

Jesus—John 11:55-57; 12:1-11

Jesus Anointed for His Burial

I. Additional Scriptures/Notes...

1. Most commentators consider Mt 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9 to be parallel accounts to this record of Jesus' anointing in Bethany given by John.
2. 11:55... "The passover feast, called 'Rosh Hashanah' by the Jews, was attended by all the adult male population of Israel with ability to attend it. Little did the gathering throngs pressing into the capital for the great feast realize that the true and holy passover for all men would be sacrificed 'that year' (to use John's cryptic words again)." [Coffman]. /// "This is the third Passover mentioned in John (see 2:13; 6:4) and the last in Jesus' earthly ministry at which His sacrificial death occurred" [MacArthur Study Bible, p. 1608]. /// "To purify themselves - This purifying consisted in preparing themselves for the proper observation of the Passover, according to the commands of the law. If any were defiled in any manner by contact with the dead or by any other ceremonial uncleanness, they were required to take the prescribed measures for purification, Lev_22:1-6." [Barnes].
3. 12:2... "Lazarus was a living proof of the divinity and power of Jesus. No doubt many of those present had seen him walk from the tomb, ..." [Harold Littrell, *A Commentary on the Gospel by John*, p. 142].
4. 12:3... Mark describes the container of the ointment as **AN ALABASTER BOX** (Mk 14:3)—"Alabaster is a soft marble common in the area of Alabastron in Egypt, from which the word may come. It is very fine-grained and pure white or translucent when no impurities are present, but the presence of iron oxide and other impurities produces beautiful combinations of yellow, pale and dark brown, and red. This soft marble was so often used for ointment containers that the word came to mean an ointment jar. Alabaster is formed by water dripping in limestone caves to form stalactites and stalagmites. ... The plant from which nard, probably spikenard, comes grows in the Himalayan Mountains and other high regions in that part of the world." [Victor Handbook of Bible Knowledge, pp. 486-87].
5. 12:4... "**Which should betray him** (*ho mellown auton paradidonai*). John does not say in Jn 6:71 (*emellen paradidonai auton*) or here that Judas 'was predestined to betray Jesus' as Bernard suggests. He had his own responsibility for his guilt as Jesus said (Mt 26:24). Mellow here simply points to the act as future, not as necessary. Note the contrast between Mary and Judas. 'Mary in her devotion unconsciously provides for the honour of the dead. Judas in his selfishness unconsciously brings about the death itself' (Westcott)." [Robertson's Word Pictures].
6. 12:7... Mark's statement is more detailed here (cf., Mk 14:6-8).

II. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Christ.

"Most chronologists agree that our Lord spent at least two months in Ephraim. This was the last passover which our Lord attended; and it was at this one that he suffered death for the salvation of a lost world. As the passover was nigh, many of the inhabitants of Ephraim and its neighborhood went up to Jerusalem, some time (perhaps seven or eight days, for so much time was required to purify those who had touched the dead) before the feast, that they might purify themselves, and not eat the passover otherwise than prescribed in the law." [Clarke].

“The events, miracles, sermons, and parables given in Mt. 19—25; Mark 10—13; Luke 17:11—20:19 took place during these last days of Jesus’ earthly ministry; all near the time that Lazarus was raised” [Harold Littrell, *A Commentary on the Gospel by John*, p. 142].

III. Summary.

The last three verses of John 11 help us to get a picture of the tremendous courage of Jesus. He would indeed go to Jerusalem for the observance of the Passover. He did so even though the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment than anyone knowing where Jesus was must tell them so they might arrest Him.

Jesus is in Bethany and Lazarus, Mary, and Martha are also present. They share a meal together. Mary takes a pound of very expensive ointment which was most likely contained in an alabaster container (Mk 14:3). The ointment cruse was broken and used to anoint Jesus’ feet. Judas spoke against this act by protesting that the expensive ointment should have been sold and the proceeds used to help the poor. John tells us that Judas was not protesting because of any special love he had for the poor, but because he was a thief and kept the bag. Our Lord did not appreciate the criticism of Mary’s act and sprang to her defense, saying: “Let her alone.” His point was that the poor will always be around to aid, but not so would there be the opportunity to anoint Him for the burial. John tells us that many Jews came to the house to see not only Jesus, but also Lazarus. The chief priests talked about killing Lazarus because many were believing in Jesus because of Lazarus’ resurrection from the dead.

IV. Outline.

1. A third Passover is mentioned here in John and there is speculation about whether or not Jesus would attend this one (Jn 11:55-57).
2. The chief priests had demanded to be told when anyone should see Jesus (Jn 11:58).
3. Jesus shares a meal with friends in Bethany (Jn 12:1-2).
4. Mary anoints Jesus with expensive nard (Jn 12:3).
5. Judas objects (Jn 12:4-6).
6. Jesus defends Mary’s action as a pre-burial anointing (Jn 14:7-8).
7. Many come to see Jesus and Lazarus at Bethany (Jn 14:9).
8. The chief priests planned to kill Lazarus (Jn 14:10-11).

V. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ Many Jewish people believe in Jesus because of Lazarus.
02. _____ The chief priests and Pharisees wanted to take Jesus.
03. _____ Mary was rebuked by Jesus for anointing His feet with expensive ointment.
04. _____ Judas was quite concerned about the poor.
05. _____ The chief priests actually discussed murdering Lazarus.

Who Am I? Who Said It? Who Did It?

06. _____ “Let her alone.”
07. _____ “Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?”
08. _____ Because of him many believed in Jesus.
09. _____ Served.
10. _____ Gave commandment to tell where Jesus was.

Fill in the Blanks

11. “...they came not for Jesus’ sake only, but that they might see _____...”

12. "...and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to _____ themselves."
13. "...Lazarus was one of them that _____ at the _____ with him."
14. "...against the day of my _____ hath she kept this."
15. "For the _____ always ye have with you; but me ye have not always."

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

ANSWERS to Lesson 01-84 ... [01—True, Josh 24:2; 02—True, Josh 24:32; 03—False, Josh 24:12; 04—True, Josh 24:13; 05—True, Josh 24:29; 06—c, Josh 24:1; 07—c, Josh 24:9; 08— a, Josh 24:14; 09—b, Josh 24:20; 10—a, Josh 24:22; 11—choose, serve, Josh 24:15; 12— Balaam, Josh 24:10; 13—forsake, strange, turn, hurt, Josh 24:20; 14—Aaron, Josh 24:33; 15— Balak, Josh 24:9.]

VI. Lessons & Applications.

1. **Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment...** (John 11:57). The religious leaders of the day were fearful of losing their position of prominence and were desirous of getting rid of Jesus, Who was creating such interest among the people. PRIDE is one of those things that **does** defile a man (Mk 7:20-23). This is that which can cause one to be blinded to the miraculous signs Jesus had done (including raising Lazarus from the dead).
2. **...and Martha served...** (Jn 12:2). More Martha's are needed in the church. Yes, she was once rebuked by our Lord for mixed up priorities (Lk 10:40-42), but SERVICE is also highly commended by our Lord (Mt 20:26).
3. **This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, ...** (Jn 12:6). "We wonder why Jesus, knowing Judas to be a thief all along, allowed him to continue as the treasurer. Why does the Lord allow men to go on stubbornly in their own willful ways today—why does He not strike them dead as He did Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5)? For the same reason He allowed Judas to continue. He is longsuffering toward all men, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Judas was given a superabundance of grace and divine motivation to change, but he would not. Judas was not forced to steal. He was given every opportunity to exercise his free will to choose between good and evil. He simply chose to sell his souls to the devil for a few pieces of money" [Paul T. Butler, *The Gospel of John, Vol II*, p. 169].
4. **...Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this** (Jn 12:7). Jesus comes to the defense of Mary against Judas and, according to Matthew and Mark, the other disciples (cf., Mt 26:8; Mk 14:4). Evidently Judas was the instigator and the others went along with the protest against the waste Mary had made of the ointment. Surely after our Lord spoke these words the disciples would have regretted their protestations. Surely there would come times in the future when they wished they would have been the ones to anoint their Lord. It is so easy to get swept up into a matter without really thinking about it and this seems to be the case here. Weighing the two alternatives, after Jesus' defense of Mary was set forth, surely any could see the value of what she had done. Brother Guy N. Woods writes: "Jesus teaches here that worship is no less our responsibility than doing good to others, the latter being no substitute for the former. Jesus said that Mary had done what she could. There were many things she could not do but she received the blessing of Jesus for doing that within her power" [*The Gospel According to John*, p. 256].

5. **REFLECT:** If you had a year’s salary to use for Christ, how would you use it? How is that reflected in your budget now? If you could take a year off and use your time as a gift to God, what would you do? How is that reflected in your priorities now?
 [Serendipity Bible Study Book, p. 230].

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle.

P O I S U Y T T R E W Q L K H G F D S A
 M N B V U C X Z P O P O U N D U Y J T R
 E W Q L K P J H G F D I S A M N B U V C
 X Z P O I U P U Y T R N E W Q L K D J H
 G F D S A M N E V C X T Z P O I U A Y T
 M A R T H A R E R W Q M F E I H T S L K
 A K J H G F D S A W S E X C D E R F V B
 R G T Y H N M J U I K N K I O L P U J M
 Y N H D E P I W Y T G T R E V O S S A P
 C D E H W S X Z A Q E S R F B V F R T B
 B G T Y A U J B N H Y T P V F E V F R T
 V R R F V I B T E Y H N M I U J T I K P
 S W A X C D R E R T F V B G K N H R N H
 U Q Z I W S X C D E H R F V B E T Y A U
 R N B G S E D C X S W A Q A Z X N E D Y
 A C D E R E R F V B G T N Y H N M A N H
 Z C D E R F D V B G T T G Y N H Y U R I
 A V F R T G B N H Y E U J Y L T S O C D
 L B G T A N O I N T E D T G B N H Y U J
 Q A Z X S W E D C V F F R T G B Y D R L

[The highlighted words can be found above. They may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. DRL]

John 12:1-8... ¹Then Jesus six days before the **passover** came to **Bethany**, where **Lazarus** was which had been dead, whom he **raised** from the dead. ²There they made him a **supper**; and **Martha** served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. ³Then took **Mary** a **pound** of **ointment** of **spikenard**, very **costly**, and **anointed** the **feet** of Jesus, and **wiped** his feet with her **hair**: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. ⁴Then saith one of his disciples, **Judas** Iscariot, Simon’s *son*, which should **betray** him, ⁵Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? ⁶This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a **thief**, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. ⁷Then said Jesus, **Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.** ⁸**For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.**