

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

We Just Open Our Eyes: Shahar Isaac and Paras Patel on the Living World of *The Chosen*

On the Texas set, the actors who play Peter and Matthew talk about James Cunningham's world-building, the creative depth added to their characters' history, and the hours that bring them to the cross.

Interview by Paul Salfen and Ronald Paul Salfen · AMFM Magazine



Jonathan Roumie as Jesus in the Season 6 trailer. *The Chosen* / 5&2 Studios / Prime Video.

They are standing inside a world that was never supposed to exist at this scale. On the set of *The Chosen* and *Lazarus House*, Shahar Isaac and Paras Patel—Peter and Matthew—talk about the sets the way actors talk about air: something that is simply there when they open their eyes. The conversation is not about plot points they cannot yet spoil. It is about the tactile fact of the place itself, and about the human relationship the series has spent seasons inventing between the fisherman and the former tax collector.

Season 6 of *The Chosen* begins streaming on Prime Video on November 15, 2026, with a three-episode premiere that drops viewers into the night of the arrest. Episodes continue weekly through December 6. The season then culminates in a two-hour theatrical film, *The Chosen Crucifixion*, releasing globally on March 12, 2027. Dallas Jenkins has described the production as the hardest logistical undertaking of his life: more time spent with the events surrounding the crucifixion than any previous project, and the first time the series shows the spiritual realm of angels and demons alongside the human one. For the actors who have lived inside these characters since the beginning, the hours ahead are the ones the entire series has been walking toward.

THE WORLD THAT LEAVES NO WORK

“We are so honored to be here,” the actors say of the set. It never gets old to come and see these worlds. Credit goes first to James Cunningham, set designer from day one. He took a very small set in Texas and turned it into an entire world. After season two you can see that Matthew’s house sits right next to Simon’s. The wedding happened in the same space. The transitions are, in their words, unbelievable.

As the show grew, the same talent got bigger sets to play with. The creation became more complex, more nuanced, larger. One set they are standing in was taken from Utah—from a city already built, shaped by the physical limitations of that environment—and copied so accurately that, for a second, you do not know if you are in Utah or in Texas. They have shot so many hours and so many days on these sets that the distinction blurs.



Shahar Isaac as Simon Peter. *The Chosen* / 5&2 Studios.

We just open our eyes. Everything is there. Everything feels so real, so tactile, so visceral that we just need to. We come, we know who we are. We know what we need to say. We open our eyes. We're in that reality. And that's how the show is created.

— Shahar Isaac and Paras Patel

That is the point they keep returning to. The talents have created a world that leaves them not needing to do any work. They open their eyes and everything is there—real, tactile, visceral. They know who they are, they know what they need to say, and they are in that reality. It is, they say, a huge part of how the show is created.

BUILT FROM ETHER

The conversation turns to the relationship between their characters. In the series, Peter and Matthew begin with a problem. There is an attempt to write, a period when they do not speak, and then a reconciliation that unfolds in stages. It is fascinating and, the interviewers note, very convincing. The Gospels do not really say that. How do they feel about that confluence?

It adds depth, they answer. With the forgiveness scene and how it draws into Scripture, these creative moments add more depth. They allow you to visualize it and actually see it in practice. You see Matthew's journey: how one can receive forgiveness, and when you do not get it immediately, how you deal with that—how Matthew handles that. It is a great example to learn from. And it adds so many more layers to the material that it is why, they believe, the audience connects so personally to the show.



Paras Patel as Matthew. *The Chosen* / 5&2 Studios.

There is another way of saying the same thing. To recreate the story, they almost have to forget anything about it and start from the beginning—truly from the beginning, from before everything started, from where the characters were in season one. The relationship was built from ether, from nothing. By the time you reach those genuine human moments, they have that complexity and those levels.

I found that if I took the responsibility of what the character means for people and what the story means for people, it would have been very difficult to not think about the end in what we know 2000 years later, rather than who this person is in that moment and that moment only.

— **Shahar Isaac**

Isaac describes the discipline he has tried to keep: the horse's blinds. Focus on each moment, each day, with this relationship, with the entire story. If he carried the full weight of what Peter means to people, and what the story means two thousand years later, it would be almost impossible to stay inside the person who exists only in this hour.

THE LIFEBLOOD AND THE UNFORGETTABLE

Asked what has stood out so far on the season that they will never forget, the answer comes quickly: Italy. Definitely Italy. The press kit confirms what the actors are pointing toward. In addition to the homebase sets in Utah and Texas, the production traveled to Matera, Italy, for the first time to shoot the crucifixion scenes. Continuously inhabited for thousands of years, Matera's stone streets and ancient architecture required little transformation to stand in for first-century Jerusalem. For three weeks the city gave the season's most demanding scenes a scale no set could replicate. Jenkins has called it the biggest undertaking in the history of the project: hundreds of extras, foreign streets, extreme pressure to get it right.

But Texas, they say, is the lifeblood. It started here. The majority of the filming was done here. It is always going to be a huge part of the show—in the fabric of the show. The lake scenes are Benbrook Lake in Fort Worth. This is where they started. This is where they are. They are happy and proud to be here, to enjoy every moment, to be welcomed so warmly. It will always be a huge part of the show.

Texas is the lifeblood of this series. You know, it started here and the majority of the filming was done here. So it's always going to be such a huge part of this, of this show. It's in the fabric of this show.

— Shahar Isaac and Paras Patel

What is cool about the season, on a story point, is that you are going to see how the disciples handle what is happening. It will probably allow you to think: if I was in this situation, I probably would have done this, or I would have thought this way. It draws you even more, along with the whole Texas locality of the sets. It is going to be a cool season. Everyone is bracing for it. The encouragement is simple: watch it and apply it.

WATCHING AND APPLYING

In the press materials for Season 6, Isaac's Peter denies Jesus three times, just as foretold, and spends the rest of the day reckoning with what he has done. The challenge, Isaac has said elsewhere, is how to deal with Peter's guilt—and a little bit of hating himself for what he has done. The solution is gentleness. Patel's Matthew, with Jesus arrested and the disciples scattered, finds himself holding something no one else has: the written record of Jesus' teachings. As Jesus is being arrested, he looks specifically to Matthew and says, "Turn to my words in this hour." Everything Matthew has been receiving, he is ready to use now.

None of that is in the brief conversation on the Lazarus House set. What is in the conversation is the foundation: the world that does the work for them, the relationship built from nothing so that the later moments can carry real complexity, and the insistence that Texas remains in the fabric even when the most demanding days take them to the stone streets of Matera. They thank the interviewers. The honor, they say, is theirs.

FIND SHAHAR ISAAC AND PARAS PATEL

The Chosen Season 6 streams on Prime Video beginning November 15, 2026 (episodes 601–603), then weekly through December 6. The Chosen Crucifixion theatrical film releases globally March 12, 2027.

More at thechosen.tv · 5&2 Studios · Distributed by Lionsgate

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Paul Salfen is Managing Editor of AMFM Magazine and a veteran interviewer of film, television, music, and sports figures. He is the author of Going For It!, a collection of Hail Mary moments from the artists and athletes he has spent two decades putting on the record. This conversation was conducted with his father, Ronald Paul Salfen.