believers observe what’s called the **Havdalah**. Havdalah, meaning “separation,” is a time to separate the Sabbath from the other days. It’s a time to remember the sweetness of the Sabbath and acknowledge what a blessing it was and what a blessing it will be next week, also.

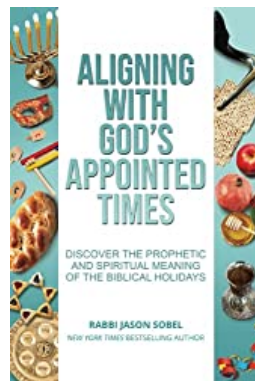
After the Havdalah, on Saturday evening, is when the new week starts. This evening is called Motzi Shabbat. Ithran says that Motzi Shabbat is when Rufus goes to his favorite restaurant. Since Jewish people typically wouldn’t go to a restaurant on Shabbat, Motzi Shabbat would be a logical time to patronize a restaurant.

As they continue to discuss, Simon says, “This Yom Rishon tradition is a problem.” Yom Rishon is Sunday in Hebrew. Yom means “day,” and Rishon means “first” or “foremost.” So, Yom Rishon is the first day of the week, Sunday, since Saturday is the last day of the week. And days on **the Biblical/Hebrew calendar** start in the evening, so Saturday evening is the beginning of Sunday.

## **Woman of Valor**

When the disciples finish building the sukkah, the women put bread on the table, and Jesus says, “Woman of valor, who can find?”.

“Woman of valor” in Hebrew is “eschet chayil,” and Jesus’s phrase is the first part of the blessing with this name. The Eschet Chayil is the blessing men say over their wives (and other women) on the evening of Shabbat. This blessing came from Proverbs 31:10-31 and was also in two episodes of Season 1 – **Episodes 2 and 8**.



[Aligning With God’s Appointed Times](#)  
[by Jason Sobel](#)

## Carrying a mat on Shabbat

The Pharisees accused Jesse of disobeying the law by carrying his mat on Shabbat. Matthew asks, "The Torah forbids carrying a mat on Shabbat?". And Big James answers him, "Not Torah, the oral tradition."

Just like when Jesus and his disciples were accused of breaking the Law in Matthew 12, rabbinical tradition is violated here, not God's Law. I covered this in my article on [the previous episode](#) when the disciples discussed Torah Law vs. Jewish law.

And that's the end of another fantastic episode! Have you read the others in my [Explaining The Chosen](#) series? Click the link to read them if you haven't, and keep an eye out for my articles on future episodes!

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