

## ***SBCOD Bible Study Notes***

**9-17-25**

**John 12**

### **Mary Anoints Jesus Feet & Judas Objects To Mary's Gift – Verses 1-6**

<sup>1</sup> Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. <sup>2</sup> Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. <sup>3</sup> Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. <sup>4</sup> But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, <sup>5</sup> "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." <sup>6</sup> He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

**12:1-2** Less than a week before His crucifixion, Jesus attended a dinner in Bethany, probably to celebrate the raising of Lazarus from the dead. With all Jesus had on His mind, knowing His fate as He came to Jerusalem for Passover, it is remarkable that He attended this dinner at all. Most would not feel like socializing.

**12:3** Pure nard was a fragrant ointment imported from the mountains of India. Thus, it was very expensive. The amount Mary used was worth a year's wages.

**12:4-6** Judas often dipped into the disciples' money bag for his own use. Quite likely, Jesus knew what Judas was doing (2:24-25; 6:64), but never did or said anything about it. Similarly, when we choose the way of sin, God may not immediately do anything to stop us, but this does not mean he approves of our actions. What we deserve will come.

**12:5-6** Judas used a pious phrase to hide his true motives. But Jesus knew what was in his heart. Judas's life had become a lie, and the devil was gaining more and more control over him (13: 27). Satan is the father of lies, and a lying character opens the door to his influence. Jesus' knowledge of us should make us want to keep our actions consistent with our words. Because we have nothing to fear with him, we should have nothing to hide.

### **Jesus Defends Mary And Explains What She Did – Verses 7-8**

<sup>7</sup> "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. <sup>8</sup> You will always have the poor among you,<sup>[a]</sup> but you will not always have me."

**12:7-8** This act and Jesus' response to it do not teach us to ignore the poor so we can spend money extravagantly for Christ. This was a unique act for a specific occasion— an anointing that anticipated Jesus' burial and a public declaration of faith in him as Messiah. Jesus' words should have taught Judas a valuable lesson about the worth of money. Unfortunately, Judas did not take heed; soon he would sell his Master's life for 30 pieces of silver.

## **The Plot To Kill Both Jesus And Lazarus – Verses 9-11**

**<sup>9</sup> Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. <sup>10</sup> So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, <sup>11</sup> for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.**

**12:9-11** The chief priests' blindness and hardness of heart caused them to sink ever deeper into sin. They rejected the Messiah and planned to kill him, and then plotted to murder Lazarus as well. One sin leads to another. From the Jewish leaders' point of view, they could accuse Jesus of blasphemy because he claimed equality with God. But Lazarus had done nothing of the kind. They wanted Lazarus dead simply because he was a living witness to Jesus' power. This is a warning to us to avoid sin. Sin leads to more sin, a downward spiral that can be stopped only by repentance and the power of the Holy Spirit to change our behavior.

## **Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King – Verses 12-16**

**<sup>12</sup> The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup> They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the king of Israel!" <sup>14</sup> Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: <sup>15</sup> "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt." <sup>16</sup> At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.**

**12:12-13** Jesus began his last week on earth by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey under a canopy of palm branches, with crowds hailing him as their king. To announce that he was indeed the Messiah, Jesus chose a time when all Israel would be gathered at Jerusalem, a place where huge crowds could see him, and a way of proclaiming his mission that was unmistakable. On Palm Sunday we celebrate Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem as Lord of lords and King of Peace.

**12:13** The people who were praising God for giving them a king had the wrong idea about Jesus. They were sure he would be a national leader who would restore their nation to its former glory, and thus they were deaf to the words of their prophets and blind to Jesus' real mission. When it became apparent that Jesus was not going to fulfill their hopes, many people turned against him.

**12:16** After Jesus' resurrection, the disciples understood for the first time many of the prophecies that they had missed along the way. Jesus' words and actions took on new meaning and made more sense. In retrospect, the disciples saw how Jesus had led them into a deeper and better understanding of his truth. Stop now and think about the events in your life leading up to where you are now. How has God led you to this point? As you grow older, you will look back and see God's involvement more clearly than you do now.

## **The Crowds Come After Jesus, To The Dismay Of The Leaders – Verses 17-19**

**<sup>17</sup> Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. <sup>18</sup> Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. <sup>19</sup> So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"**

**12:17-18** The people flocked to Jesus because they had heard about his great miracle in raising Lazarus from the dead. Their adoration was short-lived and their commitment shallow, for in a few days they would do nothing to stop his crucifixion. Devotion based only on curiosity or popularity fades quickly.

### **Jesus Predicts His Death – Verses 20-26**

**20** Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. **21** They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” **22** Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. **23** Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. **24** Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. **25** Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. **26** Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

**12:20-21** These Greeks probably were converts to the Jewish faith. They may have gone to Philip because, though he was a Jew, he had a Greek name.

**12:23-25** This is a beautiful picture of the necessary sacrifice of Jesus. Unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil, it will not become a blade of wheat producing many more seeds. Jesus had to die to pay the penalty for our sin, but also to show his power over death. His resurrection proves he has eternal life. Because Jesus is God, Jesus can give this same eternal life to all who believe in him.

**12:25** We must be so committed to living for Christ that we “hate” our lives by comparison. This does not mean that we long to die or that we are careless or destructive with the life God has given, but that we are willing to die if doing so will glorify Christ. We must disown the tyrannical rule of our own self-centeredness. By laying aside our striving for advantage, security, and pleasure, we can serve God lovingly and freely. Releasing control of our lives and transferring control to Christ bring eternal life and genuine joy.

**12:26** Many believed that Jesus came for the Jews only. But when Jesus said, “Whoever serves me must follow me,” he was talking to these Greeks as well. No matter who the sincere seekers are, Jesus welcomes them. His message is for everyone. Don’t allow social or racial differences to become barriers to the gospel. Take the gospel to all people.

### **At The Crucial Hour, Jesus Expresses His Resolve – Verses 27-30**

**27** “Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. **28** Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” **29** The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. **30** Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine.

**12:27-30** Jesus knew his crucifixion lay ahead, and because he was human, he dreaded it. He knew he would have to take the sins of the world on himself, and he knew this would separate him from his Father. He wanted to be delivered from this horrible death, but he knew that God sent him into the world to die for our sins, in our place. Jesus said no to his human desires in order to obey his Father and glorify him. Although we will never have to face such a difficult and awesome task, we are still called to obedience. Whatever the Father asks, we should do his will and bring glory to his name.

## **Jesus Plainly Proclaims His Death – Verses 31-34**

<sup>31</sup> Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. <sup>32</sup> And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” <sup>33</sup> He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. <sup>34</sup> The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

**12:31-33** The prince of this world is Satan, an angel who rebelled against God. Satan is real, not symbolic, and is constantly working against God and those who obey him. Satan tempted Eve in the garden and persuaded her to sin; he tempted Jesus in the wilderness and did not persuade him to fall (Matthew 4:1-11). Satan has great power, but people can be delivered from his reign of spiritual darkness because of Christ’s victory on the cross. Satan is powerful, but Jesus is much more powerful. Jesus’ resurrection shattered Satan’s deathly power (Colossians 1: 13-14). To overcome Satan we need faithful allegiance to God’s Word, determination to stay away from sin, and the support of other believers.

**12:34** The crowd could not believe what Jesus was saying about the Messiah. They were waving palm branches for a victorious Messiah who would set up a political, earthly kingdom that would never end. From their reading of certain Scriptures, they thought the Messiah would never die (Psalms 89:35-36; 110:4; Isaiah 9:7). Other passages, however, showed that he would die (Isaiah 53:5-9). Jesus’ words did not mesh with their concept of the Messiah. First he had to suffer and die—then he would one day set up his eternal kingdom. What kind of Messiah, or Savior, are you seeking? Beware of trying to force Jesus into your own mold— he won’t fit.

## **Will The Messiah Live Forever? – Verses 35-36**

<sup>35</sup> Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. <sup>36</sup> Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

**12:35-36** Jesus said he would be with them in person for only a short time, and they should take advantage of his presence while they had it. Like a light shining in a dark place, he would point out the way they should walk. If they walked in his light, they would become “children of light,” revealing the truth and pointing people to God. As Christians, we are to be Christ’s light bearers, letting his light shine through us. How brightly is your light shining? Can others see Christ in your actions?

## **Belief and Unbelief Among the Jews – Verses 37-41**

<sup>37</sup> Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. <sup>38</sup> This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: “Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” <sup>39</sup> For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: <sup>40</sup> “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.” <sup>41</sup> Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.

**12:37-38** Jesus had performed many miracles, but most people still didn't believe in him. Likewise, many today won't believe despite all God does. Don't be discouraged if your witness for Christ doesn't turn as many to him as you'd like. Your job is to continue as a faithful witness. You are responsible to reach out to others, but they are responsible for their own decisions.

**12:39-41** People in Jesus' time, like those in the time of Isaiah, would not believe despite the evidence (12:37). As a result, God hardened their hearts. Does that mean God intentionally prevented these people from believing in him? No, he simply confirmed their own choices. After a lifetime of resisting God, they had become so set in their ways that they wouldn't even try to understand Jesus' message. For such people, it is virtually impossible to come to God—their hearts have been permanently hardened. Other instances of hardened hearts because of constant stubbornness are recorded in Exodus 9:12, Romans 1:24-28, and 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12.

### **Some Of The Rulers Have A Weak Belief In Jesus – Verses 42-43**

**<sup>42</sup> Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; <sup>43</sup> for they loved human praise more than praise from God.**

**12:42-43** Along with those who refused to believe, many believed but refused to admit it. This is just as bad, and Jesus had strong words for such people (see Matthew 10:32-33). People who will not take a stand for Jesus are afraid of rejection or ridicule. Many Jewish leaders wouldn't admit to faith in Jesus because they feared excommunication from the synagogue (which was their livelihood) and loss of their prestigious place in the community. But the praise of others is fickle and short-lived. We should be much more concerned about God's eternal acceptance than about the temporary approval of other people.

### **A Final Appeal To Belief – Verses 44-50**

**<sup>44</sup> Then Jesus cried out, "Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. <sup>45</sup> The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. <sup>46</sup> I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. <sup>47</sup> "If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. <sup>48</sup> There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. <sup>49</sup> For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. <sup>50</sup> I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."**

**12:45** We often wonder what God is like. How can we know the Creator when he doesn't make himself visible? Jesus said plainly that those who see him see God, because he is God. If you want to know what God is like, study the person and words of Jesus Christ.

**12:48** The purpose of Jesus' first mission on earth was not to judge people, but to show them the way to find salvation and eternal life. When he comes again, one of his main purposes will be to judge people for how they lived on earth. Christ's words that we would not accept and obey will condemn us. On the day of judgment, those who accepted Jesus and lived his way will be raised to eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:51-57; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; Revelation 21:1-7), and those who rejected Jesus and lived any way they pleased will face eternal punishment (Revelation 20:11-15). Decide now which side you'll be on, for the consequences of your decision last forever.