

Flames of Freedom Podcast Episode 9

"Promise of a New Beginning"

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This is a production of Lance Toland Entertainment.

FLAMES OF FREEDOM

EPISODE 9: PROMISE OF A NEW BEGINNING

FADE IN UNDER
OPENING MUSIC:

SFX: OPENING MUSIC

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to Flames of Freedom,
Episode 9: Promise of a New
Beginning, a docudrama based on
actual historical events brought to
you by Lance Toland Entertainment.
In the previous episode, we learned
that not only were hidden Jews
known as Conversos being persecuted
by the Inquisition, hatred toward
the Jews was also playing out in
Eastern Europe. Edict after edict
by the Prussian King not only made
it untenable for Jews to earn a
living, they unleashed a torrent of
vile hatred that soon turned
bloody...

FADE IN: [Pick up from the conclusion of Episode Eight]

RABBI NIETO

I am told there have been edicts
against the Jews by the Prussian
King.

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL

Yes...I thought we could go on with
our lives like always, but this
last edict was not like the others.
It gave us no choice but to flee.

RABBI NIETO

Others have told me that there has
been increasing violence against us
Jews.

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL

Regrettably true. These edicts seem
to have unleashed something
horrible, seething under the
surface. One morning, the town
mayor posted an edict from the
King.

(MORE)

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL (CONT'D)

When I heard gentile merchants
shouting for our death, it made our
need to leave very clear...

SFX: crowd hubbub in a square

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL (CONT'D)

What does the edict say?

CROWD MEMBER

The bastard King decrees we have to
leave.

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL

What?

CROWD MEMBER

Start packing and get out now while
you can.

SFX: mood changing to ominous

MERCHANT ONE

Filthy vermin. We're sick of your
stench...

MERCHANT TWO

Christ killers...

MERCHANT THREE

Take your dirty money and get off
our land...

SFX: back to present moment

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL

That's when things really got ugly.
One of the merchants shoved an
older man I knew to the ground and
others gathered around and started
kicking him.

MERCHANT FOUR

Judensau! Schwein!

SFX: footsteps on cobblestones; door swinging open. Man
panting

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL

I turned and ran as fast as I could
to get home. I found Perla in the
kitchen cooking and grabbed her by
the shoulders.

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL (CONT'D)
 (panting and out of
 breath)
 We must leave. Now!

PERLA SHEFTALL
 Leave? For where?

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL
 Anywhere but here. The King has
 just decreed we're no longer
 welcome, and there's a murderous
 mob rioting and killing Jews in the
 marketplace. Gather your clothes--
 anything you can carry by yourself
 in a satchel.

PERLA SHEFTALL
 I must say goodbye to my parents...

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL
 There's no time.

PERLA SHEFTALL
 My sister...

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL
 Perla, if we want to be alive by
 the time the sun sets, we must
 leave Frankfurt now...

SFX: Musical Transition

BENJAMIN
 How did they escape?

ZIPPORAH
 Only by the grace of God and good
 fortune...

SFX: musical transition

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL
 We made our way over the following
 days to Hamburg. Often traveling at
 night, attempting to be as
 inconspicuous as we possibly could.
 I used most of my savings to pay
 off a ship's captain who was
 leaving for London. I have no idea
 how we're going to start over
 again.

RABBI NIETO

What a horrifying experience...

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL

We have no idea if Perla's parents got out.

SAMUEL

We, too, lost everything when we fled the Inquisition at a moment's notice...

SFX: Machado entering with tea and pastries and placing a tray on the desk.

DAVID MENDES MACHADO

Tea and scones, Rabbi.

RABBI NIETO

Thank you, David. Well, Benjamin, first things first. We will find you a place to stay temporarily until we can make more permanent arrangements...

SAMUEL

We can make room. Zipporah, our youngest, can share a room with her sister Ester.

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL

I hardly know what to say...

PERLA SHEFTALL

(tearfully)

I'll say it. Thank you...

SAMUEL

It is our honor, a gift to us to be able to help.

RABBI NIETO

That's good. Thank you, Samuel. David, ask around the congregation to see what you can do to find a more permanent arrangement for Benjamin and Perla.

BENJAMIN SHEFTALL

I never expected...to be so...so welcomed.

RABBI NIETO

This is what we do as Jews, isn't it? Give thanks to our Creator for guiding you here to allow to fulfill the mitzvah of welcoming a stranger into our homes. We are all familiar with what it feels like to be a stranger in a foreign land.

SFX: Musical transition

ZIPPORAH

Benjamin and Perla moved into our home for a few days before they got settled. Little did we know that our futures were to be intertwined. In the meantime, Senhor Oglethorpe was busy promoting the idea of a new colony in America all over London.

SFX: Printing press; door opens and attached bell rings

PRINTER

Sir, good to see you again. Your flyers are ready.

SFX: A stack of flyers placed on the counter and a cord being cut.

OGLETHORPE

They're perfect. Yes, "Fifty acres of land, tools, and a year's worth of supplies...No Papists, no slavery, no rum." Well done. How much do I owe you?

PRINTER

Ten pence, sir.

OGLETHORPE

Thank you and good day to you sir.

SFX: coins are being placed on the counter. The door swings open, and the bell rings as the door is closed. Footsteps on the sidewalk.

ZIPPORAH

Outside the print shop, the first person James Oglethorpe ran into happened to be my brother, Daniel.

OGLETHORPE

Have you heard, sir, of the new
Colony of Georgia?

DANIEL

No. What is that?

SFX: handing him a flyer

OGLETHORPE

It's all right here in the flyer.
We're seeking strong, young men
like you to help us build a new
Zion in America. If you're
interested, come to the address
here at the bottom of the flyer to
apply.

DANIEL

And will you accept Jews as well?

OGLETHORPE

Perhaps. Why not?

DANIEL

Just curious. Thank you.

SFX: Their footsteps on the sidewalk.

SFX: Musical transition

ZIPPORAH

The possibility of starting afresh
in a new world lit a fire in
Daniel's heart. When he returned
home, he and Moses came to our
father with a problem and a
proposal how to remedy it.

MOSES

Papa, you don't realize what we
must tolerate daily at work.

SAMUEL

No one said that England is
perfect. I'll be the first to admit
it. But off-handed comments from
shopkeepers or the men you work for
are very different from whispered
comments in Portugal that could
land you in the Inquisitor's prison
for your remaining years.

(MORE)

SAMUEL (CONT'D)

And Moses, you now know what being in an English prison means. It's not something you want to repeat.

MOSES

Papa, you don't have to rub it in. I learned that lesson. Don't worry. But do you know how often I have been refused work? They can tell from my accent that I'm a foreigner and a Jew. I know people lie when they claim they already gave the work to someone else.

SAMUEL

You have just had a run of bad luck. Remember, there is no shame in being Jewish.

MOSES

Papa, your commitment to Judaism is...bigger than mine.

SAMUEL

Daniel, is this true for you, too?

DANIEL

Yes. Everywhere I go, doors are shut in my face. How long do you expect us to live like this?

SAMUEL

What other options are there? There's no returning to the past! Where would you go? Be happy to be in England, where at least you're free to walk the streets without threats of reprisal.

MOSES

Papa, have you ever heard of the York massacre?

SAMUEL

No...

MOSES

...Englishmen slaughtered hundreds of Jews. Even those who surrendered and agreed to be publicly baptized were killed by the mob. The rest of the Jews committed mass suicide. What makes you think it won't happen again?

SAMUEL

Moses, I'm not naive. I understand what we're facing. But we have no alternative...

DANIEL

But we do. We can go to the new world.

SAMUEL

America?

DANIEL

Yes, Papa. America. Look at this.

SFX: paper flyer being handed over

SAMUEL

A new colony?

DANIEL

Where every man receives his own land. It would be a fresh start for all of us, Papa.

SAMUEL

No. No. No! You can't expect your mother and me to start our lives over again after we have already sacrificed so much to gain our freedom. Never...

MOSES

But Papa...

SAMUEL

We could risk everything we have gained by coming here. For what? A piece of barren property in a God-forsaken land. I said never! No more talk of America...

SFX: MUSICAL TRANSITION

ZIPPORAH

I thought that was the end of it, but bigger forces were conspiring to change our destiny. Anthony da Costa set those in motion when, a month later, he ran into John Perceval by happenstance in the White's Gentlemen Club in London.

(MORE)

ZIPPORAH (CONT'D)

Perceval was a nobleman, also known as Lord Egmont.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

John, what a pleasant surprise to run into you.

PERCEVAL

Anthony. A pleasure to see you as well.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

May I join you? Hope I'm not disturbing your reading...

SFX: Newspaper being folded up

PERCEVAL

By all means. Sit. How goes the world of finance these days? I was just reading that your Bank of England is doing quite well with its recent ventures in the colonies and paying handsome dividends.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Yes, it seems like the future is bright there.

PERCEVAL

Anthony, I want to thank you personally for supporting our efforts to establish a colony in Georgia.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Our pleasure to be of assistance. Your colleague, James Oglethorpe, seems to be making quite a name for himself.

PERCEVAL

Indeed. Impressive young man.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

I would love to make his acquaintance. I am told he is quite a philosopher in his own right.

PERCEVAL

Yes, a student of that radical thinker John Toland.

(MORE)

PERCEVAL (CONT'D)

I certainly don't agree with all his rhetoric, but I'd be delighted to introduce you.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

That would be a privilege. Thank you, John.

PERCEVAL

Do you care to join me for a glass of port?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Most kind...

SFX: Musical transition

ZIPPORAH

A week later James Oglethorpe was being shown into Anthony da Costa's drawing room. Joining da Costa were his two close friends, Alvarez Lopez Suasso and Francis Salvatore.

SFX: Musical transition

ANTHONY DA COSTA

James, so glad to finally meet. Let me introduce you to my two colleagues. Alvarez Lopez Suasso. And Francis Salvador. I believe the two of you have met.

OGLETHORPE

Yes, so good to see you again, Francis. News of your philanthropic work precedes you.

FRANCIS SALVADOR

Likewise. Since we last spoke, it seems all I read about in the press are your accomplishments in reforming our antiquated prison system. It's quite impressive. Congratulations.

OGLETHORPE

Thank you. It has been a labor of my heart. You have no idea how corrupt and horrendous the prisons are.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Actually, I have had some firsthand experience of what these prisons can be like. But that's a long story. Please, James, have a seat. We'd like to hear more about your work and efforts to get the new colony off the ground. Can I offer you a glass of wine? It's a lovely French Burgundy.

OGLETHORPE

Yes, thank you. You may not know this, but we expect the new colony to supplant France's wine production. I have it on good authority that the climate and soil along America's southeast coast are ideally suited for cultivating grapes.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

If they can produce a good wine, I'll fill my cellar with it.

OGLETHORPE

I must hold you to that promise, sir.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

How are you progressing? I presume you know that we have signed on as commissioners to assist in raising funds.

OGLETHORPE

Yes, Perceval told me. I appreciate your support. Any day now, I expect the King will provide his final approval. We'll sail for America in the next months if all goes well.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

We? You mean **you** will be leading the expedition?

OGLETHORPE

Yes indeed, and I'm looking forward to the challenge, the adventure, and the opportunity to accomplish something as monumental as this.

FRANCIS SALVADOR

People are saying slavery will be prohibited in the new colony. You're a proponent of this?

OGLETHORPE

Why, yes.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

And it's rumored that you intend to provide a place for the destitute being released from the prisons.

OGLETHORPE

That is our goal, but in the planning, we must ensure that certain skills are represented among the first settlers. Carpenters, doctors, and even experts in agriculture and sericulture.

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

Sericulture?

OGLETHORPE

Yes, silkworms, Alvarez. We think the Georgia climate will be ideal for Mulberry trees. Some are predicting it is bound to be a very successful export.

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

Fascinating. And I hear that the trustees want to make room for Protestants being religiously persecuted in Europe...

OGLETHORPE

Most certainly. The Trustees' sentiment is that we must right the grievous actions of the Papists.

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

Interesting. We applaud your ideals. We are curious. What would the Trustees' position be for accepting Jews immigrating from Prussia and or those escaping the Inquisition? They are most certainly poor and, like your Protestants, persecuted for their faith.

OGLETHORPE

Are you asking me what I think
[pause] or what the majority of the
Trustees think?

FRANCIS SALVADOR

We suspect that we already know
what most of the Trustees think.
What would you think,
hypothetically speaking, if a
shipload of destitute and
persecuted Jewish settlers were to
arrive at the colony, unexpectedly?

OGLETHORPE

You do realize I, too, am a Trustee
in this endeavor. And I am tasked
with representing their interests
and wishes.

FRANCIS SALVADOR

Of course.

OGLETHORPE

So I have a responsibility to them
and, ultimately, King George. As
you must know from my writings and
speeches, I hold no malice toward
Jews.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Yes, we are very aware of that. And
appreciative of your position. To
Francis's point, if hypothetically
a group of Jews arrived in the new
colony, would you turn them away
or...welcome them?

OGLETHORPE

I am uncertain what choice I would
make. I suppose it would depend.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

On?

OGLETHORPE

The circumstances, sir. The
circumstances...

SFX: Musical Transition

ZIPPORAH

While Oglethorpe was unwilling to take a public stand on the matter, his true feelings were revealed two weeks later on a warm summer day when he met with John Percival, Thomas Coram, and James Vernon for an emergency meeting of the Trustees.

JAMES VERNON

I am sorry that more of our trustees could not be available on this short notice. I thought it imperative that we meet to confront a serious problem. I hate to admit it, but my eagerness to sign on commissioners to raise money may have opened the door to an unforeseen situation.

PERCEVAL

And that is?

JAMES VERNON

We have allowed three Jewish gentlemen to become commissioners.

PERCEVAL

They are three of the wealthiest men in England. Why would that be a problem?

JAMES VERNON

It has come to my attention from certain discrete sources that their expectations differ considerably from ours.

OGLETHORPE

How?

JAMES VERNON

In exchange for contributing monies to the effort, they want to send Jews to the colony.

THOMAS CORAM

That would be unacceptable. It would ruin everything we have worked for. Jews? They'll overrun the colony, and we'll never be able to attract a Christian soul to settle there. How do we stop this?

OGLETHORPE

(gently)

Mr. Coram, I, for one, do not share your point of view. Certainly, there can be room for Jews, along with others petitioning to settle in Georgia.

PERCEVAL

James, I'm afraid I concur with Thomas. I cannot see how this would be a positive development. If word of this gets around, we might lose the King's support, not to speak of the Prime Minister's. What say you, Vernon? Why don't we just revoke their commissions?

JAMES VERNON

It's not quite that simple. We don't have clear procedures for disinviting commissioners articulated in our bylaws. I am with Oglethorpe on this issue, though, and see no real harm in having a few Jews go to the colony if they work hard and contribute to its success. The Jews I have known are an industrious lot.

PERCEVAL

Well then, with only four of us here, two opposed and two in favor, I see no reason for continuing this conversation until we can have greater participation from all the Trustees. I'll arrange a full meeting to address this question. But let me say, James, I personally believe we are playing with fire here.

SFX: musical transition; sea gulls

ZIPPORAH

Six weeks later, in September of 1732, John Perceval, James Oglethorpe, and the Captain of the Frigate Anne gathered on the docks to negotiate the fare for sailing the first settlers to the new colony.

OGLETHORPE

Captain, I'd like to introduce you to Lord Egmont, one of our Trustees.

CAPTAIN THOMAS

A pleasure, sir.

PERCEVAL

This is a fine frigate you have here, Captain.

CAPTAIN THOMAS

Two hundred and Twelve tons, sir.

PERCEVAL

No problem accommodating, say, 125 people on a voyage to America?

CAPTAIN THOMAS

No problem at all. We just returned from Rhode Island this summer, carrying a hundred forty people and returning in early August with our hold filled with hemp. While it won't be luxurious accommodations, I can guarantee everyone will be comfortable on the journey.

PERCEVAL

James?

OGLETHORPE

It's a sound vessel. The Captain here comes highly recommended. And the price meets our expectations.

PERCEVAL

Very well. When can you be ready to sail?

CAPTAIN THOMAS

We're completing some repairs. On our recent return, we suffered a cracked mast in a fierce storm in the North Atlantic. By the beginning of November, we shall be ready.

PERCEVAL

Sir, we have a deal then. I'll see that our bank deposits the requisite sum into your account.

(MORE)

PERCEVAL (CONT'D)

It's a pleasure doing business with you, Captain. And be certain to get Mr. Oglethorpe there all in one piece.

CAPTAIN THOMAS

Will do my very best, sir.

PERCEVAL

If you don't mind, Captain, I'd like to speak privately with Mr. Oglethorpe on another matter.

CAPTAIN THOMAS

Most certainly. Good day.

SFX: footsteps on the dock receding.

PERCEVAL

James, I have arranged a meeting of the Trustees a week from this Thursday to discuss this issue of the Jews. It's my preference that we rescind the commissions of Suasso, Salvador, and da Costa. Need I remind you how important perceptions are? I have nothing personally against the Jews, but right now, we can't afford any ill publicity. Can I count on you to be with me on this?

OGLETHORPE

I understand your position, John. I won't publicly oppose you in the meeting. But you must know, this goes against my convictions, John. This is wrong, very, very wrong.

SFX: Musical transition

ZIPPORAH

A week later in early October 1732 they met.

SFX: hubbub of conversation, then quieting as Vernon speaks.

JAMES VERNON

(clearing his throat and
banging a gavel)

James, would you be so kind as to give us an update?

OGLETHORPE

Gladly. We have over one hundred people committed to making the voyage, including several excellent carpenters, individuals who know the silk industry, and one with exceptional knowledge of growing grapes. Doctor William Cox has agreed to contribute his medical services in exchange for a house and a generous land allotment. We should depart within approximately six weeks.

JAMES VERNON

Thank you, James. Now, I would like to bring up one important piece of business. As you know, we appointed three of England's wealthiest and most prominent Jews as commissioners. It has come to our attention that these gentlemen do not intend to turn over to us the monies they have raised but are actually mounting efforts to send a sizable contingency of Jews to the colony.

THOMAS CORAM

As I conveyed to Mr. Oglethorpe and Lord Egmont, this is outrageous. All of our labors to establish our colony would be destroyed in a fortnight by a marauding gang of Jews. Should Georgia become a Jewish colony, all of our good Christian settlers would desert it. This must be stopped immediately!

JAMES VERNON

Thank you, Thomas. John, your opinion, please.

PERCEVAL

While I don't have such strong convictions as my colleague, Thomas is right on one key point. At this stage, we cannot afford any negative publicity.

(MORE)

PERCEVAL (CONT'D)

I move we send a letter to these commissioners demanding that they deliver to us any monies they have collected on our behalf, desist from making any additional solicitations, and, if the rumors are correct, discontinue plans to send Jews to the colony. I believe Mr. Oglethorpe agrees with this proposal.

ZIPPORAH

Perceval looked in Oglethorpe's direction. Oglethorpe hesitated, held himself back from speaking, and then just nodded his approval.

JAMES VERNON

Very well. Are there any additional comments before we put the matter to a vote? **[pause]** I see none. Therefore, all those in favor of John Perceval's proposal say aye.

SFX: A chorus of 'ayes'

JAMES VERNON (CONT'D)

The ayes have it. The meeting is adjourned.

SFX: gavel followed by a hubbub of conversation

SFX: Musical Transition

SFX: gulls; activity preparing the ship

ZIPPORAH

On November 17th, 1732, over one hundred people and their families were gathered at Gravesend Docks on the Thames River to journey to the New World to found the Colony of Georgia. Oglethorpe enthusiastically greeted each one at the foot of the gangplank as James Vernon checked off their name from his list.

JAMES VERNON

Your name?

PAUL AMATIS

Paul Amatis.

JAMES VERNON
Welcome aboard. Sir. Your name?

THOMAS CAUSTON
Thomas Causton.

JAMES VERNON
Welcome aboard, Mr. Causton. Your name, sir?

RICHARD CANNON
Richard Cannon. And this is my wife, Mary.

JAMES VERNON
Yes, you're right here on the list. May you have a good voyage, Mrs. Cannon.

MARY CANNON
Thank you.

SFX: people shuffling forward and footsteps on the gangplank.

ZIPPORAH
One by one they boarded. The ship's crew guided the passengers below deck and assigned them bunk space. John Perceval and many other trustees were there to see them off. By ten thirty that morning, all the passengers had arrived and boarded and were now standing on the deck with Oglethorpe and the Reverend Henry Herbert.

OGLETHORPE
My friends, we are gathered here today on the first leg of the most important journey you or I will probably ever take in our lives. The ship we are on, his Majesty's ship--The Anne, is a tight, strong, and well-manned vessel. I can assure you we're in good hands. Reverend Herbert, could you share a few words of scripture to bless us for a safe passage?

REV. HENRY HERBERT

Dear God, as it says in your Psalms, "With upright heart, he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand." Lord, may you protect our shepherd on this journey, James Oglethorpe, and fill him with thy spirit so that he knows your will and guides us skillfully. And Lord, protect these travelers and those who man this ship from all evil and all harm. Please, watch over us, for now and forevermore. In the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

OGLETHORPE

Captain Thomas. We are ready to depart.

CAPTAIN THOMAS

Chief Mate Campbell. Release dock lines and prepare to depart.

CHIEF MATE CAMPBELL

All hands on deck. Release dock lines. Standby to make sail! Lay aloft and loose topgallants! Clear away the jib!

ZIPPORAH

It was quite a site that morning as Oglethorpe saluted Perceval, standing on the dock. Perceval saluted in return as the ship moved away from the dock and the sails filled with the wind.

SFX: MUSICAL TRANSITION

BENJAMIN

Nonna, did da Costa and the other Jews give them the money back?

ZIPPORAH

That in itself is an interesting story...

SFX: Musical Transition

ANTHONY DA COSTA
I thought you both would be
interested in this communication I
received Monday from the Georgia
Trustees. Take a look at this
letter.

SFX: Suasso picking up the letter, then handing it to
Salvador, who tosses it onto the table.

FRANCIS SALVADOR
Who the hell do they think they're
dealing with?

ANTHONY DA COSTA
Quite laughable, don't you think?
How do we respond?

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO
We don't.

ANTHONY DA COSTA
Continue as planned?

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO
Yes.

FRANCIS SALVADOR
Your inquiries about the
availability of a ship. Any
success?

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO
I have located a small frigate, the
William & Sarah, that can carry
about forty-five passengers. It's
in for repairs but should be ready
to sail by the first of the year.
They have a young captain. Somewhat
inexperienced, but adequate for our
purpose. After all, it's a short
journey.

FRANCIS SALVADOR
The price?

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO
Let us just say that the captain
was eager to prove himself,
resulting in a price well below our
budget.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

And you both feel assured that our new friend, Mr. Oglethorpe, will be receptive to a contingent of Jews showing up on his doorstep, considering the tone of this letter?

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

The Trustees' prejudice against us Jews does give me pause. But my reading of Oglethorpe is that if push comes to shove, he'll be his own man and do the right thing.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

And if he doesn't?

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

I firmly believe we won't have to cross that bridge. But if that occurred, our Captain could divert his ship to the Caribbean.

FRANCIS SALVADOR

I agree. So, who will lead our expedition to the New World?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Rabbi Nieto suggested one man. Samuel Nunes. I have some experience with him. Have you met him?

FRANCIS SALVADOR

Yes, I believe I have. A Converso from Lisboa. A physician, correct?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Yes, that's the man. I discovered that he was the King of Portugal's doctor.

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

I have not met him. What makes you think he's the right man?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Let us just say he's a man of integrity. And he owes me a major favor.

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

How old is he?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

In his early sixties. But healthy and strong. A natural leader.

FRANCIS SALVADOR

Doesn't he also have two sons?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Yes. I understand they're quite enterprising, but their ambitions have been frustrated. Also, I have learned that Nunes's wife has not been particularly happy since arriving six years ago from Lisbon. Let me just say, being married to a country doctor meagerly serving the poor has not been her cup of tea.

FRANCIS SALVADOR

Then arrange for us to meet.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

I already have. Tomorrow at three in the Rabbi's study.

SFX: Musical transition

SFX: Knock at the door. Man pushing a chair back and opening the door.

RABBI NIETO

Samuel, thank you for taking the time to meet. Allow me to introduce you to three highly respected members of the congregation. I believe you are acquainted with Anthony da Costa and Francis Salvador but have not previously met Alvarez Lopez Suasso.

SAMUEL

Yes, we have met before. And a pleasure to make your acquaintance Mr. Suasso.

SFX: chair being dragged closer

RABBI NIETO

Samuel, please, have a seat... Anthony approached me a few days ago with an exciting proposition, and you came to mind. Anthony?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Thank you, Rabbi. Doctor Nunes, are you aware of efforts to create a new colony in America?

SAMUEL

In fact, I am. A few months ago, my son showed me a flyer inviting people to join the colony.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Did you know that just a few days ago, the first shipload of passengers departed?

SAMUEL

No. I was not aware of that. May God watch over them for a safe journey.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

They're in good hands. Led by a man named James Oglethorpe.

SAMUEL

My path has actually crossed his, and I have read that he's made quite a name for himself.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Yes, he has. They plan to give people land and provisions until they can stand on their own two feet. I understand those with very little can become wealthy with just a little hard work.

SAMUEL

All that is quite interesting. But why are you sharing this with me?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Doctor, we are going to send a group of Jews to live in this new colony. People looking for a new start. The Rabbi seems to think that the proposition might intrigue your sons. And we're interested in someone with some authority and maturity to lead the effort.

SAMUEL

Then why aren't you speaking with Moses and Daniel?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Because, Doctor, we had you in mind. We would like your sons to join the expedition with the rest of your family. But it's you we wanted to speak with first.

SAMUEL

Gentlemen, I'm honored you would ask me, but I'm no longer a young man. And it's a long journey. How would you expect me to start over again at my age...in a wilderness?

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

Doctor Nunes, are you and your family happy here?

SAMUEL

Happy? We're alive. I no longer worry about some stranger or close relative reporting me and my family to the Inquisition. We have food on the table. My family isn't being tortured. So, I guess we are [PAUSE] happy.

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

Sir, is it true you once ministered to the King of Portugal? Even the Inquisitor General?

SAMUEL

All that is true.

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

Impressive! Who are your patients now?

SAMUEL

Poor Jews, most of whom can't afford to pay me much, if anything.

ALVAREZ LOPEZ SUASSO

And your sons and sons-in-law, what are their future prospects?

SAMUEL

I can't say.

FRANCIS SALVADOR

Doctor, we want you to imagine a different future.

(MORE)

FRANCIS SALVADOR (CONT'D)

One where your children can be independent, own land, and succeed, where you can finally relax a bit, study Torah, and not worry so much. We would happily provide you and your family with additional resources to ensure that their future is bright.

SAMUEL

And all in exchange for leading this expedition?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Yes, Doctor Nunes.

SAMUEL

You don't expect me to give you an answer at this moment, do you?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Of course not. This is an important life decision. Confer with your family.

SAMUEL

I will. But you must know, if the decision were just up to me, my answer would be no.

ANTHONY DA COSTA

We understand.

SAMUEL

When would you like an answer?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

The sooner, the better. We're anticipating that the ship will depart sometime in January.

SAMUEL

So soon?

ANTHONY DA COSTA

Yes. Please let the Rabbi know your decision. We hope your family convinces you this is an exceptional opportunity for all of you.

SAMUEL

Perhaps.

SFX: Musical Transition

BENJAMIN

What happened?

ZIPPORAH

Well, that evening we all gathered around the dining table to discuss the matter. My father initiated the discussion.

SFX: Musical transition

SAMUEL

That is what they offered. I told them my answer would be a simple no if it were strictly up to me. But this is a family decision. What do you each say? Moses?

MOSES

Papa, I once heard you say to Mama, 'It's never too late to start over again.' America, it would be a fresh start for me. And I would no longer be doing the bidding of others. Everything I read about this new land...excites me, unlike London, where your place in society is fixed. Frankly, I don't see a future here. But there, I could be my own man.

SAMUEL

Daniel?

DANIEL

I'm with Moses. Here, I'm nobody. I, too, would love to have a fresh start. I vote we go.

SAMUEL

Rachel? Jacob?

RACHEL

I'm content with my life here. We have a home. Jacob has found good work. I don't want to raise a baby in a dangerous world, living like a savage. No. It's not for me. But if you all want to go, I understand.

SAMUEL

Very well. Ester? Abraham?

ESTER

Mama, Papa, wherever you go, I go.
Abraham?

ABRAHAM DE LYON

I am always ready for a new
adventure. I have read so much
about the things they're growing
there. I understand that they need
vintners--I could have my own
vineyard. Think of it, Ester.

SAMUEL

I take that as a yes. What say you,
Abigail and Isaac?

ABAGAIL

I have seen how hard Isaac works
here and for so little in return.
Isaac, if you want to go, I will
follow.

ISAAC

I want to go.

SAMUEL

Good. Zipporah?

ZIPPORAH

Papa, it sounds like a grand
adventure. I would like to try
someplace new, especially if David,
David Machado could be convinced to
join us, too.

SAMUEL

I'll have a word with David. We
haven't yet heard from you, my dear
Rebekah. Your vote matters the
most.

REBEKAH

I want my children to be happy. To
be successful. If London is not the
right place, it's not the right
place. Period. Is this Georgia a
better place? Who knows? Maybe yes,
maybe no. And if not, who says we
can't find a better place?

SAMUEL

Then that's a yes?

REBEKAH

A partial yes. Rachel is pregnant. I can't leave her now. I'll join you later.

SAMUEL

When?

REBEKAH

Just a few months. That's all.

SAMUEL

My dearest, we have never been apart for years. I can't even remember how long it has been.

REBEKAH

I can...when we were both in prison nearly thirty years ago.

SAMUEL

But we have no assurances there will be another opportunity...

REBEKAH

God willing, I'll find a way. I promise.

ESTER

If Mama does not go immediately, I will stay behind and help her with Rachel, and the two of us can come later.

SAMUEL

But there may not be a later.

ESTER

Papa, God, our Creator, has been with us every step of the way. He brought us safely out of Portugal. He'll bring us safely home to you and Abraham in America.

SAMUEL

Hopefully, but we have yet to hear from one person who matters as much as anyone in this family. Shem Noah. Your thoughts?

ZIPPORAH

Shem Noah didn't say a word. He pointed at my father, then motioned westward and placed his hand on his heart. My father did the same and bowed to him before speaking what was on everyone's mind.

SAMUEL

So, it's decided, then. I'll speak with the Rabbi tomorrow.

SFX: Musical transition

ZIPPORAH

The next morning, my father met with Rabbi Nieto. Together, they composed a list of people to invite for the journey to America.

SAMUEL

How about Abraham and Abigail Minis? He seems always to be struggling to keep his head above water.

RABBI NIETO

I will speak with them and his brother as well.

SAMUEL

And the Sheftalls?

RABBI NIETO

A good choice. And I can think of half a dozen other Sephardic families who would likely want to come.

SAMUEL

All very well. But I have a concern. How do we maintain our Judaism so far from you and Bevis Marks?

RABBI NIETO

It most certainly will be challenging. That's why da Costa thought you'd be a good leader. You have learned the prayers. People respect you. But you do need a Torah, and I know a man who inherited one from his family in Amsterdam.

(MORE)

RABBI NIETO (CONT'D)

He might be willing to contribute it. Eventually, please God, there will be children in this new land. Rabbi da Paiba has a spare circumcision box. In the meantime, begin getting your affairs in order. It is a long way from England, but hopefully, one day, this place they will call Georgia, you will call home.

SFX: Musical transition

SFX: cold winds and sea gulls; sails flapping in the breeze

ZIPPORAH

On the morning of January 13th, 1733, with a chill in the air, forty-two of us gathered at the Gravesend Docks to board the William & Sarah frigate. Forty-two of us slowly filed onto the ship. Among us were 34 Sephardic Jews, including my family and the families of Abraham and Abigail Minis with their three children and brother, along with Benjamin and Perla Sheftall, all Ashkenazi Jews. My brother-in-law, Abraham de Lyon, carried a box of fine wood in his arms. Inside was the donated Torah inscribed on pieces of goat skin sewn together in accordion style, unlike the scrolls we're accustomed to today. CAPTAIN HANSON, a young man in his early thirties, shouted commands to his crew as we boarded the ship. My parents stood off to the side at one end of the dock. I saw my mother rearrange his scarf.

SFX: wind blowing

REBEKAH

You'll catch a cold if you don't stay bundled up.

SAMUEL

Right again. Without your vigilant eye, I'd have no idea when to eat and sleep on the journey.

REBEKAH

Stop it, or I'll begin crying...
Promise me, you'll be safe.

SAMUEL

I promise...

REBEKAH

And you'll look after the boys...

SAMUEL

My darling, they're not boys
anymore. They need to look out for
me!

REBEKAH

...and Zipporah...her heart is
broken because David decided not to
come.

SAMUEL

Zipporah is the least of my
worries. I just hope she can be
patient. If it's not David, there
will be a good match for her.

REBEKAH

I will be on the next ship once
Rachel has her baby. I promise.
Nothing, and I mean nothing, will
keep us apart.

SAMUEL

(tearfully)

We never know what God has in store
for us. Rebekah, my love, if we
never see each other again, you
have been...the perfect wife for
me. I can't imagine overcoming
everything we have faced with
anyone but you.

REBEKAH

(tearfully)

Neither can I. Now go...go, or
they'll leave without you. I will
write you every day...and we will
see each other again soon. Eu te
amo, Samuel...te amo.

END

ANNOUNCER

This is the conclusion of Episode Nine of Flames of Freedom. Written by Richard Stone. Produced and directed by Mark Simon at Cue Tone Productions. Audio Engineering, Original Music, and Sound Design by David Wilson. Executive Producer Lance Toland.

Special thanks to our ensemble cast: Special thanks to our ensemble cast...Zipporah played by Angelines Santana. Benjamin played by Jamie Treselyan. Diogo Nunes played by Juan Pablo Gamboa. Gracia Nunes played by Gabriela Lopetegui. James Oglethorpe played by Ian Russell. Additional roles played by Brad Davidorf, Barry Stoltze, Francois Clemenceau, and Roxanne Rittman.

[pick up from previous recordings]

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