

Scene 4
The Root of Jesse

INTERIOR - EVENING
THE LIVINGSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM

SADIE

On the verge of tears

Granny Iris, this is the saddest Christmas story I ever heard!

SID

Even Gilgamesh is sad! And he's a grown-up!

GRANNY IRIS

She gives them a hug

Oh! I know it's sad, but I promise, it gets better!

FRANC

Distressed that the children are not having fun in his presence

You know what? I think we need a break from all this talk of sin and sorrow.
This is Christmas! We should be having fun! And who is more fun than your Uncle Franc, hmm?

FRANK

Oh, I don't know...a patch of turnips? A root canal? A piñata full of bees?

FRANC

Glares at Frank but decides to ignore his taunts

Tell you what, let's take a quick intermission from the story.
There is a documentary on sedimentary rocks that I think you'll find...groundbreaking.

He pauses for a beat to let his joke sink in

Pun definitely intended!

MARC

Franc, don't take this the wrong way, but I'd rather be eaten by a shark.

BETH

Yeah, let's get back to the story. I'm curious to see how this all ties into Christmas.

GRANNY IRIS

Well, even though God was supposed to be their King, the people of Israel wanted a human king, like the nations around them. God told them He would give them a king...and all the trouble that comes with giving one person all the power.

God led his prophet, Samuel, to Saul; the tallest, handsomest, most kingly guy around!

SID

In awe

Whoa...was he even bigger than Gilgamesh?

GRANNY IRIS

Looks at the massive elephant

Well...almost! Saul may have looked like a king, but...he insisted on doing things his own way. He didn't wait on God. He disobeyed God's direct orders. He refused to acknowledge and grow from his mistakes. He let the power go to his head, becoming cruel and bloodthirsty.

SAM

Annoyed

And he just...got to be king?! Why didn't they like, impeach him or something?

GRANNY IRIS

Well, in a way, God did! While Saul was still king, God told Samuel that He had chosen Saul's replacement...a shepherd boy named David.

Cut over to Samuel inspecting Jesse's sons. Jesse walks with him as the sons flex their muscles, trying to show off and prove their worthiness to be king.

JESSE

Here they are: my sons! My boys, my boys, my prides and joys. So...whadaya think?

SAMUEL

Walking over to the biggest, strongest son: Eliab

Wow, would you look at this one. You there, what's your name?

ELIAB

Flexing

Eliab. I'm the oldest. And the buffest.

SAMUEL

Nods in satisfaction

Yeah, okay! You sure do look like a king. Let me just get the old anointing oil...

He reaches for his flask of oil and stops, looking at as if he is hearing a voice no one hears

Not...not him? The Lord does not look at things the way people do...?

Looking slowly towards Eliab as he puts the flask away

For people look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart...

He sighs

Okay, fine. On to the next one.

He walks up to the next biggest son, Abinadab

ABINADAB

Confidently as he flexes

'sup, old man. Name's Abinadab. But you can call me...

He dabs

Abinadab!

SAMUEL

Impressed

Whoa, okay! Sold! Where's that anointing oil at...

Again, he reaches for the flask of oil but stops as he hears God's voice.

He sighs and puts the oil away as he pats Abinadab on the shoulder.

This man isn't God's choice either.

Jesse leads him to the third son, Shammah, who is flexing as well

Okay! Here we...NO.

Frustrated he looks at Jesse

Apparently, none of these guys are up to snuff.

Don't you have any other sons?

JESSE

Rubs his neck and looks around reluctantly

Well...yes. But he's kinda...well, he is who he is!

SAMUEL

Uh-huh...and just *where* is he?

JESSE

Shrugs

I think he's in the pasture singing to the sheep.

SAMUEL

Folds his arms

Well, we're not going anywhere until I take a look at him. Go get him!

Jesse nods to his servants and they rush off, returning with David in tow

DAVID

Whistling as he walks up, cheerful

Hey dad! Who's this? Oh wait, are you here to buy a sheep? Because I know just the one.
Fluffy, mild-tempered, doesn't bite...hard.

JESSE

Straightening David's clothes, a bit flustered

David, this is Samuel. He's a prophet. And he's here to pick out the next king.

DAVID

Nods along, smiling

So who's it gonna be? I bet it's Eliab. He is the buffest, after all.

SAMUEL

No...it ain't him.

DAVID

Well, then it's gotta be...

He dabs

Abinadab!

SAMUEL

No...it ain't him either.

DAVID

Confused

Shammah? Nethanel? Raddai? Ozem? Shimea?

SAMUEL

Nope. None of them.

DAVID

Looking at Jesse and Samuel as they both gaze at him, amused by his cluelessness

Huh. Well, if it's not one of them, I have no clue who it could...

It slowly dawns on him

OH WAIT.

He turns to Jesse

Is it you, dad?!

SAMUEL

It's you, ya sheep-brained yutz!

DAVID

Me...? But...but I'm...

SAMUEL

Getting out his anointing flask

You're the one God has chosen. And you're gonna be the next king over Israel.

Cut back over to the Livingstons

INTERIOR - EVENING
THE LIVINGSTON FAMILY LIVING ROOM

GRANNY IRIS

So Samuel anointed David as king over Israel. And even though he wasn't crowned right away, it didn't take long for the boy to prove himself. Soon enough, David was slaying Giants, rising through the ranks of the army, singing in the palace, and dodging king Saul's spears!

SAM

Wait...spears? Like, actual spears? Who chucks a spear, honestly?

SID

But David didn't do anything wrong!

SADIE

Leans in, concerned

Why was Saul throwing spears at him? I thought they were on the same team.

GRANNY IRIS

Well, they were...at first. But Saul became jealous of David. The people loved David for his bravery, and Saul didn't like sharing the spotlight.

FRANK

I mean, I can tell you who I'd rather hang out with...and it ain't the spear-chucker!

FRANC

Ah Frank...always such insightful Biblical commentary. Move over, Matthew Henry!

FRANK

All I'm saying is, David was a rock star! He killed a giant, led a band of mighty warriors, even played a mean lyre! All in a day's work.

SETH

So David's just...dodging spears and working for Saul, all while knowing he's supposed to be king? That is one crazy job.

BETH

Sounds like your average day in corporate America.

MARK

I bet David thought about putting in his two weeks notice more than once.

SID

Standing up and putting his ear to Gilgamesh as though the stuffed elephant is speaking to him
What's that, Gilgamesh?

SADIE

Stands as well, listening to Gilgamesh
Gilgamesh wants to know if David ever became king.

MARK

Gilgamesh also wants to know what this has to do with Christmas.

Sid, Sadie, and Beth all glare at him
What? Gilgamesh is the one who asked, not me...

GRANNY IRIS

Well, Gilgamesh, yes. David did become king. And God made a special promise to him.

SOPH

Another covenant?

GRANNY IRIS

Yes. Another covenant...a promise God made and planned on keeping.

Cut back to the throne room where David is sitting

INTERIOR - DAY
DAVID'S THRONE ROOM

NATHAN

Approaching David

Ah, hey David.

DAVID

Looking up from his thoughts

Hmm? Oh, Nathan! How's my favorite prophet on this fine morning?

Noting Nathan's haggard appearance

Or maybe not so fine a morning...you look like you haven't slept a wink!

NATHAN

Yeah, that's just the thing Dave...ah, you know that house you wanted to build for God?

And I said go for it, God is with you?

DAVID

Stands up excitedly, pacing as he describes his vision for the temple

Oh yeah! It's gonna be so grand...picture this, Nathan: massive stone walls, ceilings so high they touch the belly of heaven! We're talking marble floors that shine like glass, pillars carved out of cedar. And the bling. Oh, Nathan. The bling! Bling everywhere. Bling on the doors, bling on the altars...people will need shades just to walk in the door! Jewels, rubies, emeralds-

NATHAN

Interrupting reluctantly

Yeah, that's not gonna happen!

DAVID

Deflated

Wha..? But...but the bling...

NATHAN

Thought I was gonna get forty winks last night, but no...after our conversation, I was up all night talking with God. He said, and I quote:

He clears his throat

“Are you serious? You, David, are gonna build me, God, a house? You know I haven’t lived in a house from the time I brought Israel out of Egypt ‘til now, right? All that time, I’ve been living in a tent and never once did I say

Sarcastically but in good humor

‘Hey, you know what would be great? A house.
Why hasn’t anyone built me a house with lots of bling?’ “

DAVID

Well, I just thought it would be nice...

NATHAN

Holding up a finger for David to be silent as he continues
Furthermore...God told me to tell you this:

He clears his throat again, dramatically

“Honestly David, I’m touched. You want to build me a house? Guess what. I’m gonna build *you* a house. When your life is over and you’re buried with your ancestors, I’ll raise up your child, your own flesh and blood to succeed you, and I’ll firmly establish his rule.

He’ll build a house to honor me, and I will guarantee his kingdom rules permanently. Your family and your kingdom are secured forever. I’m keeping my eye on them! And your royal throne will always be there, rock solid.”

DAVID

Overwhelmed, he sits down
Whoa.

NATHAN

Whoa indeed.

DAVID

Looking up to the heavens

Who am I, my God, and what is my family, that you have brought me to this place in life? And this is nothing compared to what’s coming...you’ve spoken about my family in the far future, given me a glimpse into tomorrow. What can I possibly say in the face of all this? You know me, God. Just as I am. And you’ve done this not because of who I am...but because of who you are.

Out of your very heart! But you’ve let me in on it...

Cut back over to the Livingstons

