

- John:** *(we pick them up in the middle of a conversation while cleaning and mending the nets. Three actors on stools in center, Zebedee is central on slightly higher stool to give him fatherly, authoritative appearance James and John are to his sides, side on to congregation . One omnidirectional mike in their midst?)* And then he said something like, “the ax is laid to the tree and every tree that doesn’t bear good fruit will be thrown into the fire.” And that someone was coming who would baptize in “the Holy Spirit and fire.”
- James:** Why can’t prophets ever speak plain Aramaic? Fruit and fire, sounds like prophets are frustrated poets. Why can’t they just say do this, don’t do that?
- John:** Because then they’d be Pharisees. But he did actually say some practical stuff too. He said if a man has two jackets that he should give one to someone who has none.
- Zebedee:** Sounds like communism. What’s to make a man work for his jacket if you’re just going to give him one?
- John:** *(instantly exasperated, this is obviously not the first time these two have butted heads)* I think he was finding another way of telling us to be kind to each other, Dad.
- Zebedee:** God helps those that help themselves.
- John:** Great, I ask for Psalms and I get Proverbs.
- Zebedee:** You want a Psalm? “What is man that you are mindful of him?.. You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings...you made him the ruler over your works. You put the works of Your hands under his feet all the beasts of the field, the flocks of the air and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.” Fish get two lines.
- James:** Ah yes, dad’s favorite psalm. The fish psalm.
- John:** Why is everything about fish?
- Zebedee:** Fish is food. Food is life. You two are so smart. You figure it out. I’ve noticed you don’t have any problem figuring out what to do with your mouths at dinner time. If only you’d work your hands as well!
- John:** Thanks for that. That’s very helpful. Dad, don’t you ever get sick of the world the way it is? Work, work, work, just to die? What’s the point of it all?

James: *(trying to lighten the mood)* Isn't it obvious? We're here to rule the fish!

Zebedee: Look, you boys wanna run off and change the world? You want to start a revolution? Fine. Be my guest. But remember this: revolutions don't pay well. And changing the world doesn't get your family fed.

James: This from the guy who would never leave this lake if it wasn't for the annual feasts in Jerusalem. What do you know about the changing the world?

Zebedee: I know we used to stone kids for talking to their fathers that way. Lucky for you some things do change. Smart guy wants proof? Alright, here's your proof. We all took a day off, a very expensive day off; I might add and went out into the desert to see that Jim guy right?

John: John!

Zebedee: John, right, we all went out and got a bath. Kingdom of God is near! You're a sinner, Woohoo! Yadda yadda. Where are we now?

James: Back in the blinkin' boat, mending the verscluginah nets.

Zebedee: Back in our own boat, mending our very useful nets. And where is John the Bather?

John: In prison, but*

Zebedee: *(Cutting him off)* Thank-you. So I ask you? What changed? The Romans are still in Jerusalem, the fish are still in the lake and last time I checked, we are all still sinners.

John: But you did go out, Pop. You can't tell me you didn't feel anything, like things were finally happening or something big was coming. We all felt it. You must have felt something?

Zebedee: Sure, I felt something. I feel things all the time. Every time your mother makes gefilte fish for instance. It passes.

James: Did he just equate the Kingdom of God to heartburn?

John: Gosh, I hope that was all he meant.

Zebedee: *(growing angry)* What I mean is that the Kingdom of God will come or it won't. When and if it does, it certainly won't need the help of two

lazy, pickle-headed fisher boys like you two. Leave the theology to the priests and rabbis.

- John:** *(An uneasy silence until John looks up from his work towards the congregation...)* Sure are a lot of people on the beach this morning.
- James:** Yeah, Hey, there's Andrew! *(raising his voice)* Yo, Andy, what're you guys all gawking at?
- Andrew:** *(from the congregation)* The One spoken of by the prophets is coming! Jesus of Nazareth!
- James:** Nazareth? Can anything good come out of Nazareth?
- Jesus:** *(a mic'd voice from the back)* James, John, sons of Zebedee. Come with me. *(music comes up as actors leave scene.)*