

# An Open Letter to my Sisters in Christ: A Warning Regarding *The Chosen*

By \*\*\*\*\* Brown  
October 25, 2023

Beloved,

I write to you as a women's Bible study teacher who got caught up in *The Chosen* swell.

My mantra is: "Know God in His Word. To know Him is to love Him is to trust Him." I can sing a chorus of verses with you, my sisters, that are deeply meaningful and true—verses such as, "If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Another verse we find scrolled across many Bible covers and coffee mugs, although many do not know its context, is "I know the plans I have for you... to give you a future and a hope" (Jeremiah 29:11). The Bible reader who spends time with the God of Jeremiah, the God who loves His people even in their chastisement and exile, is rewarded with a deep and abiding knowledge of the Living God. He tells His faithful ones to cling to Him as they are deported to Babylon for the nation's idolatry—idolatry which required the burning of their sons and the prostitution of their poor. After Yahweh warned and warned them through the prophets, it is as tho He said, *Go, then. Worship their gods. But not in My Name and not in the place where I chose to put My Name.*

The Babylonians came and conquered His people, Israel, an historical fact. Yet, even in the midst of judgment, He proclaimed to them a future and a hope. For those who would submit and still cling to Him in their exile, ones like Daniel and his friends, God remained intimately near. In fact, He delighted to make His Name known through both His faithful children, and their tyrannical leaders. Read the Book of Daniel after you read Jeremiah and witness the astounding display of His utter power and sovereignty, love and compassion. Reading such accounts gives me solid ground on which to stand. I come to know many things about my God. All of them are true.

The question is, if I know Him in His Word, where, then, is the harm in watching a television series about Jesus? If I am a student of the Word, diligent and faithful to accurately handle it, rightly dividing the Word of Truth (2 Tim. 2:15), where is the harm in watching *The Chosen*? I am able to accurately point out where the writers embellished, as tho it is a work of historical fiction. I am able to pinpoint where in the Scriptures they inserted details that were not written, and developed characters of their own imaginations that are based on actual people. I know what the real accounts reveal. I know the Bible. So what is the concern?

Recently, I asked the Lord that very question. And, true to form, as a loving, all-knowing, Creator God who does not conceal truth from us, nor hides Himself from any who diligently seek Him and long to know Him more deeply (Ps. 27:8, Heb. 11:6), He answered. He showed me, gently, the danger. The danger is two fold: the first is in the sheer beauty of the production; the second is that the Jesus they are portraying is not the Jesus of the Bible.

In short, *The Chosen* is a visually stunning lie.

I began watching *The Chosen* after the first season was completed. A friend, on Facebook, posted, *Hey everyone! The Chosen is now available to download!* I hadn't known what it was. She is a faithful follower of the Lord Jesus. So I searched for it and watched. After all, there is so little to watch that isn't marbled with sexual immorality and woke indoctrinating messaging. One season in, and I was hooked. I couldn't wait for the second. Then the third. And something happened that was out of character for me—I watched several of the episodes multiple times, late at night. I would watch certain ones repeatedly.

Allow me to describe the experience:

The Screen is dark, shrouded in hues of deep blue. Quiet night sounds emerge: an owl, the crackle of a fire. Soft voices float out of figures draped in linen, huddled together—father and daughter—conversing about fear and hints of sickness. A passage of Scripture is then recited and the child comforted. As a woman, I am drawn in to something intimate and familiar in this scene and in others—something familiar and yet transcendent in its aesthetic: the handsome actors, the women in long hair and muslin, the accents, the wood and stone, the apricots and pomegranates, the olives being crushed under bare feet, and the utter lack of anything severe and cold and jolting. I am lulled and something within me stirs. I hear the soft sounds; I see the soft hues; I sense the heart connection between the players such as the father and daughter, and I am for them. I am transported. I can participate, somehow, and my heart warms. My guard is down and I remember this is a story from the Bible! And all who are seeing it will be drawn in! In an age when people scoff and atheism and nihilism are the themes of middle school assigned reading. In a post Christian western world, I have hope that many will see and believe.

In another episode, King David appears with his pregnant and delicate olive-skinned wife, her hand in his. He guides her beautiful form past the limestone walls and through candle lit halls. He shepherds her to her seat, next to his, and the men of service adorned in humility, bow and present to the king and his beloved, a psalm.

Their voices hum a foreboding melody in a minor key, and the lead psalmist emerges and speaks the words of the psalm against the ominous chorus. It is Psalm 77 they are performing for the royal duo. As a woman, I am tempted to want what she has, his seemingly undivided attention and devotion. As the performance closes, I realize, because I know the Word, that they left out the last line of the psalm. I get my Bible out, still captivated by the depiction despite being aware of the circumstances that led to their coming together

as a couple (adultery and murder and the death of a newborn (2 Sam 11&12)), and I read the omitted verse, “You led Your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron” verse 20. I wonder, *Why did they leave that out?*

Why did they leave that out?

I am troubled at the thought of them leaving out undeniably Jewish imagery and a nod to the Exodus from Egypt into the Promised Land. But I am strangely satisfied with the visual scene, and my ears still ring with the humming. Both seem to drown out the lie. I am tempted to watch it again.

Jesus came in the form of a man as described as follows: “For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness: and when we see Him, no beauty that we should desire Him” (Isaiah 53:2). Knowing that God does not see as man sees, “for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Sam 16:7), it should not be surprising to us that the Eternal Son of God would choose a cloak of humble flesh to dwell in and with mankind. We would do well to remember and apply this truth as we sojourn on the earth. God is no respecter of Hollywood.

You may say but I *know* this. I submit that the writers of *The Chosen* know this, as well. So why are they working so hard to achieve such sensual aesthetic beauty in their depiction of The Gospels? One can only speculate. But herein lies the danger. It is addictive. It is alluring. We are all thirsty, every one of us. We may have family members who are sadly drawn away into their own false realities via social media and gaming and are cut off from us emotionally. We may have lonely marriages where the financial pressures have shaped a rhythm of work and exhaustion, disconnectedness breeding more disconnectedness. We may be new to empty nesting, and disoriented and startled that we are experiencing pangs of loneliness as our once bustling homes seem strangely hollow. We may be life weary from disappointment, both familial and ministerial. The evil is that *The Chosen* is marrying a visceral, sensorial experience with a fictional interpretation of the Word of God. This is the two fold danger: it is a sensuous lie.

The actor who plays Jesus is tall and handsome, yes, but something much more sinister is at work. The whole presentation is tall and handsome. The music, the scenery, the costumes, the tones of the voices, the pulse of the narrative—it’s other worldly and not in a good sense. The viewer finds herself drawn in and wanting more. And wanting more of what? Wanting more of *whom*? The Scriptures I read reveal Jesus, after He rises from the dead, still bearing the holes in His wrists and in His side. He allows an unbelieving Thomas to put his hands right into them and feel! And Believe! (John 20:27). The Scriptures I read inform me that over and over again disciples, who dined with Him, slept next to Him, who followed Him through dusty paths and stormy waters and listened to His earth moving teachings, did not recognize Him after He was raised from the dead and before His

ascension (Luke 24:37-39; John 20:14,15, 24-29; John 21:4-12). *Why is that?* I read the horrific descriptions of what was done to His face: the plucking out the beard (Isaiah 50:6), the blows to and pushing thorns into his forehead (Mark 15:17) in fulfillment of the Scriptures, “Just as many were astonished at You, so His visage was marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men” (Isaiah 52:14). I wonder, *Does He still bear some mark on His face like He does the marks of His crucifixion on his hands and side?* What if when we finally see Jesus face to face (1 John 4) there will be a reminder of what He endured for us in His face? As if He is saying when we look into His eyes,

*I love you this much*

I don't want to picture Him any other way than what I gather in the Scriptures. I don't want anyone supplanting another Jesus for the One and only.

There is something especially dangerous about marrying an exquisite visual experience with an oh so slightly off depiction of the Truth. But there is more. What if their wrong portrayal of Jesus is not just slightly off? What if they are making a claim about His identity that, when believed, leaves people so deceived that they remain unsaved?

Come away with me and examine *The Chosen's* presentation of John 3. Edgy and modern, we find Nicodemus stealing away in the night to meet with Jesus on a rooftop to question Him. Two disciples hide in the stairwell and eavesdrop. With a writing stick and paper in hand, John the disciple records their conversation. Brilliant depiction.

The writers put the words into the mouths of the actors directly from the pages of John 3. “Unless one is born from above, Nicodemus, one cannot see the kingdom of God...that which is born of flesh is flesh, that which is born of Spirit is spirit...” to name a few. As a Bible reader, I am delighted to see the Word of God being acted out and I picture a postmodern young audience hearing the Gospel, perhaps for the first time. But then this: when the two finish their conversation and stand up, Nicodemus drops to a knee in a posture of worship and reaches for Jesus' hand as he recites from Psalm 2:12a, “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry and you perish in the way,” he says as he kisses Jesus' hand.

“What are you doing? Get up,” the fake Jesus says refusing his worship.

He then lifts Nicodemus to his feet and answers him with a hug as He finishes the psalm, “Blessed are all who take refuge in Him,” skipping the line in between, “when His wrath is kindled but a little.”

Psalm 2 is a glorious, splendrous Messianic psalm of the End Times confrontation. Messiah the King will put down all rebellion. To the kings of the earth who rise up and conspire against the God of the Bible, a warning! When I read Psalm 2, with an anxious eye looking across the globe, in real time, taking note of enemies surrounding Israel, enemies of the Church slaughtering peaceful Christian farmers in Nigeria as they work in their fields,

nation-heads devouring their own people through toxic and murderous public policies, my fears are harnessed and I can sleep at night, knowing ALL rebellions will be put down by the One who redeemed me with His blood. Like a weaned child, my soul rests (Psalm 131).

When fake Nicodemus kneels to worship fake Jesus, and fake Jesus refuses his worship, what message is being projected to the audience? Two things: Jesus is not God, and Jesus wants to make sure you understand that.

The real Jesus is God. He never refused worship (Matthew 14:33; 28:9,17; John 20:29). In fact, one of the ways the careful Bible reader can tell if an angel in the Old Testament is simply an angel, or if He is the Angel of God, (what is called a theophany, an appearance of the Eternal Son—Jesus before the manger), is whether or not He accepts worship. If it is an angel, one of the created host messengers from God, he refuses man's worship. *Get up! Don't do that! Worship God, not me.* We see this in Revelation 22:8,9. But if He is God appearing as the Angel of God to man on the earth, He makes that clear, as He did in the book of Joshua (Joshua 5:13-15). He did not refuse Joshua's worship.

This is our God. And what about the writers leaving out the line in the psalm about His wrath? *Hmmm.*

This is not the only scene in *The Chosen* where Jesus rebuffs a worshipful response. Lies shrouded in aesthetic beauty. What could be more dangerous? At least the sexual immorality and woke indoctrinating material of the secular entertainment productions are blatantly sinful. Easily identifiable.

One may say, well, I know the Bible, and it is obvious what they are adding in and what they are leaving out. That may be true. But I ask, why the historical depiction of the Jesus of the Bible? The director will tell you plainly that he wanted to produce a depiction of Jesus that was binge watch worthy. He wanted people to be drawn into the Bible, to know the Jesus who saves. He says this is reaching audiences untouched by churches and people are being saved.

We are all vulnerable to deception. Jesus, the real Jesus, in His Word, warns us over and over and over again. My appeal to my sisters is to turn away. This stuff is too good and it gets in. God's enemy wants us to be anemic when it comes to the Word of God. What better way than to wrap up the gospel accounts in a luxuriant wrapping paper—a delight to the eyes and the ears—having distorted the single most important truth about Jesus which, if a person does not believe that He is God, he does not know Him, and, therefore, forfeits the salvation He offers. On His terms. Can you imagine *on that day* how many people will have been satisfied to have a Jesus who does not have wrath, nor is He eternal, nor is He Creator and therefore He has no authority?

The enemy of God, the enemy of our souls was able to cause the fall of the entire human race by observing one couple. Two people is all he had to gather data on. The

Scriptures teach that Eve was full on deceived (1 Tim. 2:14). She could see God and walk with Him in the garden. Hear His voice. Didn't have to read His Word in order to know what He said. He said what He said directly to her. Let that sink in. There was no interpretation necessary. He communicated directly to her. And the enemy was that crafty, that deceptive, as to know exactly what to say to get her to doubt God. Eve was the perfect woman. Unfallen. That's not even a word, but describes her. Perfect as perfect could be. And he was able to deceive her.

*What about us?*

Put it away. Sink into the real thing. And ask Jesus to remove the sights and sounds of it all from your precious mind and memory. He will do that, you know. He is more than capable.

Because He is God.

And His plans for you are good.

Maranatha