

JESUS IS ANOINTED FOR DEATH

PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word.

Summary and Historical Background

Chapter twelve concludes Jesus' public teaching ministry (12:23-50), which was preceded by two interesting events: first, Mary's anointing of Jesus followed by Judas' criticism of it, which clearly revealed the difference between the action of the true believer and that of a hypocrite (12:3-8); and second, the "Triumphal Entry" of Jesus into Jerusalem which showed the willingness of the people to have Him as their King, but the determination of the religious leaders to have Him killed (12:12-19). The events of this chapter took place in the final week before His crucifixion (12:1).

The purpose of John's gospel must be kept in mind. This gospel was written that readers might believe that Jesus was the Christ (Messiah), the Son of God, and by believing they would have eternal life through His name (Jn 20: 31).

I. The Supper at Bethany — 12:1-11

A. The setting — 12:1-2

12:1-2 — This supper was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper (Mt 26:6), six days before the Passover. Lazarus was there and Martha was serving.

B. The anointing — 12:3

12:3 — Mary is again seen at Jesus' feet. This time she anointed Him with very expensive perfume, worth the wages of a common laborer for one year.

C. The contrast — 12:4-6

12:4-6 — Judas' attitude is contrasted with Mary's. Mary had a sacrificial spirit while Judas had a covetous spirit. He wanted the money to be put into the bag of the disciples because he was their treasurer. Then he could take some of it for his personal use because he was a thief.

D. The justification — 12:7-8

12:7-8 — Mary was justified in anointing Jesus because she realized He was soon to die. How did she know this? She sat at His feet and believed what He said (cf Lk 10:39, 42).

E. The followers — 12:9-11

12:9-11 — Many Jewish leaders believed on Jesus when He raised Lazarus from the dead. In fact, this miracle was so profound in their reasoning that the chief priests considered killing Lazarus along with Jesus to crush the desire of those that followed Jesus.

II. The Triumphal Entry — 12:12-19

A. The setting — 12:12-13a.

12:12-13a — Many people from Jerusalem went out to meet Jesus as He and His followers approached Jerusalem from Bethany (cf. vv. 17-18).

B. The fulfillment — 12:13-15

12:13-15 — The people hailed Jesus as their King as he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. They cried out "Hosanna," which means save now. This fulfilled prophecies in Ps 118:25-26; Zech 9:9.

C. The reaction — 12:16-19

12:16 — Jesus rode triumphantly into Jerusalem on a donkey and was hailed by the people as their King, but He did not take the throne of Israel. This was a mystery to His disciples until He ascended to Heaven where He was glorified with His Father.

12:17-18 — The people were so impressed with Jesus' miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead that they wanted Him acknowledged as their Messiah.

12:19 — The Pharisees were deeply concerned when they saw the people so excited about Jesus. They felt the need to act quickly to have Him killed.

III. The Visit of the Greeks — 12:20-36**A. The occasion — 12:20-22**

12:20-22 — There were some Gentiles at the feast who wanted to see Jesus. These were proselytes who had not fully adopted all the Jewish rites and laws, but they had forsaken their gods and worshipped the God of Israel.

B. Jesus' response — 12:23-28a

12:23 — Jesus told His disciples that It was time for the Son of God to be glorified. How would this be done? He would die, be resurrected and ascend to Heaven, where He would be glorified for finishing all the work that His Father had given Him.

12:24-26 — Jesus gave His disciples a parable. A seed must be planted in the ground and die, or else it remains a single seed: but if it dies, it brings forth much fruit. Jesus would die and bring forth much fruit by saving many people (cf. 1 Cor 15:20-26). He further explained that those who loved their lives, by focusing on their own interests, would lose their lives, but those who hated their own lives, by focusing on the interests of Jesus, would keep their lives. They would keep the blessings of eternal life and not lose them when their works would be tested by fire (1 Cor 3:12-15).

12:27-28a — Jesus knew that He had come into the world to die for the sins of all people, so He would not ask His Father to save Him from this hour. Instead He prayed, "Father, glorify Your name." How then can we reconcile this with His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Let this cup pass from Me" (Mt 26:39)? Was He asking His Father that He not die on the cross as He had told His disciples several times (Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34)? Hebrews 5:7 sheds much light on these questions. It says Jesus offered "prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears to Him that was able to save Him from death." "From" is the translation of "ek" in the Greek language, which means "out of." "Exit" comes from this Greek word. So Jesus was praying that He would be saved out of death, not from death. He was asking His Father to resurrect Him after He died for the sins of the people. The last words of Hebrews 5:7 prove that this is what Jesus was asking His Father in the Garden. It says, "He was heard." He certainly was not saved from death, but He was saved out of death when He was resurrected.

C. The voice — 12:28b-30

12:28b — When Jesus prayed, "Father, glorify Your name," His Father spoke from Heaven, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." His Father was glorified by the words and works of His Son during His life. He would be glorified again by His Son's death and resurrection. His Son obeyed His Father in everything. He had spoken words of approval for His Son on two earlier occasions: His baptism (Mk 1:11), and His transfiguration (Mk 9:7).

12:29 — When God spoke to His Son, some thought it thundered and others thought an angel spoke (cf. 1 Cor 2:14), but they were wrong on both counts.

12:30 — The purpose that God spoke aloud was to encourage the disciples that it was His plan for His Son to die. He did not speak aloud for the benefit of Jesus.

D. The judgment — 12:31-33

12:31 — "Prince of this world" — Satan is the ruler of this world now, but He would be cast out by the power of Jesus' death for the sins of all people and His resurrection for the life of those who believe. Jesus' power will cast Satan into the bottomless pit after the Great Tribulation and He will have no power during the millennial reign of Christ (Rev 20:1-6). After the millennial reign of Christ, he will be released for a short time and then cast into the Lake of Fire forever (Rev 20:10). Jesus also used "prince of this world" for Satan in 14:30 and 16:11.

12:32-33 — "Lifted up from the earth" - Christ would be "lifted up" on a cross to die for our sins. Crucifixion was a cruel means of capital punishment used by the Romans for criminals.

"Will draw all men" — Christ will not draw all people to Himself for salvation, but for judgment. All men will be judged by Christ because He died for all people (1 Jn 2:2) and all must give an account to Him for their decision to receive or reject Him. He did not come the first time to judge people, but when He comes the second time, the words that He received from His Father and spoke to them, will judge all people.

E. The warning — 12:34-36

12:34-36 — The people were told to believe while they had Him as their light, because He would be with them for only a short time longer. If they did not receive His light by believing on Him, darkness would come upon them and they would fall in the darkness (cf. v. 46).

IV. The Summary of His Ministry — 12:37-50

A. John's analysis — 12:37-43

12:37-41 — Many could not believe on Christ, even though He performed many miracles, because they had hardened their hearts against Him (cf. Isa 6:9-10; 53:1). If they would not believe when they heard the truth, Christ would not compel them to believe by His miracles. Instead, He would harden their hearts in unbelief. Miracles only helped those who believed the truth, even though it were only for a physical benefit.

12:42-43 — "Among the chief rulers also many believed." It is not certain whether or not these rulers were truly saved, because they did not openly confess Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God, lest they be put out of the synagogue (cf Mt 10:32-33). They may have confessed Jesus as their Messiah after His death and resurrection as Nicodemus did. Secret believers are never praised, because they love the praise of men more than the praise of God.

B. Jesus' analysis — 12:44-50

12:44-46 — Jesus made it clear that believing on Him was the same as believing on His Father who had sent Him and seeing Him as seeing the One who sent Him. Since God is spirit and does not have a body, seeing Jesus' life and character was seeing the life and character of His Father. It is implied that rejecting Him was rejecting His Father (cf. 14:1; 1 John 2:23).

12:47-50 — Jesus said He did not come to judge the world, but to save the world (cf Jn 3:17). However, He warned those who rejected His message. His words were from His Father and those words would judge them forever with darkness.