

John Chapter 12

Christ and the Crisis

John 12 records the second major crisis in the ministry of our Lord as seen by John the apostle. The first occurred when many of His disciples would no longer walk with Him (John 6:66), even though He is “*the way*” (John 14:6). In this chapter, John tells us that many would not believe in Him (John 12:37ff), even though He is “*the truth*.” The third crisis will come in John 19: even though He is “*the life*,” the leaders crucified Him.

John opened his book by telling us that Jesus “*came unto His own [world], and His own [people] received Him not*” (John 1:11). In the first twelve chapters, John presented one witness after another, and one proof after another, to convince us that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God. All this evidence was seen firsthand by the leaders of the nation, and yet they rejected His claims. Having been rejected by “*His own*” nation, Jesus then retired with “*His own*” disciples (John 13:1) whom He loved.

In this chapter, We see Jesus as He relates to four different groups of people!

I. **Jesus and His Friends (John 12:1–11)** ¹ *Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; and Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. ³ Mary then took a litre of perfume of very costly pure nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was going to betray Him, said, ⁵ “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?” ⁶ Now he said this, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief, and as he had the money box, he used to take from what was put into it. ⁷ Therefore Jesus said, “Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. ⁸ For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.” ⁹ Then the large crowd from the Jews learned that He was there. And they came, not because of Jesus only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. ¹⁰ But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus. ¹*

Jesus knew that the Jewish leaders intended to arrest Him and kill Him (John 11:53, 57), but He still returned to Bethany, only two miles from the very citadel of His

¹ [Legacy Standard Bible](#) (Jn 12:1–11). (2022). Three Sixteen Publishing.

enemies. Why? So, that He might spend a quiet time with His friends Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. True to their personalities, Martha busily served and Mary worshiped at the feet of Jesus (cf. Luke 10:38–42).

The account of Mary's anointing Jesus is found also in Matthew 26:6–13 and Mark 14:3–9. But it must not be confused with the account given in Luke 7:36–50, where a former harlot anointed Jesus in the house of Simon the Pharisee. Mary was a virtuous woman, and she anointed Jesus in the house of Simon the (former) leper (Mark 14:3). The Luke 7 event took place in Galilee, while the account in this chapter occurred in Judea. The fact that there are two "*Simons*" involved should not surprise us, for Simon was a common name in that day.

When you combine all three accounts, you learn that Mary anointed both His head and His feet. It was an act of pure love on her part, for she understood that Jesus was about to endure suffering and death. Because she sat at Jesus' feet and listened to Him speak, she realized what He was going to do. It is significant that Mary of Bethany was NOT one of the women who went to the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus (Mark 16:1).

In a sense, Mary was showing her devotion to Jesus *before* it was too late. Her act of love and worship was public, spontaneous, sacrificial, lavish, personal, and unembarrassed. Jesus called it "*a good work*" (Matthew 26:10; Mark 14:6—He both commended her and defended her.

It would have required a year's wages from a common laborer to purchase that ointment. Like David, Mary would not give to the LORD that which cost her nothing (2 Sam. 24:24). Her beautiful act of worship brought a fragrance to the very house in which they were dining, and the blessing of her deed has spread around the world (Matthew 26:13; Mark 14:9). Little did Mary realize that night that her love for Jesus would be a blessing to believers around the world for centuries to come!

When she came to the feet of Jesus, Mary took the position of a slave. When she undid her hair (something Jewish women did not do in public), she humbled herself and laid her glory at His feet (see 1 Corinthians 11:15). Of course, she was misunderstood and criticized; but that is not uncommon when give their best to the Lord.

It was Judas who started the criticism, but the other disciples joined in. They did not know that Judas was a devil (John 12:4), and they seemed to admire him in his concern for the poor. After all, he was the treasurer; and especially at Passover

season, he would be expected to share with those who were less fortunate (cf. John 13:21–30). Until the very end, the disciples believed that Judas was a devoted follower of the Lord.

John 12:4 records Judas' first words found anywhere in the four Gospels. His last words are found in Matthew 27:4. Judas was a thief and was in the habit of stealing money from the money box that he carried. No doubt Judas had already decided to abandon Jesus, and he wanted to get what he could out of what he considered a bad situation. Perhaps he had hoped that Jesus would defeat Rome and set up the kingdom; in which case, Judas would have been treasurer of the kingdom!

What Mary did was a blessing to Jesus and a blessing to her own life. She was also a blessing to the home, filling it with fragrance (cf. Philippians 4:18). But not so Judas! We call our daughters "Mary," but no parent would name a son "Judas." His very name is listed in the dictionary as a synonym for treachery. Mary and Judas are seen in contrast in Proverbs 10:7: *"The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot."* According to Ecclesiastes 7:1, *"A good name is better than precious ointment."* Mary had both.

Matthew 26:14 implies that immediately after this rebuke, Judas went to the priests and bargained to deliver Jesus into their hands. But it is likely that the events recorded in Matthew 21–25 took place first. No doubt the Lord's rebuke of Judas at Bethany played an important part in his decision to betray Jesus. In addition, the fact that Jesus once again openly announced His death certainly motivated Judas in his betrayal.

As we look at this event, we see some *"representative people"* who are good examples. Martha was *worker* who prepared and served dinner for the Lord. This service was just as much a *"fragrant offering"* as Mary's ointment (cf. Hebrews 13:16). Mary service represents *worship*, while Lazarus service represents *witness* (cf. John 11:9–11). People went to Bethany just to be able to see this man who had been raised from the dead!

Of course, we have no recorded words from Lazarus in the New Testament, but certainly his miraculous life was an effective witness for Jesus Christ. Those of us who have been *"born again"*—given new life—can give witness as we *"walk in newness of life"* (Romans 6:4) because we, too, have been *"raised from the dead"* (Ephesians 2:1–10; Col. 3:1ff). Of course, the Christian life should be a beautiful balance of worship, work, and witness.

But the fact that Lazarus was a walking miracle was dangerous, because the Jewish leaders wanted to kill both *him* and Jesus! Jesus was right when He called those leaders children of the devil, for they were murderers indeed (John 8:42–44). They threw the healed blind man out of the synagogue rather than permit him to bear witness to Christ every Sabbath, and they wanted to put Lazarus back into the tomb because he was a witness to the power and identity of Jesus. Anytime we will not accept the evidence, we are motivated to get rid of it!

This quiet evening of friendly fellowship—despite the way the disciples treated Mary—must have brought special encouragement and strength to the heart of Jesus as He faced the demands of that last week before the Cross. It invites us to examine our own hearts to see if we are bringing joy to the heart of our Lord by our worship, work, and witness.

II. **Jesus and the Passover Pilgrims (John 12:12–19)** ¹² *On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,* ¹³ *took the branches of the palm trees and went out to meet Him, and began to shout, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel.”* ¹⁴ *And Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written,* ¹⁵ *“Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your King is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.”* ¹⁶ *These things His disciples did not understand at the 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 *So the crowd, who was with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to bear witness about Him.* ¹⁸ *For this reason also the crowd went and met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.* ¹⁹ *So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing; look, the world has gone after Him.”*

John shifted the scene from a quiet dinner in Bethany to an exciting public parade in Jerusalem. All four Gospels record this event, and their accounts should be compared. This was the only “*public demonstration*” that Jesus allowed while He was ministering on earth. His purpose was to fulfill the Old Testament prophecy (Zechariah 9:9). The result was a growing animosity on the part of the religious leaders, leading eventually to His crucifixion.

There were three different groups in the crowd that day:

1. The Passover visitors from outside Judea (John 12:12, 18),
2. The local people who had witnessed the raising of Lazarus (John 12:17), and

3. The religious leaders who were greatly concerned about what Jesus might do at the feast (John 12:19).

At each of the different feasts, the people were wondering if Jesus would be there and what He would do. It looked as though Jesus was actually seeking to incite a revolution and establish Himself as King, but that was not at all what He had in mind.

So, what did this event mean to Jesus? For one thing, it was a part of His obedience to the Father's will. The Prophet Zechariah (Zechariah 9:9) prophesied that the Messiah would enter Jerusalem in that manner, and He fulfilled the prophecy. (*"Daughter of Zion" is another name for the city of Jerusalem (Jeremiah 4:31; Lamentations 2:4, 8, 10).*)

In this way, Jesus was openly announcing to the people that He indeed was the King of Israel (John 1:49), the promised Messiah. In their understanding of the Messianic hope, many of the pilgrims expected that *now* Jesus would defeat the Romans and set the nation of Israel free.

So, what did this demonstration mean to the Romans? We don't know since nothing is recorded about the Roman viewpoint, but it is certain that they closely watch the events that day. During the annual Passover feast, it was not uncommon for Jewish zealots to try to arouse the people; and perhaps the Romans thought this parade was that kind of an event.

After all, the *Triumphant Entry* resembled the entry into Rome when a Roman general had been victorious on foreign soil. It was the Roman equivalent of the American "ticker-tape parade," only with more splendor. Of course, In comparison to a Roman Triumph Parade, the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was nothing.

So, what did the "Triumphal Entry" mean to the people of Israel? The pilgrims welcomed Jesus, spread their garments before Him, and waved palm branches as symbols of peace and victory (Revelation 7:9). They quoted from Psalm 118:26, which is a messianic psalm; and they proclaimed Him the "*King of Israel.*" But, while they were doing this, Jesus pronounced judgment on the city (Luke 19:37–44)!

The name *Jerusalem* means "*city of peace*" or "*foundation of peace*"; and the people were thinking that Jesus could be the one who bring them the peace that they needed. However, He knew what lay ahead for the nation—war, suffering, destruction, and a scattered people. At His birth, the angels announced, "*peace on earth*" (Luke 2:13–14), but in His ministry Jesus announced, "*war on earth*" (Luke

12:51ff). It is significant that the crowds shouted, *“peace in heaven”* (Luke 19:38), because that is the only place where there is peace until He returns!

The nation had wasted its opportunities. Their leaders did not know the time of God’s visitation. They were ignorant of their own Scriptures. The next time Israel sees the King, the scene will be radically different (Revelation 19:11ff)! He will come in glory, not in humility, and the armies of heaven will accompany Him. It will be the act of victory as Jesus comes to defeat His enemies and establish His kingdom.

There is this repeated theme in Scripture that glory follows after there is suffering. Jesus knew that He had to die on the cross before He could enter into His glory (Luke 24:26). The Jewish theologians were not clear in their minds concerning the sufferings of the Messiah, and the glorious kingdom that the prophets announced. Some teachers held that there were two Messiahs, one who would suffer and one who would reign. Even Jesus’ disciples were not clear as to what was going on (see John 11:16).

So, how did the Jewish leaders respond to the “Triumphal Entry” of the Lord? As they watched the great crowd gather and honor Jesus, the Pharisees were quite sure that Jesus had won the day. They were anticipating some kind of general revolt during the Passover season. Perhaps Jesus would perform a great miracle and thereby capture the minds and hearts of the restless people. Of course, they really did not understand the mind and heart of Jesus! What they did not realize was that Jesus was *“forcing their hand”* so that the Sanhedrin would act *during the feast*. It was necessary for the Lamb of God to give His life when the Passover lambs were being slain.

The statement, *“Look, the world has gone after Him!”* (John 12:19) was both an exaggeration and a prophecy.

III. **Jesus and the Gentile Visitors (John 12:20–36)** ²⁰Now there were some Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; ²¹ these then came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, *“Sir, we wish to see Jesus.”* ²² Philip came and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip came and told Jesus. ²³ And Jesus answered them, saying, *“The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal. ²⁶ If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him. ²⁷ Now My soul has become dismayed; and what shall I say,*

‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose, I came to this hour. ²⁸ Father, glorify Your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” ²⁹ So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sake. ³¹ Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out. ³² And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.” ³³ But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was about to die. ³⁴ The crowd then answered Him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how do You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?” ³⁵ So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. ³⁶ While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light.” These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

Following His entry into Jerusalem, Jesus cleansed the temple for the second time. He quoted Isaiah 56:7 and Jeremiah 7:11, *“Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer’? But you have made it a den of thieves”* (Mark 11:17).

One of John’s major themes is that Jesus is the Savior of the world, not simply the Redeemer of Israel. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). *“For God so loved the world”* (John 3:16). The Samaritans rightly identified Him as *“the Savior of the world”* (John 4:42). He gave His life for the world, and He gives life to the world (John 6:33). He is the Light of the world (John 8:12). The universal emphasis of John’s Gospel is too obvious to miss—Jesus will bring the *“other sheep”* who are outside the Jewish fold (cf. John 10:16; 11:51–52).

The original text indicates that the Greeks *“were accustomed to come and worship at the feast.”* They were not curious visitors or one-time investigators. No doubt they were *“God-fearers”*—gentiles who attended the Jewish synagogue and sought the truth, but who had not yet become proselytes. Gentiles came to see Jesus when He was a young child (Matthew 2), and now Gentiles came to see Him just before His death.

These men *“kept asking”* Philip for the privilege of an interview with Jesus. Philip finally told Andrew (who was often bringing people to Jesus), and Andrew gave the request to Jesus. No doubt there were many people who wanted private interviews

with Jesus, but they were afraid of the Pharisees (John 9:22). Being from out of the country, the Gentile visitors either did not know about the danger, or did not fear the Jewish authorities.

We can commend these Greeks for wanting to see Jesus. The Jews would say, “We would see a sign!” (Matthew 12:38; 1 Corinthians 1:22) but these men said, “We would see [have an interview with] Jesus.” There is no record that Jesus did talk with these men, but the message that He gave in response contains truths for all.

The central theme of this message is the glory of God (John 12:23, 28). We would have expected Jesus to say, “The hour is come, that the Son of man should be crucified.” But Jesus saw beyond the cross to the glory that would follow (see Luke 24:26; Hebrews 12:2). We will see that the glory of God is an important theme in the remaining chapters of John’s Gospel (see John 13:31–32; 14:13; 17:1, 4–5, 22, 24).

Jesus used the image of a seed to illustrate the great spiritual truth that there can be no glory without suffering; no fruitful life without death; and no victory without surrender. Of itself, a seed is weak and useless, but when it is planted, it “dies” and becomes fruitful. There is both beauty and bounty when a seed “dies” to fulfill its purpose. If a seed could talk, it would no doubt complain about being put into the cold, dark earth. But the only way it can achieve its goal is by being planted.

God’s children are like seeds. We are small and insignificant, but we have life in us—God’s life. However, that life can never be fully experienced until we yield ourselves to God and permit Him to “plant us.” We must die to self so that we may live unto God (Romans 6; Galatians 2:20). The only way to have a fruitful life is to submit to Jesus Christ in death and resurrection.

In these words, Jesus challenges us today to surrender our lives to Him. Note the contrasts: loneliness or fruitfulness; losing your life or keeping your life; serving self or serving Christ; pleasing self or experiencing God’s glory.

Jesus knew that He was facing suffering and death, and His humanity responded to this ordeal. His soul was troubled, not because He was questioning the Father’s will, but because He was fully conscious of all that the Cross involved. Note that Jesus did not say, “*What shall I do?*” because He knew what He was ordained to do. He said, “*What shall I say?*” In the hour of suffering and surrender, there are only two prayers we can pray, either “*Father, save me!*” or “*Father, glorify Thy name!*”

They are two options for believers—either be *comfortable* or *conformable*. If we are looking for comfortable lives, then we will protect our plans and desires, safeguard our

lives, and never be planted. But if we yield our lives and let God *plant* us, we will experience His divine purpose and will have the joy of being fruitful to the glory of God. “If any man [Jew or Greek] serve Me, let him follow Me” (cf. Matthew 10:39 and Mark 8:36).

The prayer, “*Father, glorify Thy name!*” received a reply from heaven! God the Father spoke to His Son and gave Him a double assurance: the Son’s past life and ministry had glorified the Father, and the Son’s future suffering and death would glorify the Father. It is significant that the Father spoke to the Son at the beginning of the Son’s ministry (Matthew 3:17), as the Son began His journey to Jerusalem (Matthew 17:5), and finally as the Son entered the last days before the Cross. God always gives His word of assurance to those who willingly suffer for His sake.

The people heard the sound but did not know the message that had been conveyed. Yet, if the voice was for their sakes and they could not understand it, what good was it? In that the voice assured Jesus, who was to die for their sakes, the voice was for their good. They heard Jesus pray and they heard a sound from heaven in response to that prayer. That should have convinced them that Jesus was in touch with the Father. We might translate John 12:30, “*That voice came more for your sake than for Mine.*”

Jesus then openly spoke about the Cross. It was an hour of judgment for the world and for Satan, the prince of the world. The death of Jesus Christ would seem like a victory for the wicked world, but it would really be a judgment of the world. On the cross, Jesus would defeat Satan and his world system (Galatians 6:14). Even though he is permitted to go to and fro on the earth, Satan is a defeated enemy. As we serve the Lord, we overcome the wicked one (Luke 10:17–19). Satan was cast out of heaven (Revelation 12:10) and eventually will be judged and imprisoned forever (Revelation 20:10).

We have met the phrase “*lifted up*” before (John 3:14; 8:28). Its basic meaning is *crucifixion* (cf. John 12:33), but it also carries the idea of *glorification*. “*Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted*” (Isaiah 52:13). The Son of man was *glorified* by being *crucified*!

The phrase “*all men*” does not suggest universal salvation. It means “*all people without distinction,*” that is, Jews and Gentiles. He does not force them; He draws them (cf. John 6:44–45). He was “*lifted up*” that men might find the way (John 12:32), know the truth (John 8:28), and receive the life (John 3:14). The cross reminds us that

God loves the whole world and that the task of the church is to take the Gospel to the whole world.

The people did not understand what He was teaching. They knew that “*Son of man*” was another title for Messiah, but they could not understand why Messiah would be crucified! Did not the Old Testament teach that the Messiah would live forever? (See Psalm 72:17; 89:36; 110:4; Isaiah 9:7.)

But that was no time to be discussing the fine points of theology! It was an hour of crisis (cf. John 12:31, where the Greek word *krisis* means judgment) and an hour of opportunity. The light was shining and they had better take advantage of their opportunity to be saved! We have met this image of light and darkness before (John 1:4–9; 3:17–20; 8:12; 9:39–41). By a simple step of faith, these people could have passed out of spiritual darkness and into the light of salvation.

This marked the end of our Lord’s public ministry as far as John’s record is concerned. Jesus departed and hid Himself. It was judgment on the nation that saw His miracles, heard His messages, and scrutinized His ministry, and yet refused to believe on Him.

IV. **Jesus and Unbelieving Jews (John 12:37–50)** ⁴³⁷ *But though He had done so many signs before them, they still were not believing in Him,* ³⁸ *so that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: “Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”* ³⁹ *For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again,* ⁴⁰ *“He has blinded their eyes and He hardened their heart, lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and return and I heal them.”* ⁴¹ *These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke about Him.* ⁴² *Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue;* ⁴³ *for they loved the glory of men rather than the glory of God.* ⁴⁴ *And Jesus cried out and said, “He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.* ⁴⁵ *And he who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.* ⁴⁶ *I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.* ⁴⁷ *And if anyone hears My words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.* ⁴⁸ *He who rejects Me and does not receive My words, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him on the last day.* ⁴⁹ *For I did not speak from Myself, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment—what to say and what to speak.* ⁵⁰ *And I know that*

His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me.

The key word in this section is *believe*; it is used eight times. First, John explained the unbelief of the people—they *would not* believe (John 12:37–38, with a quotation from Isaiah 53:1); they *could not* believe (John 12:39); and they *should not* believe (John 12:40–41, with a quotation from Isaiah 6:9–10).

Despite all the clear evidence that was presented to them, the nation would not believe. The “*arm of the Lord*” had been revealed to them in great power, yet they closed their eyes to the truth. They had heard the message (“*report*”), had seen the miracles, and yet would not believe.

When a person starts to resist the light, something begins to change within him; and he reaches the point where he cannot believe. There is “*judicial blindness*” that God allows to cover the eyes of people who do not take the truth seriously. (This quotation is found in a several places in the New Testament (cf. Matthew 13:14–15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:25–27; Romans 11:8). It is a serious thing to treat God’s truth lightly, since a person could miss his opportunity to be saved. “*Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near*” (Isaiah 55:6).

There were those who would not believe, and there were those who would not openly confess Christ even though they had believed (John 12:42–43). Initially, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea belonged to this group, but eventually they openly confessed Jesus Christ (John 19:38ff). In the early church, there were numbers of Pharisees (Acts 15:5) and even priests (Acts 6:7). It was the old struggle between the glory of God and the praise of men (John 12:25–26). It was a very costly thing to be excommunicated from Judaism (John 9:22), and these “secret believers” wanted the best of both worlds (cf. John 5:44).

In John 12:44–50 we have the last message of Jesus before He “*hid Himself*” from the people. Again, the emphasis was on faith. Several basic themes in John’s Gospel run through this message:

- God sent the Son;
- To see the Son means to see the Father;
- Jesus is the Light of the world;
- His words are the very words of God;
- Faith in Him brings salvation;
- To reject Him is to face eternal judgment.

In fact, the very Word that He spoke will judge those who have rejected it and Him! It is an awesome thought that the unbeliever will face at the judgment every Scripture he has ever read or heard. The very Word that he rejects becomes his judge! Why? Because the written Word points to the Living Word, Jesus Christ (John 1:14).

Many people reject the truth simply because of the fear of man (John 12:42–43). Among those who will be in hell are “the fearful” (Revelation 21:8). Better to fear God and go to heaven than to fear men and go to hell!

The word *judge* is repeated four times in the closing words of this message. Jesus did not come to judge; He came to save (John 3:18; 8:15). But, if the sinner will not trust Jesus as Lord and Savior, the Savior must become his Judge. The sinner is actually passing judgment on himself, not on the Lord! Therefore, “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light” (John 12:36).²

Questions for Personal Reflection and Group Discussion³

1. When has God seemed to act out of character or done something you weren’t expecting Him to do? How did you feel?
2. Read verses 1–11. If you had been at this dinner, would you have been more likely to be Martha (the worker); Mary (the extravagant worshipper); Lazarus (the living evidence of Jesus’ power); or Judas (the traitor). Explain.
3. Why do you think Mary anointed Jesus’ feet with her perfume? How do you think her gift made Jesus feel?
4. How can we respond when God acts in ways contrary to what you would choose or expect?
5. What convinced you to “believe”—confess Jesus as your Lord?

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*The Bible exposition commentary*](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 338–344). Victor Books.

³ Wiersbe, Warren W.. Be Alive (John 1-12): Get to Know the Living Savior (The BE Series Commentary) (p. 197). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.