

John Chapter 12

Survey of the Final Week

After Jesus brought Lazarus back to life, the infuriated Pharisees made serious plans to kill Him. Jesus would make His sacrifice in His own time, however, so He withdrew with His disciples to Ephraim, a remote city north of Jerusalem, on the edge of the Judean desert (John 11:53-54). At this juncture, Jesus begins to alter His ministry. First, He changes His public outreach to a private one-He moves from seeking the multitudes to sequestering Himself with the disciples (see 12: 36b). Second, He shifts His emphasis away from the signs and concentrates on the quiet, intimate conversation with His disciples (chapters 13-17-). In fact, the raising of Lazarus is the last sign until His own Resurrection. And third, He reduces His travels, returning to Jerusalem and staying there (Chapter 12:12). He's not out evangelizing; He's preparing to leave and preparing the disciples for His departure.

If you knew you had only one more week to live, how would you spend your time? What's really important to you? Look closely at Christ's last days before the Cross. He chose to spend His final moments with those most dear, with His closest friends. This week, this day, could be your last. How are you investing your time?

A Study of the First Part of the Week

As this last week unfolds, the things Jesus does and says are of top priority. He's still in the public eye at the beginning of the week, and John captures three events in his twelfth chapter.

A. Six days before (Read John 12: 1-11)

Questions:

- Given the value of the perfume (v.5), how would you have reacted as you watched Mary?
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- Judas had a point though His motives were evil. How did Jesus put him right (v.8)
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B. Five days before (Read John 12: 12-19)

John next transports us from the sleepy village of Bethany to the bustling metropolis of Jerusalem.

- How could you tie in the people's hope that Jesus will do at this Passover what God did at the first Passover?
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- But how did Jesus deflect all the hype? (v.15).
What, no warhorse? A king on a donkey? Is this a joke? (No, it is just as the Old Testament prophet, Zechariah predicted). Sure, Jesus is the long-awaited king chosen by God. But not the sort of king this fever-pitched crowd was after.
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- What made the disciples realize this? (v.16)
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C. Four days before (Read John 12: 20-50)

Again John changes the scene without warning, introducing a third set of characters.

Now there were certain Greeks among those who were going to worship at the feast; and began to ask him saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." (vv.20 - 21).

You're sitting an exam. Working frantically. Then you hear the words you've been longing for. Or dreading. " 'Time's up'. Here in John, it's a critical moment like that. It's 'time up' for Jesus. 'Time up' for the nation Israel. 'Time up' for the devil. 'Time up' for all who reject Jesus."

- What brings Gentiles to Jerusalem during a time of Jewish patriotism?
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- What was so unique about their request that Philip would first filter it through Andrew?
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- Jesus said several times that “his time has not come” (2:4; 7: 6, 30). What regarding this request caused him to say that now it has come?

- In his parable (v24), who is the kernel of wheat? How is this related to the Gentiles’ request?

- What is he calling his disciples to do in verses 25-26?

- What promise do they receive?

- What causes the crowd’s initial support (in 12:13) to waver here (v32-34)? What happened to their celebration?

Reflect

Where is Jesus calling you to die so that you might live? What do you tend to hold on to rather than follow Jesus?

A Summary of the Truth

We can glean three principles from our study of these last days in Jesus' life.

- A. Salvation is not limited to certain types.** Remember Judas? He was Christ's disciple, the trusted treasurer. But he defected. Mary was emotional and unconventional, yet she embraced Christ with all her heart. Likewise, the Jews in the street believed him, the Greeks were in awe of Him, but the religious officials rejected Him.

- B. Worship is not limited to specific times.** We can worship God anywhere and at anytime. Mary worshipped at the dinner table. The crowd worshipped in the street, The Greeks worshipped as He spoke, There is no limit to when we can worship, and sometimes our most meaningful worship times are spontaneous.

- C. Christianity is not lived on selfish terms.** The Christian life is a paradox: to keep, we must give ... to be great, we must serve ... to live, we must die. And not until we die will we realize the real joy of giving, or the emptiness of keeping.