

The Chosen

Season 1 - "What Does It Mean to Be Chosen?"

Opening Prayer

To open our Bible study on The Chosen, let us read from the Book of Isaiah (43:1-2, 19).

Thus says the Lord who created you, O Jacob, and He who formed you, O Israel: "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" Amen.

Introduction - 30 min

Can everyone introduce themselves by saying your name and how far have you watched The Chosen?

Let's begin with a brief message from the Director, Dallas Jenkins.

[Show Introduction from Director - <https://youtu.be/0E-8-NcL7tc> (0:00 - 2:27)]

So we see Jesus through the eyes of those that met him. The point is to make these Biblical figures that you read about and see in art and statues, real human beings with hopes, dreams, emotions, questions, stress, faults, and doubts that need God's love and mercy...just like you and me.

Season 1

Season 1 asks the question: What does it mean to be chosen? Season 1 examines this question through the eyes of four Biblical characters: Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus, Matthew, and Simon Peter.

Mary Magdalene is introduced in Luke 8:2: "Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out...". Mary represents the lost sheep; those who had some Christian upbringing, but encountered traumatic or tragic events to make them feel unworthy to have a relationship with God. Hence, they have allowed sin to overtake their life.

Nicodemus is introduced in John 3:1: "Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews." Nicodemus represents those who grew up and remain confident in their spiritual status. They know God and are confident they will be saved. But this pride may hinder their ability to see their need for reconciliation with God. That is, does God know them?

Matthew is introduced in Matthew 9:9: “As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth.” Matthew represents those who had some Christian upbringing, but have grown to love material things and strive for personal gain. They embrace the world and do not see the need for faith.

Simon (Peter) is introduced in Matthew 4:18: “While walking by the Sea of Galilee, Jesus saw two brothers, Simon and Andrew casting a net into the sea.” Simon represents those who have faith but use it only when it is convenient. They are Sunday only Christians. For the most part, they rely on themselves.

Episodes in Season 1 focus on “the calling”: Jesus choosing his disciples and how they reacted. Each episode has a theme regarding “being chosen”:

1. You Are Called
2. You Rest
3. You Are Cherished
4. You Change Course
5. You Are a Witness
6. You Are Made New
7. You Are Established
8. You Are Carried

Tonight, we will cover You Are Called and You Rest

[7:30 pm]

Episode 1 - You Are Called - 30 min

Synopsis: The opening shows Mary Magdalene as a child praying with her father. Later, we learn her father died while Mary was young. Then, we see Mary Magdalene is living in Capernaum and haunted by demons, both literal and figurative. When a man flees her home and calls her possessed, the Romans ask Nicodemus, a rabbi visiting from Jerusalem, to perform an exorcism on her — but it fails. Meanwhile, Simon and Andrew are worried that they will lose their fishing boat because they cannot pay their taxes — so Simon stalls for time by lying and telling the tax collector Matthew that he is secretly working for the Roman praetor. Mary Magdalene considers throwing herself off a cliff, but holds back and goes to a pub, where she is about to have a drink when Jesus shows up and reveals that he knows who she is, and he heals her.

Episode Talking Points

- *With which of these four flawed-but-still-called characters do you identify?*
- *Did you learn or feel anything new about these Biblical characters?*
 - *What is the symbolism behind Mary Magdalene using the name “Lilith”?*
 - *Did Simon’s marriage surprise you?*
 - *Did the people’s hatred for Matthew surprise you?*

[7:45 pm]

Let's watch a scene from Episode 1. On a personal note, I have watched this scene probably 10 times. I still get choked up every time I watch it.

[Watch Mary's healing - <https://youtu.be/0E-8-NcL7tc> (50:22 - 54:44)]

- *What was your reaction to Jesus healing Mary?*
- *From what do you need to be rescued? A difficult personal history or pain? Too much pride? Financial insecurity? A world view that we must rely on ourselves? Something else?*
- *Did you notice the sitar playing during certain times in the episode? Have you ever noticed when the Holy Spirit is active in a situation or event? Pray that you will notice when the Holy Spirit is being active in your life.*
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[8:00 pm]

Read John 3:16-18

- We choose to do our own thing, to go our own way, and to defy the boundaries that were meant for our good and God's glory.
- By sending Jesus, God made a way (1) for sin to be atoned, and (2) for us to know Him the way He intended

Notable quote: "What if [God] is more beautiful and strange than we could ever imagine?" (Nicodemus)

Episode 1 prayer: Thank you, Lord, for creating me, for wanting to have a relationship with me, for making me one of your chosen. My thoughts, words, and actions show that I am unworthy to be called. But you pursue me relentlessly. Thank you for sending Jesus to search for me, to rescue me, and to guide me back to your heavenly home. Let me realize the Holy Spirit in my life like the sound of a sitar. Amen.

[8:05 pm]

Episode 2 - You Rest - 25 min

Synopsis. The opening is Chinnereth 948 BC (1 Kings 15:20) to show that the Jewish people were celebrating the Shabbat over 1000 years before the current storyline. The newly-exorcised Mary Magdalene gets ready to host her first Shabbat dinner in a long, long time. Matthew tells the praetor Quintus that Simon might be lying to the Romans about his ability to help them catch merchants who are dodging their taxes.

Nicodemus learns that Mary is no longer possessed and asks her who cast out the demons, but she does not know. Jesus shows up unannounced at Mary's house for Shabbat dinner, along with two of his disciples. Mary, Nicodemus, Simon attend very different Shabbat dinners, while Matthew eats alone. The episode ends with Simon standing by the shore of Galilee as several Roman soldiers approach.

Episode Talking Points - Shabbat (sabbath)

- *What is the Shabbat and why is important to the Jews?*
- *Why did the writers create a storyline that has Simon and Andrew being very delinquent on their taxes?*
- *Why is Nicodemus so confused by Mary's healing?*

[Watch the different Shabbats - <https://youtu.be/0E-8-NcL7tc> (1:25:15 - 1:30:58)]

Did you notice how the different celebrations reflect the four characters?

- Mary: Humble and imperfect but true worship of the presence of God
 - Nicodemus: Ritually respectful but potentially an act of recitation instead of an act of prayer and worship to God
 - Matthew: Striving for personal gain often isolates us from the people we love and leads us away from God
 - Simon: Worldly concerns can make one distracted, even wonder if God still cares, and thinking "I got this" instead of applying one's faith
- *Which shabbat celebration do you identify with the last mass or service you attended?*
 - *What is the symbolism of Mary saving the chair for Elijah?*
 - *Did you notice the quote from John 1:46 about "Nothing good can come out of Nazareth?" (Nathaniel to Philip)*
 - *Who was the last person you invited to church or to your home for the purpose of hearing about what God has done in your life?*

Read Exodus 14:26-31, Joshua 3:14-17, Daniel 3:19-25, then Isaiah 43:2

- *How does the wording from Isaiah relate to the events in Exodus, Joshua, and Daniel?*
- *How do these readings challenge your own notion that somethings are impossible?*

Notable quote: "I don't understand it myself. I was one way and now I'm completely different. And the thing that happened in between - was Him. So yes, I will know him for the rest of my life!" (Mary Magdalene)

Episode 2 prayer: Thank you, Lord, for the soul rest you offer through Jesus. Thank you for providing us our daily bread and for your constant presence that allows us to endure and overcome hard circumstances this side of eternity. We humbly ask that you teach us more and more how to rest in your presence. We excitedly await the everlasting joy of eternal life. Amen.