CONFLICT & PEACE: AT HOME WITH JESUS

written by

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Based on the book, *"Conflict & Peace: At Home with Jesus"*

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EPISODE 1: Galilean

FADE IN:

EXT. MILVIAN BRIDGE, ROME - DAY - OCTOBER 28, 312 AD

Swords ring against shields. Constantine's infantry storms across the bridge in a wall of iron and dust, wooden shields painted with the crossed lines of the Christian Chi Rho symbol catching the morning light.

TITLE CARD: This series is based on historically documented events. Certain lesser characters, dialogue, and chronological events have been interpolated, fictionalized, or otherwise altered for dramatic narrative purposes.

SUPERIMPOSE: October 12, 312 AD. Constantine defeats rival Maxentius to claim the title of Western Roman Emperor, all under the banner of the Christian Chi Rho.

FADE TO:

INT. BISHOP EUSEBIUS' OFFICE, CAESAREA - NIGHT - 326 AD

Lightning flickers against tall windows. Scrolls and loose parchment cover every surface of a cramped study that has clearly not been cleaned in weeks.

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA, fifties, stooped from decades bent over manuscripts, stands over a weathered map of the eastern Mediterranean. His finger traces the coastline from Galilee down to Judea.

EUSEBIUS
Good evening. My name is Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea. I have had a front row seat to the conversion of Rome, from a thousand pagan gods down to the one true God.

The wall behind him splits into two images. On one side Eusebius keeps talking. On the other, archival footage shows jubilant Roman crowds pressing in around Constantine's chariot as it rolls through the capital.

EUSEBIUS (CONT'D)
It was made possible by the leadership of our Emperor, who unified church and state under a single banner. I recall that victory as if it happened yesterday.
(MORE)

EUSEBIUS (CONT'D)
Senators, mothers, children, they lined the streets and welcomed him home like a savior.

Eusebius looks up from the map, directly at us.

EUSEBIUS (CONT'D)
But I am getting ahead of myself. Let us go back to where this all began. Long before Constantine. Long before Rome ever knew the name. To a movement they called the Way, and a man named Jesus of Nazareth.

CUT TO:

EXT. JORDAN RIVER VALLEY - DAWN

Wind moves across open desert scrub toward the river below.

HEAVENLY VOICE (V.O.)
The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, as it is written in the prophets. See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way. The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

TITLE CARD: GOSPEL OF MARK, CHAPTER 1.

FADE TO:

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - DAY

The sun bakes the riverbank white. JOHN THE BAPTIST, thirties, wild haired, dressed in rough camel hair cinched with a leather belt, wades waist deep in the current, dunking one convert after another as a crowd presses close to the water's edge.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
Repent. The kingdom of heaven is near. I baptize you with water, but someone is coming after me who is far greater than I am. I am not fit to untie his sandal.

A cluster of PRIESTS AND LEVITES pushes forward through the crowd, robes marking them as officials sent from the city.

PRIEST
We were sent from Jerusalem. Who are you?

JOHN THE BAPTIST
I am not the Messiah.

A LEVITE steps closer, suspicious.

LEVITE
Then who? Elijah?

JOHN THE BAPTIST
I am not.

PRIEST
The Prophet, then?

JOHN THE BAPTIST
No.

The priests exchange a look, frustration building.

LEVITE
Then who are you? Give us something to bring back.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
I am a voice crying out in the wilderness. Make the way of the Lord straight.

A PHARISEE shoulders in from the back of the group.

PHARISEE
Then why are you baptizing at all, if you are none of these things?

JOHN THE BAPTIST
I baptize with water. But there is one standing among you right now that you do not recognize.

The crowd murmurs, scanning each other's faces. The sun drops lower. The priests disperse, unsatisfied, as dusk settles over the riverbank.

CUT TO:

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - THE NEXT DAY

John straightens as he spots a figure approaching along the bank. JESUS OF NAZARETH, early thirties, travel worn robe, calm and unhurried, walks toward the water.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
Look. There is the Lamb of God, the one who takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I told you was coming after me, because he existed before me.

John wades toward Jesus, awe breaking through his usual fire.

JOHN THE BAPTIST (CONT'D)
I saw the Spirit come down on him like a dove and stay there. I have seen it myself. This is the Chosen One.

Jesus lowers into the water. John baptizes him. As Jesus rises, a dove circles low overhead and a low rumble rolls across the sky like distant thunder.

VOICE FROM HEAVEN (V.O.)
This is my son, the Beloved. With him I am well pleased.

Jesus stands motionless in the current for a long beat, water running off his shoulders, before turning and walking alone toward the hills.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE WILDERNESS - DAY

Cracked earth stretches in every direction. Jesus sits alone against a boulder, gaunt from weeks without food, his lips cracked from the heat.

JESUS
Forty days out here, and not a scrap to eat.

A shadow falls across him. SATAN, ageless, elegantly dressed, entirely too composed for the desert heat, has simply appeared, crouched a few feet away.

JESUS (CONT'D)
And now you. What are you doing here.

SATAN
If you are the Son of God, tell that stone to become bread.

JESUS
It is written that man does not live on bread alone. He lives on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

The desert dissolves. Jesus and Satan now stand on the high pinnacle of the Jerusalem temple, wind whipping at their robes, the city sprawled far below.

SATAN
If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. It is written that he will command his angels to catch you, that you will not so much as strike your foot against a stone.

JESUS
It is also written, do not put the Lord your God to the test.

The temple dissolves into a mountain summit. Every kingdom of the earth spreads out beneath them in the haze.

SATAN
All of this, I will give to you. Kneel, and worship me.

JESUS
Get away from me, Satan. It is written, worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.

Satan's composure cracks. He staggers backward off the ledge and drops from view without a sound. The mountaintop empties. A moment later two ANGELS descend, kneeling beside Jesus with bread and a skin of water.

FADE TO:

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - LATE AFTERNOON, THE FOLLOWING WEEK

John stands with two of his followers, ANDREW, twenties, and an UNNAMED DISCIPLE, watching the road. Jesus passes at a distance.

JOHN THE BAPTIST
There. The Lamb of God.

Andrew and the other disciple fall into step behind Jesus. He stops and turns to face them.

JESUS
What are you looking for.

ANDREW
Rabbi. Where are you staying.

JESUS
Come and see.

Andrew follows, then breaks off at a run to find his brother. He returns minutes later dragging SIMON PETER, thirties, broad shouldered, a fisherman's calluses on his hands, by the sleeve.

ANDREW
We found him. The Messiah.

Jesus studies Simon for a long moment.

JESUS
You are Simon, son of John. From today, you will be called Cephas. Peter. The Rock.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD NORTH TO GALILEE - DAY

Jesus walks the dusty road along the Jordan with his small band trailing behind. He spots PHILIP, twenties, walking toward Bethsaida.

JESUS
Follow me.

Philip falls in beside him without hesitation, then breaks away to find a friend resting beneath a fig tree.

PHILIP
We have found him. The one Moses and the prophets wrote about. Jesus, son of Joseph, from Nazareth.

NATHANAEL, thirties, sits up, skeptical.

NATHANAEL
Nazareth. Can anything good come out of that place.

PHILIP
Come and see for yourself.

Jesus approaches before Philip can even finish the sentence.

JESUS
Here is a true Israelite. No deceit in him at all.

NATHANAEL
How do you know anything about me.

JESUS
I saw you under that fig tree before Philip ever called your name.

Nathanael rises, stunned.

NATHANAEL
Rabbi. You are the Son of God. The King of Israel.

JESUS
You believe that because I mentioned a fig tree. You will see far greater things than this.

CUT TO:

EXT/INT. WEDDING FEAST, CANA - NIGHT

Lanterns sway over a crowded courtyard. Musicians play. Guests dance in loose circles as wine flows from clay jars stationed along the wall. MARY, fifties, moves through the celebration checking on food and drink like a woman who has run a hundred weddings before this one. She finds Jesus seated near the edge of the gathering.

MARY
They have run out of wine.

Jesus meets his mother's eyes. A beat passes between them, something unspoken and familiar, before he finally answers, gentler than the words themselves suggest.

JESUS
Woman, why come to me with this. My hour has not yet come.

Mary studies him a moment longer, then allows herself the smallest smile, already certain of what he will do.

MARY
(to the servants)
Do whatever he tells you.

Six stone water jars line the courtyard wall, each large enough to hold thirty gallons. Jesus crosses to them.

JESUS
Fill the jars with water.

The SERVANTS obey, hauling water until each jar brims to the top.

JESUS (CONT'D)
Now draw some out. Take it to the man running the feast.

A servant dips a cup and carries it to the HOST. He drinks, eyes widening, and waves over the bridegroom.

HOST
Every man serves the good wine first, then the cheaper wine once the guests have had their fill. You have saved the best for last.

Word spreads through the courtyard like fire through dry grass. Guests lift their cups toward Jesus, laughing, astonished, as the celebration swells around him.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD TO JERUSALEM - DAY

Jesus walks alone this time, the road climbing steadily toward the holy city on the horizon.

CUT TO:

INT. TEMPLE COURTYARD, JERUSALEM - DAY

Cattle low and sheep bleat inside makeshift pens set up between the columns. MONEY CHANGERS sit behind low tables stacked with coin. Jesus stops cold at the sight of it, then bends and knots a length of rope into a whip.

He tears through the courtyard, driving the animals loose and flipping tables. Coins scatter and roll across the stone floor.

JESUS
Get these out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace.

SELLERS AND TEMPLE OFFICIALS scramble back, furious.

TEMPLE OFFICIAL
What gives you the right to do this.

JESUS
Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it back up.

TEMPLE OFFICIAL
This temple took forty six years to build. You expect us to believe you could raise it in three days.

Jesus says nothing further to them. He strides out through the scattered coins and overturned tables, a small crowd of onlookers falling in behind him, murmuring, unable to look away.

CUT TO:

INT. RENTED ROOM, JERUSALEM - NIGHT

A single oil lamp burns low on a table. A soft knock. NICODEMUS, fifties, silk trimmed robe marking him as a man of standing, slips inside and pulls his hood back once the door is shut behind him.

NICODEMUS
Rabbi. We know you are a teacher sent from God. No one could perform the signs you perform unless God were with him.

JESUS
I tell you the truth. No one can see the kingdom of God without being born again.

Nicodemus frowns, genuinely confused rather than hostile.

NICODEMUS
Born again. How. Can a grown man climb back into his mother's womb.