

The Gospel of John

Chapter 12:1-19

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- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
- Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
- Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
- Chapter 6 The Bread of Life
- Chapter 7 The public debates about Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles
- Chapter 8 Public debates: Woman caught in adultery; The Son makes you free; Abraham's true children
- Chapter 9 Jesus heals a man born blind.
- Chapter 10 Jesus is the Door and the True Shepherd
- Chapter 11 Our Lord is the Resurrection and the Life
- Chapter 12 Anointed and Worshipped as King

- **Review and Introduction**

The leaders have publicly declared their plot to arrest Jesus and warned against providing assistance to Him. All of their attempts to keep the multitudes from following Christ is exactly what the Father uses to bring about the glory of His Son. In this section we will see Jesus receive faithful worship and not deny His rightful position of King.

- **Exposition of John 12:1-19**

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.² There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

- This particular event is paralleled in two of the other gospels in Matt 26 and Mark 14. We know from this account that Jesus arrives in Bethany six days before Passover and from the other accounts it appears that this meal spoken of occurs at Simon the Leper's house two or three days before the Passover. This would explain why John explains that Lazarus was also in attendance at the table. If the meal were to have been in the home of Mary and Martha, it would seem out of place, even unnecessary, to say that Lazarus was sitting at the table in his own house.

3 Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

- This anointing of Christ is also in the other gospels but it appears that Mary began by anointing Jesus' head first and then His feet. In the Matthew account, Jesus refers to her action as an anointing of His body.
- This anointing was both a declaration of His Kingship and a burial preparation. In addition, it was a simple sacrificial worship of our Lord by Mary. When Judas later equates the value of the oil to 300 denarii, he declares the value to be equal to a workers annual wage. It is unclear by what means Mary obtained the oil but clearly she disregarded the personal cost to her and use the oil to worship her Lord.
- This event gives us an interesting opportunity to consider our own worship. Too frequently our worship, both individual and corporate, is trite and not sacrificial. We frequently fail to prepare for our corporate worship and we end up offering to our Lord things which are not suitable for honoring Him. The Jews had become guilty in the same way in Malachi 1:6-8. We can also see in Malachi another way in which our corporate worship is defiled is the lack of fellowship that can exist in the gathering between family members and even families. Malachi 2:13-15

4 Then one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray Him, said,⁵ "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?"⁶ This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it.

- This is the first direct mention of Judas in this gospel (other than his inclusion in the twelve) and we see John providing details of the event as well as commentary on Judas. We learn here the estimate of value for the oil used by Mary but we see that the estimate is not considered by Judas as a testimony of the faithfulness of Mary but rather as a grounds for accusing her of being insensitive to the plight of the poor. We can see from the Matthew account (26:13) that our Lord considered the use of the oil to be an act to be memorialized for ages to come. However, we can see that Judas had an agenda other than worshipping the Lord.
- We learn here that Judas' protest of Mary's use of the oil was not because of his care for the poor but rather because he

frequently helped himself to the contents of the money bag and he saw this as a missed opportunity to replenish what he had taken as well as provide a great deal more to pilfer. Even today this is a common front occasionally used by those who would like to see the coffers for the poor filled so that they can filch the money for other purposes.

7 But Jesus said, "Let her alone; she has kept this for the day of My burial."⁸ "For the poor you have with you always, but Me you do not have always."

- God has built the world in such a way that there will always be those considered poor in the world. His remark states that it is something that should be a continual consideration for those who follow Him. There was an extraordinary time when the people were to care for the poor and they were to worship Christ. The point is that our attention is to always be on the poor even today.
- As Christians, our call is to fight against the oppression of the poor and to be merciful and generous. We should avoid the utopian hopes of eliminating poverty when our Lord has clearly stated that we won't. In addition, we should seek Godly wisdom when being merciful so that we truly provide mercy where needed and not further incentive for disobedience. For example, if a brother is poor because he is lazy, or has been chasing after quick profits (unsuccessfully) we should be careful not to subsidize the behavior. But in those cases where our sovereign Lord has decreed hardship upon someone, we should be compassionate and merciful.

9 Now a great many of the Jews knew that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He had raised from the dead.¹⁰ But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also,¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

- Lazarus had become somewhat famous as the man dead for four days and raised by Christ. He was a living testimony to the divinity of Jesus. In addition, Lazarus also became the target of death plots because he was such an effective testimony.

12 The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,¹³ took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out:

"Hosanna! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!' The King of Israel!"

14 Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written:

15 "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt."

- We learn from the other gospels that Jesus instructs two of the disciples to go to a particular man carrying a pitcher of water and ask for the location of the room and begin the preparations for Passover. He also instructs two of them to go into town and retrieve a donkey and her colt upon which He rode into the city.
- On the second or first day prior to Passover, our Lord, not fearing the actions of the Jews, rides into town in full view of all and declares His rightful occupation of the throne. John records the crowds quoting Psalm 118 and Zechariah 9 as they ascribe the worship unto Christ and declare His reign as King. It is glorious to consider how the Creator of the Universe chose to ride into the town of men to declare His throne. He rides in on a donkey, not a stallion. With all authority in heaven and earth given to Him, yet He is clothed with humility. Frequently we don't think of authority and humility as partners however, we see from the example of our Lord how, although in a much lesser way, we should regard the authority granted to us in the realms in which we wield that authority.

16 His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.¹⁷ Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.¹⁸ For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.¹⁹ The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!" NKJV

- John records that the disciples did not understand all of the things that were happening even this late in the relationship with Christ but later, at His resurrection and ascension, they were enlightened in all of the events they witnessed. In addition, here we also see that those who witnessed Lazarus' resurrection were themselves effective witnesses such that many more believed in Christ.
- It is rather ironic that the leaders considered their plan to be failing to accomplish anything. Although they will succeed in executing Him, their plan truly accomplished the purposes of God and brought destruction upon themselves and glory and mercy to the gentiles of the world.