

Explaining The Chosen: Season 2, Episode 5: Spirit

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In another fantastic episode of The Chosen, we get a Hebrew lesson, the inside scoop on John the Baptist's intent to confront Herod, and a glimpse of what a demon-possessed life may look like.

Haven't seen it? [Click here to watch!](#)

Mary's Blessing

In some of [my other articles on The Chosen](#), I've written about the many daily prayers in a practicing Jew's life. They invite God into every aspect of their lives and acknowledge His blessing and provision throughout each day.

As Mary is picking persimmons, she recites the following blessing.

Blessed are You, LORD our God, King of the universe,

Who left out nothing in His world and created pleasant creations

And good trees so that people can derive benefit from them.

In Hebrew, this blessing is:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה אֲדֹנָי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

שֶׁלֹא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם וּבְרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת

וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבִים לְהַנּוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם.

And it's pronounced:

Baruch atah Adonai Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam, she'lo chisar b'olamo klum u'vara vo beri'ot tovot ve'ilanot tovim le'hanot bahem b'nei adam

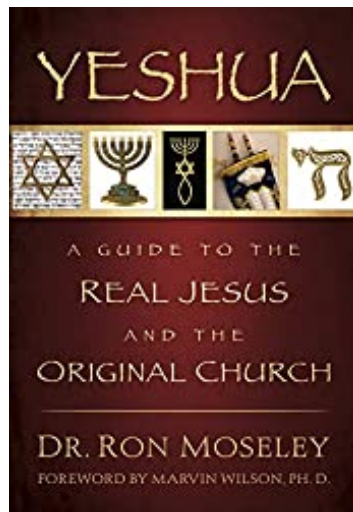
Then she recites Psalm 139:8. This is the verse Phillip was teaching Matthew in Episode 3 of this season.

If I ascend to heaven, you are there; If I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

Psalm 139:8

Thousands Named Jesus

When Jesse, the former paralytic, is being questioned by the Pharisees, Yanni, and Shmuel, he says that all he knows about Jesus is his name. Yanni comments, “There are a million Jews here for the festival, thousands named Jesus.”



[Yeshua: A Guide to the Real Jesus and the Original Church](#)

We generally know who someone is referring to when they say “Jesus,” but it was a common name in Jesus’s time. The name Jesus is a variation on the Greek word for Jesus, Iésous (Ἰησοῦς, pronounced ee-ay-soos).

His Hebrew name (what his family, disciples, and other Jews would have called him) exposes more meaning to his purpose here on earth.

In Hebrew, it’s “Yehoshua” (יהושוע), which is the same name as “Joshua.” In Aramaic, it’s shorter – “Yeshua” (ישוע). Both Aramaic and Hebrew would have been spoken when Jesus was on the earth, and both of these languages are in the original Old Testament texts.

Yehoshua and Yeshua are both a contraction of two root words: Yahweh (יהוה) and “yasha” (ישע). Yasha means “to deliver,” so combining the two means “God delivers,” “God saves,” or “God is salvation.” This significance makes the angel’s announcement

to Joseph in Matthew 1:21 even more meaningful. The angel says, “you are to give him the name Jesus [Yehoshua/Yeshua] because he will save [yosheea] people from their sins.”

Jesus of Nazareth

When Shmuel says, “It was him! It was Jesus of Nazareth!” Jesse chuckles and questions, “Nazareth?”.

Scoffing at Nazareth is, again, as in **previous episodes**, a reference to people of that time questioning the messiah’s ability to come from a place like Nazareth. In John 1:46, Phillip tells Nathaniel about Jesus, and Nathaniel responds incredulously, “Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?”. Nazareth was a little, no-name town, so people had a hard time believing their long-awaited messiah could come from such an insignificant place.

Forbidden Miracles

When Atticus finds Jesse and questions him, Atticus says that Jesse probably wants to shout from the rooftops about what happened to him but implies he cannot because it’s “forbidden.” Why would such a wonderful thing be forbidden?

According to Jewish interpretation of some of the book of Isaiah (Isaiah 35:5-6 and other verses), there are four types of miracles only the messiah could perform – healing congenital disabilities (blind, lame, etc.), casting out demons that were deaf and without speech, cleansing leprosy, and raising someone from the dead after more than three days.

In the Bible, the Pharisees were often there when Jesus performed miracles and objected to him doing so. They questioned the source of his healing power because they watched for the messiah to come and ensure that the people adhered to Jewish law.



[Lord's Prayer Mobius Bracelet](#)

Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons." And knowing their thoughts Jesus said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand. "If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? "If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? For this reason they will be your judges. "But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you."

Matthew 12:22-28 (NASB)

But Jesus did indeed heal with the power of God, and he used those healings as evidence that he was the messiah when John the Baptist sent word asking if he was. In responding this way, Jesus demonstrates that he fulfilled the messianic prophecies in Isaiah 35 and other places.

Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you hear and see: the BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.

Matthew 11:4-5 (NASB)

Morning Blessings

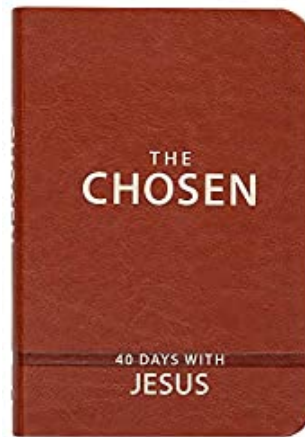
Simon the Zealot is saying a blessing which is a common blessing said in the morning. Called the Elohai Neshamah (the first two words of the blessing), it goes like this.

My God, the soul that you placed within me is pure. You created it, You formed it, You breathed it into me, and You preserve it within me. And in the future, You will take it from me and restore it in the Time to Come. All the time that this soul is within me, I am thankful before You, Adonai, my God and the God of my fathers, Ruler of all creation, Lord of all the souls. Blessed are You, Adonai, Who restores souls to dead bodies.

It's traditionally said in Hebrew. In Hebrew, it's:

אֱלֹהֵי, נְשָׁמָה שְׁנִתַּת בִּי טְהוֹרָה. אֶתְּךָ בְּרָאָתְךָ, אֶתְּךָ יִצְרָתְךָ, אֶתְּךָ נִבְחַתְּךָ בִּי, וְאֶתְּךָ מְשַׁמְרָה בְּקִרְבִּי, וְאֶתְּךָ עֲתִיד לְטָלָה מִמֶּנִּי, וְלִהְיוֹת בִּי לְעֵתִיד לָבוֹא. כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהַנְּשָׁמָה בְּקִרְבִּי מוֹדָה אֲנִי

לְפָנֶיךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתַי. רַבּוֹן כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים אֲדוֹן כָּל הַנְּשָׁמוֹת. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַמַּחְזִיר
נְשָׁמוֹת לִפְגָּרִים מֵתִים



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

It's pronounced:

Elohai neshama shenatata bi t'horah hi. Ata b'ratah, atah y'tzartah, atah n'fachtah bi, v'ata m'shamrah b'kirbi v'atah atid litelah mimeni ulehachazirah bi leatid lavo. Kol z'man shehaneshaman b'kirbi modeh (or modah) ani lefaneicha, Adonai Elohai v'lohei avotai, Ribon kol hamasim, Adon kol haneshamot. Baruch atah Adonai, hamachazir neshamot lifgarim metim.

This blessing can be followed by a deep breathing pattern like Simon demonstrated in this scene.

In Jewish tradition, a person's soul leaves the body at night during sleep, then returns when they wake. Jesus recites another of the morning prayers, the Modeh Ani, in [Season 2, Episode 1](#), which also addresses the concept of the soul returning to the body.

Demon possessed man

Simon says to the demon-possessed man that a demon will go on and pass through the waterless places and find someone else.

The waterless place is an intriguing concept in the Bible. Two different Hebrew words are translated as "waterless" in English. One, found in Job 6:17, is **רָבַח**, which means "scorched," and the other is **אֵין** in Zechariah 9:11, which means "to be nothing" or "not

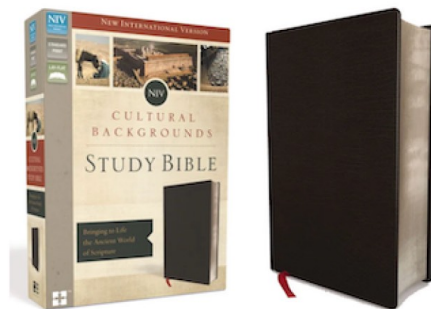
to exist.” It’s unclear whether the waterless places mentioned here are referring to hell or another place, but wherever it is, it doesn’t sound pleasant! A place that’s scorched and doesn’t exist isn’t one I’d like to pass through!

Jesus mentions the waterless places in his teaching recorded in Matthew 12 and Luke 11. He says that when demons are cast out, they leave the person and travel through the waterless place, seeking rest and never finding it. So creepy!

Demon’s sense of smell

The demon-possessed man mentioned that he could smell Simon and, later, that he could also smell Jesus. Demons smelling Jesus isn’t recorded in the Bible, but demons are often reported to have a smell of sulfur. Biblically, sulfur is known as brimstone. When mentioned in the Bible, it’s related to the wicked and their punishment.

Whether or not demons could smell Jesus, there does seem to be some scent that crosses the spiritual/physical barrier in the case of demon possession.



[Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, Leather Bound Cover, NIV](#)

At the end of the Feast

Simon says he hugged his brother at the end of the Feast. What Feast? The Feast of Tabernacles or Sukkot is what he’s referring to. Would you like to learn more about Sukkot? Read my article, [Explaining The Chosen, Season 2, Episode 4](#), for an explanation.

“Oy!”

Like I did at one time, you may think the expression “Oy!” is merely a Jewish form of “Oh my gosh!” but there’s more to this exclamation than that.

When John the Baptist says, “Oy, the hassle of it all,” he’s using a Biblical expression. Found in Numbers 21:29, Psalm 120:5, Proverbs 23:29, and many other places, the word *יָאֵן* (pronounced “Oy”) is a lamentation most commonly translated as “woe” or “woe to me!”.

Herod is marrying Herodias

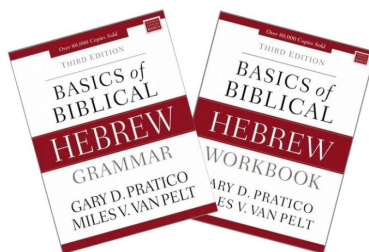
Why did John the Baptist mention to Jesus and his followers that Herod was divorcing his wife to marry Herodias? Just to update them on the latest in celebrity drama?

No. In this conversation, the writers of The Chosen are setting up the sad and unfair situation where John is martyred. This story is recorded in Matthew 14 and Mark 6. To summarize, King Herod Antipas, who was supposedly Jewish but sided with the Romans, divorced his wife to marry his sister-in-law.

However, it’s forbidden in the Law (Leviticus 18:16) to marry one’s brother’s wife while the brother is still living. As a Jewish king, Herod had a responsibility to follow the Law but chose not to, and when John called him out on this violation, Herod’s new wife, Herodias, wasn’t happy. At Herod’s birthday party, when her daughter was dancing before his guests, Herod was pleased with her dancing. He offered her whatever she wanted, up to half of his kingdom. Her mother told her to ask for John’s head on a platter. She did, and, unfortunately, that’s what she got.

Later in this episode, John the Baptist says that Herod is afraid of him, but he is being honest, not prideful. Herod’s fear of John is Biblical, as reflected in the two chapters (Matt. 14 and Mark 6) that told the story of John’s beheading. This fear is why Herod didn’t just kill him in the first place, rather than waiting for the request from Herodias’s daughter.

John the Baptist also says later, speaking of Herod, “He might not be as bad as his father, but he’s still bad.” Herod Antipas came from a rough family. He and his brothers were tetrarchs in the areas controlled by the Romans. Their Jewish descent was questioned, but they seemingly only acted Jewish when it served them. Their father, Herod the Great, is known for the many buildings he built, including the remodeling and expansion of the Temple and Temple Mount. He’s also known for having Jewish infants murdered around the time of Jesus’s birth. He left some great historical architecture, but he was a bad man indeed!



Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar Bundle

Hebrew lessons

Mary is teaching Hebrew to Ramah in the next scene. They're going over the second part of Psalm 7:1, "O LORD my God, in You I have taken refuge..."

Mary points out that the "root" is "chet-samech-hey," which looks like this: חסה. In Hebrew, there's a three-letter root to almost every word that reveals its meaning. Added to the three-letter root are prefixes and suffixes to tell more about the word.

For example, the word they're discussing is חִסִּיתִי (cha-see-tee). Its root is חָסָה (cha-sah), which is a verb meaning "take refuge." The letters added to the word change it into the first person singular form, making it "I sought refuge."

But Ramah comments that there's no hey, and she's correct. When a word ends in hey, and a suffix is added, the hey drops off, making it difficult to recognize the root word. That may be why Ramah is struggling with this word.

Words with the same root are similar in meaning, not just appearance. As Mary and Ramah continue to the next part of the verse, "from my pursuers and deliver me," they skip over one root I think is very important. The word translated "save me" is הוֹשִׁיעֵנִי (ho-shee-ay-nee), which is from the root יָשַׁע. Another word we get from this root is Yeshua (יֵשׁוּעַ), Jesus's name, which I discussed above.

The Elijah-ness of John's role

Jesus says that they both know the "Elijah-ness" of John's role. John the Baptist and Elijah have commonly been compared among Christians, but what are the similarities? There are many in the Bible. Both were desert-dwellers who dressed strangely and lived off of the land. Both were called to prophesy to Israel at a time they had turned from God, and both preached a message of repentance to the people and the leadership. To

study many things these two have in common, read [Twenty-five Similarities between Elijah and John the Baptist](#).

Some believe that John was the “Elijah” sent to prepare the way for the messiah. Luke 1:17 says that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah. And Malachi 3:1 says, “Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple...”

But if these verses mean that John the Baptist is a resurrection of Elijah, someone didn’t tell the prophet himself. He denies being Elijah when asked.

They asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” And he said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.”

John 1:21 (NASB)

So, while John the Baptist did walk on earth with Elijah-ness, he wasn’t Elijah himself, and we can still look forward to Elijah returning to prepare the way for our messiah when he comes to rule his kingdom!

Prophecy and song

John the Baptist mentions his abba’s (dad’s) prophecy and Jesus’s eema’s (mom’s) song. In Luke chapter 1, Mary’s song and Zechariah’s prophecy tell of Jesus’s role as savior. John knows that what was said about he and Jesus is being fulfilled.

Belial, spawn of Oriax

This demon’s name, Belial, is found throughout the Hebrew text of the Old Testament and once in the New. Belial is mentioned as a being but also as a concept – commonly translated as “worthless.”

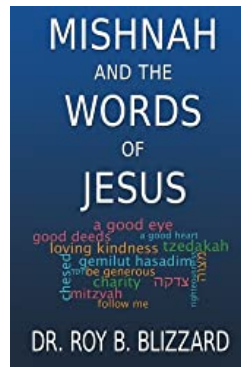
He’s the subject of much Jewish and Christian thought and has been proposed to be Satan’s right-hand demon or even his predecessor. Oriax, Belial’s supposed father, is a notorious demon from extrabiblical sources.

“Nicodemus has influence, but he’s not Caiaphas”

Shmuel says the above vehemently as they leave after attempting to make amendments to the case against Jesus.

In John 3, Nicodemus is called a “ruler of the Jews.” Because of this and the Sanhedrin authority he had to at least somewhat defend Jesus in John 7; he’s thought to have been a Pharisee of very high standing. Jesus also refers to him as “the teacher of Israel.”

On the other hand, Caiaphas was the high priest, so he ranked above Nicodemus. He’s the one who would eventually bring the charge of blasphemy against Jesus, and we know how the rest of that story goes...



[Mishnah and the Words of Jesus by Roy Blizzard](#)

Hillel and Shammai

Yanni said, “...there are two schools of Mishnaic thought,” and Shmuel finished his statement with, “Hillel and Shammai, of course...”.

First, let’s define Mishnaic thought. The Mishnah is a written document (book) containing the previously oral Jewish traditions. The Mishnah contains interpretations and practical applications of the Torah. For example, what exactly does it mean to “keep the Sabbath holy”? The rabbis had a specific answer to this question to guide the Jewish people and keep everyone on the same page as far as what could or couldn’t be done on the Sabbath.

Rabbis Hillel and Shammai were well-respected Jewish sages who lived about 2,000 years ago. They were devoted scholars, but they disagreed on many things. Conditions for divorce, the procedure for lighting Hanukkah candles, and whether to allow anyone to study Torah or only chosen students.

Hillel’s school of thought is more liberal than Shammai’s, and Hillel’s is what is followed by most observant Jews today, but both opinions are expressed in the modern-day Mishnah.

These groups were also divided politically. In Jesus's time, the school of Shammai sided with the Zealots, and Hillel wanted to find a more peaceful existence with the Romans. They sometimes disagreed to the point of killing members of the other side, but this was the exception, as most disagreements between the two schools were peaceful and respectful.

And we can look forward to Episode 6 to see what Mary's up to in Jericho and more! Would you like to receive updates from Hebrew Roots Mom? Follow me on social media or sign up for the newsletter!

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