

The Gospel According to John

“Finding Ourselves in the Storyline of Jesus Death”

John 12:1-19



John 12:1-3

Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

So they made Him a supper there, and Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him. Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of 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.

John 12:4-8

But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?”

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 pilfer what was put into it.

Therefore Jesus said, “Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial. For you always have the poor with you, but you do not always have Me.”

John 12:9-11

The large crowd of the Jews then learned that He was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom He raised from the dead. But the chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.

John 12:12-15

On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 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.*"

Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, "*Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.*"

John 12:16-19

These things His disciples did not understand at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him, and that they had done these things to Him. So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him. For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign. So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are not doing any good; look, the world has gone after Him.”

Main Idea

The events surrounding Jesus' return to Bethany point to precious gospel truths, while the people's responses to Him help us to see ourselves in the storyline of His death.

Surrounding Events and Gospel Truths

How do the surrounding events point to precious gospel truths?



Surrounding Events/Gospel Truths

The coming Passover
and the hope of our redemption.

John 11:55

Now the Passover of the Jews was near,
and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country
before the Passover to purify themselves.

John 12:1

therefore, six days before the Passover,
came to Bethany where Lazarus was,
whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

John 11:55

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and many went up to Jerusalem out of the country
before the Passover to purify themselves.

John 12:1

Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover,
came to Bethany where Lazarus was,
whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

As the Passover drew near,
the Passover Lamb also drew near.

John 1:29

**“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes
away the sin of the world!”**

Exodus 12:21-22

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and slay the Passover lamb.”

Exodus 12:21-22

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Exodus 12:21-22

Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and take for yourselves lambs according to your families, and **slay the Passover lamb.**”

The “elders of Israel,” their hatred of Jesus having been inflamed, went and took the Lamb, gathered the people, and slayed Him.

But unlike the blood of their lambs
which only temporarily rescued them,
the blood of this Lamb,
being precious and imperishable,
has redeemed us *fully* and *finally*!

1 Peter 1:18-19

You were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, **but with precious blood**, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

What is our hope then?

Romans 8:32

He who did not spare His own Son,
but delivered Him over for us all,
how will He not also with Him
freely give us all things?

Surrounding Events/Gospel Truths

The coming Passover and the hope of our redemption.

A celebration supper and our eternal feast.

John 12:1-2

Jesus, therefore, six days before the Passover, came to Bethany where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

So they made Him a supper there.

We know from Matthew and Mark that this supper was held at Simon the Leper's home, whom Jesus had also healed.

Mark 14:3

While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table...

John 12:2

And Martha was serving; but Lazarus was one of those reclining at the table with Him.

Consider this party and the cause of their celebration and the delight they must have experienced in the presence of the Healer.

This celebration supper points
to our eternal feast with our Healer,
in whose presence alone we will find
the fullness of our joy!

Revelation 19:6-7 and 9

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.
Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come
and His bride has made herself ready.

Then he said to me, “Write,
‘Blessed are those who are invited
to the marriage supper of the Lamb.’”

Psalm 16:11

In Your presence is fullness of joy;
In Your right hand there are pleasures forever.

Psalm 17:15

As for me, I shall behold Your face in righteousness;
I will be satisfied with Your likeness when I awake.

**What precious truth and
what sustaining hope!**

Surrounding Events/Gospel Truths

The coming Passover and the hope of our redemption.

A celebration supper and our eternal feast.

A triumphal entry and Christ's eternal reign.

John 12:12-15

On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 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.*"

Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, "*Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt.*"

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Jesus, finding a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written, *“Fear not, daughter of Zion; **behold, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.**”*

Zechariah 9:9

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;
He is just and endowed with salvation,
Humble, and mounted on a donkey,
Even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Jesus' entry into the city of David pointed to His deliverance of His people and to His eternal reign over His kingdom.

The strongman of the house has been bound, and God is plundering his house, rescuing the lost and delivering them into to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

Colossians 1:13

For He rescued us from the domain of darkness,
and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,
in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Their Responses, Our Identification

How do the people's responses help us to see ourselves in the storyline of Jesus' death?



This *is* a storyline of His death!

John 12:7

Therefore Jesus said, “Let her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of My burial.”

Mark 14:8

“...she has anointed My body beforehand for the burial.”

Their Responses, Our Identification

Mary's extravagant devotion.

John 12:3

Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of 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.

Mark 14:3

While He was in Bethany at the home of Simon the leper, and reclining at the table, there came a woman with an alabaster vial of very costly perfume of pure nard; and she broke the vial and poured it over His head.

Our familiarity with this story
can cause us to miss the scandal
of Mary's extravagance.

John 12:3 and 5

Mary then **took a pound of very costly perfume** of 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.

“Worth three hundred denarii!”

John 12:3 and 5

Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume
of 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.

John 12:3 and 5

Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume
of 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.

Mark 14:5

...and [the disciples] were scolding her.

Mary's devotion to Jesus moved her to respond with extravagance and in humility.

But before we can identify with Mary's response, we will first need to identify with the others' responses.

Their Responses, Our Identification

Mary's extravagant devotion.

Judas' covetous reaction.

John 12:4-5

But Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, who was intending to betray Him, said, “Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and given to poor people?”

Judas wasn't alone in his indignation.

Matthew 26:8

...the disciples were indignant when they saw this,
and said, “Why this waste?”.

Consider again the extravagance
of Mary's actions.

Are you sure you wouldn't also
respond with indignation or at least
with some measure of disapproval?

Does your pride hold you back?

Judas instigated the indignation.

John 12:6

Judas said this...**because he was a thief!**

But it was really *betrayal* that was
brewing in Judas' heart.

John 12:4-6

But **Judas** Iscariot, one of His disciples, who **was intending**
to betray Him...

Mark 14:10-11

Then Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve,
went off to the chief priests in order **to betray Him** to them.

Do you suppose that Judas came into this whole venture intending to pilfer the money box and betray Jesus?

Judas came in with a set of expectations that Jesus didn't meet.

It was his disappointment that was the seed of discontent that blossomed into his betrayal.



Can you identify with Judas as
you consider *your* expectations, *your*
disappointments, *your* discontent?

Their Responses, Our Identification

Mary's extravagant devotion.

Judas' covetous reaction.

The crowd's fickle professions.

John 12:12-15

On the next day the large crowd who had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, 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.”*

Did they believe what they shouted?

What motivated the crowds to shout?

John 12:17-18

So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him.

For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.

What motivated the crowds to shout?

John 12:17-18

So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him.

For this reason also the people went and met Him, because they heard that He had performed this sign.

What motivated the crowds to shout?

John 12:17-18

So the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, continued to testify about Him.

For this reason also the people went and met Him,

because they heard that He had performed this sign.

And yet...

John 12:37

Though He had performed so many signs before them,
yet **they were not believing in Him.**

The crowds were fickle...

6:15: ...they were intending to come and take Him by force to make Him king.

7:12: There was much grumbling among the crowds concerning Him.

7:20: The crowd answered, "You have a demon!"

7:31: ...many of the crowd believed in Him.

7:43: So a division occurred in the crowd because of Him.

The people were tossed about by the ebbs and flows of the moment and often moved with the tides of the crowd.

But can you see how we too are often caught up with the crowds and move in the currents of our culture.

Their Responses, Our Identification

Mary's extravagant devotion.

Judas' covetous reaction.

The crowd's fickle professions.

The rulers' murderous intentions.

John 11:53

So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.

John 11:57

Now the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that if anyone knew where He was, he was to report it, so that they might seize Him.

**What was at the heart of these
murderous intentions?**

Even Pilate was able to see...

Mark 15:9-10

Pilate answered them, saying,
“Do you want me to release for you the King of the Jews?”
For he was aware that the chief priests
had handed Him over **because of envy**.

The chief priests and Pharisees' envied Jesus, and their envy was producing a crop of bitter jealousy which was about to reap a harvest of brutal murder.

But can *you* relate to envy?

Galatians 5:26

Let us not become boastful,
challenging one another, envying one another.

And their intentions weren't just for Jesus!

John 12:10-11

The chief priests planned to put Lazarus to death also; because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and were believing in Jesus.

When you think of the Pharisees
nitpicking and bickering and plotting,
can you see yourself?

Finding Ourselves in the Storyline

How do these things help us
to take hold of Christ?



Going back to Mary...

We may need to reconsider Mary and admit that too often we respond more like Judas, the crowds, and the religious rulers than like her.

Remember...

John 12:3

Mary then took a pound of very costly perfume of 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.

Consider...

You won't experience the depth of Mary's devotion and her delight in Christ's presence until you identify with the depths of your own depravity.

Luke 7:47

“...but he who is forgiven little, loves little.”

How do these things help us?

These things give us places and names
to identify with.

Whether at Cana or at the porticoes
of Bethesda or on a hill near Tiberius
or at a leper's supper party or in a
crowd before Pilate, if you look hard
enough, you'll see yourself.

And if you're honest with yourself,
Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman
and Martha and the people in the
crowds and the Pharisees and even
Judas will show you yourself
and your need of Christ.

How do these things help us?

They give us places and names to identify with.

They give us gospel truths to ponder
and preach to ourselves.

Are you troubled by your depravity?

Preach the gospel to yourself,
for Christ and His cross are what will
communicate comfort to your soul
and lead you to deep devotion
and sweet delight.

It will be the surety of your justification, the hope of your redemption, the gift of your adoption, the confidence of Jesus' intercession, the anticipation of your resurrection, and so much more that will counsel your soul in the ebbs and flows of your life.

A Concluding Prayer:

Lord, may you show us our great need and teach us your great mercy so that the fragrance of our deep devotion might fill this house and all our homes!