

SUPERBOOK

"Nothing But the Truth"
(John the Baptist)

Episode 206P

CBN APPROVED TAKE-AWAY - "Live truthfully and point others to Jesus"

LOG LINE: When Chris is faced with a challenge between choosing to act truthfully or to take the easy (and more "fun") pathway, Superbook whisks the kids back to meet John The Baptizer. During an exciting journey that takes the kids from witnessing John preach and baptize on the Jordan River, all the way through to his incarceration and ultimate death at the hands of Herodias and King Herod, Chris comes to understand what it means to live truthfully and point others toward in the direction of being more like Jesus. When Chris returns home, he applies what he's learned. Although it doesn't change the boy he is trying to help, Chris himself is that much stronger for the effort he's putting in and for the experience of meeting John the Baptizer firsthand!

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SUPERBOOK

"Nothing But The Truth"

EPISODE #206P

Written by

LEN UHLEY

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CBN TAKEAWAY: Live truthfully and point others to Jesus.

REGULARS

1. Chris
2. Joy
3. Gizmo
4. Superbook

GUESTS

5. God
6. Jesus
7. John
8. Sam
9. Herod
10. Herodias
11. Sadducee #2
12. Centurion
13. Disciple #1
14. Disciple #2
15. Salome

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. RIVER JORDAN - DAY

A CROWD OF PEOPLE (Including a few Pharisees) stands at the river's edge. PAN PAST TWO DISCIPLES who line up members of the CROWD waiting to enter the water.

SETTLE on hirsute JOHN THE BAPTISER waist deep in the

JOHN

Repent of your sins and turn to
God for the Kingdom of Heaven is
near.

<SPLASH> - Soaked, Man #1 rises and grins gratefully.
Disciple #2 ENTERS FRAME and ushers Man #1 from the
river.

ANGLE ON THE CROWD - it slowly parts as someone comes
through - a beat as they move - and then we REVEAL JESUS.
He stops at the river's edge. PUSH IN - as a slight
smile comes to him.

JESUS

John.

ANGLE ON JOHN - He looks at Jesus. His eyes drops
slightly for brief second - and then they return to
Jesus. John trudges through the water to the shore. He
stops before Jesus. They exchange looks.

CLOSE ON JESUS

CLOSE ON JOHN

JOHN [MATTHEW 3:14 CEV]

I ought to be baptized by you.
Why have you come to me?

CLOSE ON JESUS

JESUS [MATTHEW 3:15 CEV]

For now, this is how it should be,
because we must do all that God
wants us to do.

CLOSE ON JOHN - He hesitates -- how can John absolve He
Who is Without Sin -- of sin?

CLOSE ON JESUS - Jesus nods, urging him to continue.

ANGLE ON THE WATER - Jesus and John ENTER FRAME - waist deep - (PRODUCTION NOTE: Please verify with researchers if Jesus should now be stripped or still wearing robes.)

IN SLOW MOTION - Jesus is submerged in the Jordan [ART NOTE: see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgIIAIdU3ik> from the Jesus film for reference - Please double check this action/video with CBN RESEARCH for accuracy; the water swells and settles. Then, after what seems like forever, John raises up Jesus. Suddenly --

WIDE - <THUNDERCLAP SFX>, a BLINDING ANGLED SHAFT OF LIGHT parts the clouds. The Spirit of God descends in the FORM OF A LIGHT SHAFT AND IN THE LIGHT - FORMED BY BRIGHTER LIGHT - IS THE SHAPE OF A DOVE - A DOVE MADE COMPLETELY OF LIGHT. (NOTE: No other effects should appear in this scene - no swirling clouds, winds or water movement. Just pure light and THUNDER)

The CROWD look up in wonder.

JOHN looks up.

CLOSER ON JESUS- as the LIGHT-DOVE alights just above Him for a brief beat... and then it descends INTO Jesus while Jesus calmly gazes upward and we hear...

GOD (V.O.)
This is My beloved Son, in whom I
am well pleased.

WIDEN OUT ON TIGHT TWO SHOT INCLUDING JOHN Standing beside and slightly behind Jesus:

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

GO TO MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. QUANTUM LAB - DAY (PRESENT)

GIZMO and JOY sit at the table and look up as CHRIS enters with his HOLO 9 Helmet.

CHRIS

Ah, het Giz, can you run a test on
my Holo 9 Game Helmet? It's been
real slow since I got it back.

Gizmo takes the helmet and cocks his wrist. A PROBE pops
out. He inserts it into the back of the helmet as...

JOY

Got it back? Did you lose it?

CHRIS

Naw. I let Sam borrow it.

ANGLE FAVORING GIZMO - who withdraws the probe from the
helmet; <ZIP-CLICK>, it reels back into his wrist.

GIZMO

I see what is wrong, Chris. There
are several new games stored in
your helmet's memory.

(beat, disapproving)
The odd thing is, none of these
titles are available for sale.

JOY

Sam put stolen games on your
player?

CHRIS

No! I'm sure there's a simple
explanation.

<BEEPING SFX> Chris pulls out a HANDHELD VIDEOPHONE and
taps a button.

CLOSER ON VIDEOPHONE - SAM appears on the screen. A big
round-faced kid with a perpetual know-it-all smirk.

SAM (FILTERED)

Hey, Chris. You find the games?

REVERSE - Joy gives Chris a look.

CHRIS

Uh, yeah.

SAM(FILTERED)

Rad, huh?

CLOSE ON VIDEOPHONE SCREEN - Sam boasts:

SAM (FILTERED)

I just downloaded them from a new
bootleg site I found.

WIDEN AS Joy turns Chris's hand so the phone faces her.

JOY
Bootleg, huh? As in *stolen*?

CLOSE ON PHONE

SAM (FILTERED)
Relax, *Kill Joy*. It's no big
deal.

BACK ON TWO SHOT Chris and Joy

Joy glares at Chris. Embarrassed, Chris mutters:

CHRIS
Uh, Sam? I'll -- call you back.

He taps the phone, ending the call.

CHRIS
Joy, I gotta...

JOY
I gotta nothing, Chris, I don't
care what excuses he makes. What
he did is *stealing*.

FAVOR GIZMO

GIZMO
And if you play the games Sam gave
you, it's like you stole them too.
(innocently)
Isn't it?

He holds out the helmet. Chris takes it and considers
for a beat...

CHRIS
Awww --
(beat, wavering)
What am I supposed to do? Sam's
my partner in all the toughest
gaming tournaments. I mean, we're
champions because he's so good.

Joy looks at him.

JOY
What are you gonna do Chris?

CHRIS
Why do I have to do anything? I
just won't play the games.

JOY
You mean you're not going to say
anything?

(MORE)

JOY (CONT'D)
You're just gonna let him keep
doing it even though you know it's
wrong?

SUPERBOOK RISES near the table.

CHRIS/JOY/GIZMO
Superbook!

A TIME VORTEX OPENS and sucks them in.

CHRIS/JOY/GIZMO
Whoas.....

CUT TO:

TIME VORTEX - CONTINUOUS

The kids float through the tunnel.

SUPERBOOK (V.O.)
I am taking you to meet a man who
spoke the truth to everyone he
met, even if that meant putting
his own life in danger.

CUT TO:

EXT. RIVER JORDAN - (SAME AS TEASER) - DAY

The KIDS AND GIZMO MATERIALIZE behind a large BOULDER on
the river bank.

JOHN [MATTHEW 3:7 NLT]
You brood of snakes!

POV - A HULKING SILHOUETTE - appearing more like a bear
than a man, looms over them, atop the rock with his back
to the kids. He is blotting out the sun and obscuring a
clear view as he bellows:

REVERSE ON JOHN - He stands atop the boulder, looking
about, wild-eyed, holding a stone in each hand. (The kids
would be down behind him - behind the boulder - out of
sight. John is looking towards a large crowd.

JOHN [IBID]
Who warned you to flee God's
coming wrath? Prove by the way
you live that you have repented of
your sins and turned to God!

HIGH ON CROWD

JOHN [MATTHEW 3:9 NLT] (O.S.)
Don't just say to each other,
'We're safe, for we are
descendants of Abraham.'

ON PHARISEES WATCHING

JOHN [IBID]
That means nothing, for I tell
you...

ON JOHN - He picks up two stone.

JOHN
... God can create children of
Abraham from these very stones!

ON THE CROWD - Listen and react.

CROWD
Walla of some understanding and
some questioning)

BACK ON THE PHARISEES

PHARISEES; #1 nudges #2 forward.

SADDUCEE #2
Some say you are the Messiah. How
would you answer?

JOHN - standing atop the boulder, shakes his head.

JOHN [MATTHEW 3:11 NLT]
I baptize with water those who
repent of their sins and turn to
God.

He turns to face the civilians - voice building.

JOHN
But someone is coming soon who is
greater than I am -- so much
greater that I'm not worthy even
to be his slave and carry his
sandals!

THE PHARISEES - trade disgruntled looks.

HEROD (O.S.)
Are you referring to me?

UP ANGLE ON JOHN - as he glances off, then scowls.

REVERSE - The Centurion helps Herod disembark the litter.
The Soldiers place their hands on their sword hilts.
Gizmo notices and cowers behind Chris.

ON JOHN - eyes narrowing as he addresses Herod.

JOHN
No. Most definitely *not*.

THE CROWD MEMBERS - ease backwards. A few nervously bow.

CROWD
Why is he here? / What do we do? /
Don't look at him! / Just bow!

FAVORING HEROD - He beams. Herodias withdraws from view.

HEROD
You *do* know who I am, don't you?

UP ANGLE ON JOHN - nods.

JOHN
Yes.
(beat, louder)
And I know what shame you bring to
this holy place!

John accusingly points at the litter, shouting:

JOHN
It is against God's law for you to
take your brother's wife!

WIDER - He leaps off the rock, addressing the crowd.

JOHN [LEVITICUS 20:21 NLT
PARAPHRASE]
This is what the Lord told Moses!
And that is why I say: what they
have done *is an act of impurity!*

MEDIUM - Chris, Gizmo and Joy trade wary looks.

GIZMO
Awkward

ON LITTER - The Guards join together creating a small
force - as though they might move to disperse the crowd.

THE CROWD

CROWD
<Keep them away from John! / He's
a Man of God! / Leave him be!
(etc.)

WIDE ON LITTER - Herod waves them off with a dismissive
gesture and climbs into the litter.

HEROD

Oh, forget them! - Get us out of
here -- now!

JOHN STARES DOWN A GUARD - The guard turns away in a
huff.

ANGLE ON CHRIS, JOY AND GIZMO

They watch the guards depart.

IN THE LITTER

Herodias shoots Herod a deadly glare.

HERODIAS

Are you going to let him get away
with that?

HEROD

Do you think anyone really listens
to him, Herodias? There is
nothing to be concerned with.

Herodias glowers. This isn't finished in her mind.

HIGH DOWN ANGLE

The litter exits frame.

CROWD

<cheers and jeers>

MEDIUM - as the Disciples approach John; he's calm.

DISCIPLE #1

Teacher, what have you done?

JOHN

I told the truth to a man who
sinned.

DISCIPLE #2

That *man* is Herod Antipas, a
powerful ruler. He will not
change his ways.

JOHN

Then he will be judged by the
Ruler of Heaven -- and pay a price
much greater than any we can
imagine.

He pats Disciple #2's arm, then heads O.S.

CHRIS, JOY AND GIZMO - PUSH IN ON CHRIS

He absorbs this.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HEROD'S PALACE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - NIGHT

PUSH IN...

INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Herodias approaches Salome.

HERODIAS
Salome. The servants have left
the throne room. Your father is
alone now.

SALOME
(sigh) Herod is *not* my father!

HERODIAS
Just do what we rehearsed.

Herodias ushers Salome O.C.

CUT TO:

INT. HEROD'S PALACE - GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Herod plucks a grape and pops it in his mouth just as
Herodias SCREAMS from O.C.

HERODIAS
No!

Herod chokes and drops the grapes.

HEROD
(cough-choke)

Herodias storms in, bawling. Salome follows.

HERODIAS
How can you just sit there? How
can you let him do this to me?

CLOSER AT THRONE - He picks up his grapes.

HEROD
Him who?

HERODIAS
John the Baptist! He humiliated
me in public! Didn't he, Salome?

SALOME - recites in a monotone:

SALOME
Oh, yes, the whole city is abuzz.

She saunters to Herod - takes a grape - and exits. Herod
watches her with attention - but not leering.

BACK ON HERODIAS - she notes Herod's attention to Salome.

HEROD (O.C.)
Now-now, Herodias.

Herodias looks back toward Herod.

BACK ON HEROD

Herod is still looking at O.C. Salome and slowly turns
his gaze back towards his wife.

HEROD
No one cares about the ramblings
of a madman!

ON HERODIAS

HERODIAS
Fine! Don't defend me, *I'm* only
your wife!

PUSH IN as Herodias leans close, nose to nose with Herod.

HERODIAS
But defend yourself! Every speech
John makes about his 'God'
undermines *your* authority!

CLOSE ON HEROD - eyes darting nervously.

HEROD
Hmm.... Yes... I see. Alright.
I'll have the Guards arrest the
Baptiser. Will *that* satisfy you?

ON HERODIAS - She looks towards Herodias who is only half
paying attention to all this. Then Herodias looks at
her fingernails in a self-satisfied gesture.

HERODIAS
For now.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. RIVER JORDAN - LATER SAME DAY

CHRIS, JOY AND GIZMO - sit on mats, facing Disciple #1.

DISCIPLE #1
...and that's when we decided to
follow John.

CHRIS
Everyone in the crowd who we've
camped with these past few weeks
has a story just like yours. But
weren't you even a little scared
of him at first? I mean, with all
that hair --

JOY
And the animal skins --

GIZMO
And the preaching?

DISCIPLE #2
(chuckle)

DISCIPLE #1
You have been in the wilderness
with us long enough... do you not
agree that John knows how to get
our attention? He wants us to
hear the truth.
(shrugs)
Even when we do not want to
listen.

TWO SHOT - Joy asides to Chris.

JOY
Sound familiar?

ON GROUP

DISCIPLE #1
You should meet John for
yourselves.

CHRIS
Okay, but first I got a question
about that thing he does, dunking
people down in the river...

**
**

GIZMO cuts him off as his face plate scans an image of
John baptizing someone.

GIZMO

Oh! *That* is a baptism. Those people are turning from sin and accepting God's forgiveness.

CHRIS

I know that Part, Giz. What I was..

JOHN (O.C.

Anan!

WIDE - John steps up behind Gizmo. He holds a piece of oilcloth, tied together in a knot.

JOHN

Have you made the new guests feel welcome?

DISCIPLE #1

I hope so, Teacher.

John sits and places the oilcloth sack in front of them.

JOHN

Perhaps you would like something to eat.

CHRIS - lights up as John opens the sack BELOW FRAME.

CHRIS

That would be awesome, what's th..
(looks down, puzzles)
-- that?

HIS POV - CLOSE ON John's hands finish unwrapping the oilcloth, revealing a dripping piece of HONEYCOMB and several CRAWLING LOCUSTS.

CLOSE ON JOHN - as he picks up one of the locusts and grins.

JOHN

Honey -- and locusts!

REACTION SHOT - Chris and Joy look askance at one another. Gizmo's eyes are wide as saucers.

JOY

And... you eat them?

ON JOHN AND DISCIPLE #1 - John places a locust in his mouth and both chews. <CRUNCHING SFX>

ON GIZMO

He puts his hand to his mouth and almost gags.

GIZMO
(holding back a gag)

JOHN
(chewing)
Yes! Even here in the desert, the
Lord provides for us.

ON TRIO - Chris and Joy share a look - then look down at
the food - both shrug - and reach for the food.

JOY
Sure

CHRIS
I'm game.

JOY
Why not?

CLOSE ON GIZMO - His eyes roll up in his head and he
keels backward.

GIZMO
<fainting groan>

THUD <SFX>

John and Chris look at Gizmo - shrug to one another -
then go back to eating the locusts.

X-DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLEARING BY THE JORDAN RIVER - SUNSET

Chris Joy and Gizmo use nets to try and catch more
locusts. John watches and smiles nearby as Gizmo dives
on spot in the grass and all the locusts swarm up and
out. <BZZZZZZ> - Gizmo pops up and offers a weak smile.

JOHN
(a chuckle)

Disciples #1 and #2 approach.

DISCIPLE #2 [JOHN 3:26 NLT]
Teacher... The man you met on the
other side of the Jordan River,
the one you identified as the
Messiah, is also baptizing people.

DISCIPLE #1 [IBID]
And everybody is going to him
instead of coming to us!

OUR HEROES - stop chasing bugs and turn to see John say:

JOHN [JOHN 3:28 NLT]
You yourselves know how plainly I
told you, 'I am not the Messiah.
I am only here to prepare the way
for him.'

RESUME JOHN AND HIS DISCIPLES - as John explains:

JOHN [JOHN 3:29 NLT PARTIAL]
Therefore, I am filled with joy at
his success.

DISCIPLE #1
But Teacher --

John holds up a hand, silencing him.

JOHN [JOHN 3:30 NKJV]
He must increase and I must
decrease.

CUT TO:

EXT. JOHN'S CAMP - NIGHT

A BRIGHT MOON and TWINKLING STARS fill the sky. TILT
DOWN TO John and a few Disciples. They are all asleep.

JOHN / DISCIPLES
<quiet snoring>

CENTURION (O.S.)
There they are!

The kids sit up.

JOY/GIZMO
(gasps of fear)

ANOTHER ANGLE - THE CENTURION AND THE SOLDIERS - come
over a ridge, torches raised, swords in hand.

CENTURION (CONT'D)
Spread out! Find the Baptiser!
<walla continues under next lines>

BACK ON THE KIDS and DISCIPLES - They leap to their feet.

DISCIPLE #1
<gasp> What should we do?

John stands, but he does not flee.

JOHN
Hide in the reeds by the river.
(to Chris and Joy)
Go! All of you!

JOY AND CHRIS - trade looks of dread, then run off with Gizmo.

John watches them go, then turns toward the approaching Soldiers.

AMONGST THE REEDS - Chris, Joy and Gizmo dash PAST CAMERA, <SWISH>. Beat; then the Centurion bursts INTO VIEW with torch in hand. He looks around but doesn't see which way the kids went.

GIZMO
Oh no!

JOY
Go! GO!!

They run off.

JOY
(fearful whimper)

CLOSE ON TRIO - crouching in the reeds. The nearby torch's light, plays across their fearful faces. It passes away. The kids look relieved.

CHRIS
(sotto)
What are we going to do?

JOY
We have to help John!

Suddenly the Superbook light begins to swirl around them.

GIZMO
Too late!

SUPERBOOK SHIMMER envelops them - swirling the BG

CHRIS/JOY/GIZMO
Whoaaa...

EXT. JESUS' ENCAMPMENT - SEVERAL MONTHS LATER - DAY

Our TRIO MATERIALIZES behind a TENT. CLOSE ON GIZMO - checking his wrist monitor.

GIZMO

It appears that Superbook has
carried us several months forward
in time.

CHRIS

Oh no! We gotta find out what's
happened to John!

Disciple #1 and # approach with camels.

DISCIPLE #2

We have just come from him,
Children. He is being held
prisoner in a cistern below
Herod's palace.

They hurry past and approach Jesus and some other men.

DISCIPLE #2 - [MATTHEW 11:3 NLT]

John the Baptizer sent us to ask,
are you the Messiah we've been
expecting --

DISCIPLE #1

-- or should we keep looking for
someone else?

JESUS [MATTHEW 11:4-6 NLT]

Go back to John and tell him what
you have heard and seen --

ON JOY AND CHRIS - reacting to Jesus's FILTERED VOICE:

JESUS (V.O.)

The blind see, the lame walk, the
lepers are cured, the deaf hear --
the dead are raised to life, and
the Good News is being preached to
the poor.

FAVORING JESUS - putting a hand on Anan's shoulder.

JESUS

And tell him, 'God blesses those
who do not turn away because of
me.'

As they continue to speak, CAMERA PULLS BACK TO THE
KIDS...

CHRIS

Come on, guys. We gotta see what
we can do to help John!

They dash away.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. HEROD'S PALACE - NIGHT

PUSH IN...

SALOME (O.C.)
Mother, John the Baptist is in
the dungeon.

EXT. BALCONY ON HEROD'S PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Herodias stands with Salome. <O.S. PARTY SOUNDS> Salome
is idly swaying to the <MUSIC>.

SALOME
Isn't that enough?

HERODIAS
No, it is *not enough*! In fact,
now that he's here, Herod even
visits with him! Seems to glad to
listen to him talking about sin
and salvation, yet Herod does
nothing!

She watches Salome dance absently to the music and
inspiration strikes.

HERODIAS
But we can do something.

<MUSIC STINGS> as we PUSH IN on Herodias's smile.

CUT TO:

INT. HEROD'S PALACE - SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR - NIGHT

HOLD ON A WINDOW (no glass or window dividers) at one end
of the corridor. Straining, Chris and Joy pull
themselves through the window...

CHRIS/JOY
(climbing efforts)

They look both ways, then wave out the window.

JOY

Hurry, Giz.

CLOSER -Gizmo pulls his torso over the sill and lands,
<CLUNK>. Two long FLEXI-CABLES dangle behind him.

GIZMO

<woah-grunt-sigh> Once, just once,
I'd like to go someplace and walk
through a door like normal people.

MOVING WITH CHRIS - already sneaking along the hall. He
looks back toward Gizmo and Joy, not seeing where he's
going.

CHRIS

(sotto)

Keep it down, will you? We can't
afford to get -- unghh...

He bumps into an armor-clad stomach, then looks up. ZOOM
OUT FAST to find the Centurion glowering down at him.

CENTURION

'Caught?' (lunging sound)

The Centurion lunges at Chris, who leaps up and over his
lunging grasping arms.

CHRIS

I'm not a big hugger!

CLOSE ON THE CENTURION as he face-plants on the floor.

CENTURION (CONT'D)

<impact grunt>

CHRIS

Run Joy!

END OF HALL - Joy and Gizmo zip down an intersecting
hall.

THE CENTURION - gets to his feet as SOLDIER #1 runs over.

CENTURION

It's those children who were with
the Baptizer! After them!

As they race down the corridor in pursuit...

CUT TO:

INT. HEROD'S PALACE - SISTERN-PRISON - NIGHT

A SPUTTERING TORCH at the top of the stairs provides a faint light as Chris creeps down a dark and narrow stone staircase.

CENTURION (O.C.)
Which way did he go?

SOLDIER 1 (O.C.)
I think he headed to the west tower.

CENTURION (O.C.)
You go that way. You two with me!

PUSH IN as Chris he listens fearfully. Then he grabs atorch and starts down the dark stairs.

CHIS
John, are you...

He turns and comes face to face with a RAT on a rock.

CHRIS
<gasp>!

BIG CLOSE UP - The rat bares it's teeth with a <SQUEAL> and then scampers away.

BACK ON CHRIS - he clutches his chest going from a wide-eyed reaction to more relief. Then a VOICE ECHOES in the gloom:

JOHN (O.S.)
Who is there?

NEW ANGLE - Chris hurries over to the CISTERN.

CHRIS
John? John, it's me. Chris!

CLOSER - John - gaunt.

JOHN
Come to see John the Baptizer now
John "the prisoner" did you?

Chris looks aorund.

CHRIS
Don't say that. There has to be a way to get you out of here!

CLOSE ON JOHN - He shakes his head.

JOHN [ISAIAH 40:3 CEV]
The Scriptures told of a messenger
-- someone shouting, 'Clear a path
in the desert! Make a straight
road for the Lord our God.' I am
the messenger. Jesus is the Lord.
(beat, quietly)
Now He must increase and I must
decrease.

Chris shakes his head; with grim resolve:

CHRIS
No, I don't get it. But you can
explain it after I get you outta
here!

As Chris bolts up the stairs...

CUT TO:

INT. HEROD'S PALACE - THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY - MEANWHILE - NIGHT

O.S. <MUFFLED MUSIC PLAYS> as Joy and Gizmo duck around a corner, with backs to the wall and frightened expressions. Joy sees a CURTAINED PORTAL and whispers:

JOY
Quick -- in there!

She dives through the curtains. Gizmo reacts, shooting his neck up and coast is clear, all while dashing after her. They disappear. Just as the curtains settle, the Centurion and Soldier #1 round the corner and storm PAST CAMERA.

CUT TO:

INT. HEROD'S PALACE - BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Joy, then Gizmo stumble through the curtains and halt. PANIC ZOOM OUT TO REVEAL that they have just crashed Herod's party unseen - near a row of banners on stands

THEIR POV - PAN COUCHES - where OFFICIALS, ARMY OFFICERS and LEADERS OF GALILEE lounge. SLAVES offer them TRAYS of FOOD. MUSICIANS <PLAY MUSIC>. And finally, we see Herod speaking to a guest while Herodias watches him. She turns the other way and secretly nods to an O.C. Servant. She turns and nods the opposite direction.

ON SERVANT

He nods back at her and then moves to extinguish a torch.
The room dims.

ON JOY AND GIZMO

They look around as other torches are extinguished.

ANGLE ON THE CROWD

People look around in curiosity. <DANCE MUSIC COMES UP>

HEROD

looks around

SALOME - dressed in silk, arms writhing slowly like
serpents, steps into a lone pool of light in the middle
of the room. She does a seductive dance.

HEROD

Reacts please - beside him, Herodias watches him watch
Salome, her plan unfolding perfectly. She smiles a wicked
smile.

WIDER - The dance ends.

ON HEROD - beaming. He bursts into <APPLAUSE>.

HEROD
Wonderful! Wonderful!

DOWN SHOT - Salome looks up at him from the floor in a
dance-finished pose.

SALOME
Now what will you do... for me?

CLOSE ON HEROD

HEROD [MARK 6:22-23 CEV]
Ask for anything, and it's yours!
I swear that I will give you as
much as half of my kingdom, if you
want it.

THE GUESTS - trade looks.

GUESTS
(It's his own daughter./ What's he
doing?/This is unheard of.)

ANGLE ON HERODIAS

She and Salome step to one side... and stand in front of
our heroes' banner.

SALOME [MARK 6:24 CEV] (O.S.)
What do you think I should ask
for?

Herodias leans in and whispers to Salome.

Salome turns to the throne and announces:

SALOME [MARK 6:25 CEV]
Right now, on a platter -- I want
the head of John the Baptiser!

THE GUESTS - react, some shocked, some approving.

GUESTS
<sotto walla>

FAVORING HEROD - His satyr's sneer becomes a sullen pout
as he turns to Herodias. She smirks, triumphant.

HEROD [MARK 6:26 CEV PARAPHRASE]
You know I cannot break a promise
I have made in front of my guests.
(shouts)
Captain? *Captain!*

THE CENTURION AND SOLDIER #1 - enter and salute.

CLOSE ON HEROD - as he replies, bitter and resigned:

HEROD [MATTHEW 14:10 CEV]
Go to the prison and cut off
John's head.

BEHIND BANNER - Gizmo stare in shock. Then Joy shakes
Gizmo out of it and drags him backwards towards the
curtain where they entered.

JOY
Come on! We gotta find Chris!

They turn and bum,p into Chris as he approaches.

CHRIS
(startled yelp) - Joy! I found
John!

JOY
It's too late!

GIZMO
Chris! They are going to cut off
his head!

CHRIS
WHAT?! NO!

He races back towards the stairs. Gizmo and Joy trade fretful looks, then follow.

CUT TO:

INT. HEROD'S PALACE - CISTERN - PRISON AREA - NIGHT

The three dash down the stairs where Chris had previous seen the rat. But the hear chains RATTLING and stop short. They peer around the corner with care.

The Centurion and Soldier #1 drag John off by his arms.

CENTURION
Come on, move it! COME ON!

ON CHRIS - as the men pass by. He watches, horrified.

CHRIS'S POV - PAN as John locks gazes with Chris.

OTS OF CHRIS - watching the men carry John into the shadows and disappear to do their deed somewhere unseen.

CHRIS
Why does it have to end like this?

Joy leans into Chris CLOSE-UP from behind and places her hand on his shoulder consolingly.

JOY
Chris...

Then the Superbook effect appears.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Superbook -- not now!

The BLUE LIGHT FILLS FRAME.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. QUANTUM LAB - MOMENTS LATER - DAY (PRESENT)

The kids return home. They stare at one another stunned.

GIZMO
Did what I think just happen,
happen? Did John...

Chris puts his hand to his neck, lost in thought. Joy nods. Gizmo sighs and withers, sitting down in defeat.

GIZMO
(sigh)

JOY - kneels and puts a hand on Gizmo's shoulder.

CLOSE ON CHRIS

CHRIS
John always told the truth. No
matter what the consequences were.

Chris has a thought - and turns to look at --

RACK FOCUS TO HOLO 9 GAME HELMET - <DOORBELL CHIME>

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SAM'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER - DAY

Sam opens his front door and reacts. ZOOM OUT TO REVEAL
Chris, Joy and Gizmo standing before him.

SAM
Oh, hey, Chris. You like those
new games?

CHRIS
I... told Gizmo to delete them.

SAM
What? You had no right to do
that!

Chris stands up to Sam.

CHRIS
No, you had no right, sam.

CLOSE ON CHRIS

CHRIS
You know what? Stealing is
stealing, whether you download a
bootleg or walk in a store and
stuff a copy in your pocket. - I
can be your friend but I won't be
your game partner if you're going
to steal and cheat. And that's the
truth.

Chris turns and walks down the steps. SAM glares.

SAM
(seeming contrite)
Hey maybe what I did wasn't
'truthful.'

Chris stops by Joy and Gizmo. They turn - thinking Sam
is about to apologize. Then he shows his true colors.

SAM
But I got the best games in school
before anyone else. HA!

Sam <SLAMS> the door.

CLOSE ON CHRIS, JOY AND GIZMO - they wince back from the reverberation of the door <SLAM> - Joy and Gizmo slowly look at Chris. He keeps looking at the closed door.

GIZMO
Ya know... I think I am starting
to understand why John had to
shout so loud sometimes.

CHRIS
Yeah. That could be what it takes
to get through to some people.
But, for now, let's just give Sam
some time to figure this out on
his own.

**

They turn and walk away from Sam's house.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - DAY

John is preaching to the crowds.

JESUS [MATTHEW 11:7 CEV]
What kind of person did you go
into the desert to see? -- In
the scriptures, God says about him
In the Scriptures God says about
him --

EXT. JESUS ENCAMPMENT - DAY

Jesus is telling his disciples...

JESUS [IBID] (O.S.)
'I am sending my messenger ahead
of you to get things ready for
you.'

WIPE TO:

EXT. JORDAN RIVER - DAY

John is baptizing Jesus.

JESUS [MATTHEW 11:11 CEV (O.S.)]
I tell you that no one ever born
on this earth is greater than John
the Baptizer.

INT. HEROD'S PALACE - CISTERN - NIGHT

John is hauled away to his beheading Chris watches him
go.

JESUS [MATTHEW 11:7 NLT]
Yet even the least person in the
kingdom of heaven is greater than
he is.

PUSH IN ON CHRIS...

FADE OUT:

THE END