

# Notes on John 12

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Many segments in John are long sections compared to the Synoptics. Two examples: 1.) His section on feeding the five thousand led to a long discourse on the Bread of Life. 2.) The narrative of the blind man in chapter 9 takes up all of that chapter and continues into chapter 10. This kind of writing occurs in most of this Gospel, but here in chapter 12 the Apostle places together a number of shorter sections:

- the meal in Bethany where Mary anointed the Lord
- the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem
- the request of the Greeks to see Jesus and His response
- John's theological reflection on unbelief and the Lord's appeal for faith.

The first three are events. The last is an explanation by John with related words by Christ. The three events all move closer to the death of Christ, which was very close in time.

After John 12, the narrative begins at the Passover meal. After Judas left, Jesus met only with disciples who believed in Him, so chapter 12 draws John's account of the public teaching ministry of Christ to an end. The Synoptics give much more of Jesus' public teaching during Passion Week; John gives much more of His private conversation in the Upper Room. The Lord would have one last day of activity observable to the public, the day of His crucifixion. On that day He was the Priest Who offered Himself for His people. After the crucifixion, not one person who had rejected Him ever saw Him on earth again. The next time they see Him will be at His Second Coming (Matthew 26:64).

John 12 shows the adoration of Mary for her Lord in contrast to the hatred of Jesus within the Sanhedrin. The brief public reception during the Triumphal Entry is very different from the feeling of those determined to have Him killed. The response to Christ continues to be divided within this Gospel and within our day as well. John wrote to encourage faith in Christ (20:30,31); the signs were the Father's work (10:32,37,38; 11:42) to point those who observed them to believe in Jesus. The reason for rejecting Christ is individual hardness of heart (v.40) and within the community, a greater fear of man than of God. John shows that the unbelief was a fulfillment of prophecy by Isaiah!

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## 12:1-8 Mary Anoints but Judas Deplores

**12:1** "Six days before Passover" is six days before the Friday Passover meal. (The crucifixion was on Friday in daylight. In Jewish reckoning Friday began at sunset on our Thursday.) So Jesus entered Bethany on the Saturday Sabbath. It was probably after sunset that there was a dinner in Jesus' honor. That means that "the next day," mentioned in v.12,13, is Sunday, the day of the *Triumphal Entry* that many call *Palm Sunday*.

In 11:56,57, many (probably His enemies) did not expect after the decision to arrest Jesus that He would come near Jerusalem. Nevertheless, here in chapter 12, He is already in Bethany, close to Jerusalem, for a big dinner. His location was well known to a large crowd of Jews (v.9). The next day a very large crowd, i.e., those coming to the feast from outside the city, "heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem" (v.12). Raising Lazarus increased the interest in Christ. In this meal there would be people present who were very grateful to Christ for raising their friend by calling out his name! Lazarus was also present and knew why He was there.

In that day people often ate by *reclining* at the table. Since this put their feet out away from them, it is better to say they reclined at the table. Some old artwork shows the Last Supper with the disciples sitting upright; actually they probably used couches. With Jesus reclining it would be easy for Mary to approach Him from behind to anoint His feet.

It is consistent with Luke 10:38-42 that Martha served. That meal was gone in a day, while Mary's devotion will be remembered eternally. We do not even know what they ate. Both sisters had gratitude for having their brother back from the dead, but here the narrative looks ahead to the future because Jesus' death and burial was very soon.

In all four Gospels there is an account of a woman approaching Jesus from behind to anoint Him while He was reclining at a table with others. Two of them say a woman wiped His feet with her hair. It is obvious that the

account in Matthew and Mark are so similar that it is the same story. The detail in John 12 shows that John also is writing about the same thing, though some debate that. However, what happened in Luke 7 is so different, surely Luke was not writing of the same occasion. (See Appendix 12 A below, Jesus Anointed by a Woman.)

It is serious that some scholars suggest all four accounts are from the same occasion. What makes it so serious is that they teach that this is an example (in their mistaken minds) of Gospel writers mixing the details of a story because they had their facts confused. That viewpoint assumes that this is a story distorted by repetition. They think that this is how we receive information in the Bible. Thus, in their opinion, the Bible contains errors and cannot be fully trusted. The Lord knew that what He really said could fade in the disciples' minds, so He promised that the Holy Spirit would bring to mind everything He said (14:26).

The Anointing by Mary in Bethany In Matthew, Mark, and John, the location of this anointing by a woman is Bethany in the house of Simon the leper. The time was very close to Passion Week. The ointment (or perfume) she used was very expensive; both Mark and John say it was nard, costing about 300 denarii. There was criticism of the woman among the disciples, especially Judas, because of the very high cost of what she had "wasted" on Jesus. Only John names Mary and Judas. The Lord defended her and connected her act to His burial. His death was only a week away. The woman spent the money on Jesus. It did not go through Judas' hands, so he could not steal any of it. Matthew and Mark relate that it was just after this that Judas decided to make some money in an agreement with the chief priests.

The Anointing in Luke 7 What we read in Luke happened in the house of a Pharisee. It is doubtful that this Pharisee is Simon the leper. That section in the Gospel of Luke speaks of events in Galilee, not Bethany near Jerusalem. Luke, unlike the other three, does not speak of this as close to Passion Week. (He gives the Triumphal Entry later in Luke 19.) The woman is called a *sinner*, a term used to imply that she was known for sexual immorality. The ointment she used is not reported as expensive, nor that all of it was used. It was the Pharisee (not a disciple) who objected, and he objected not to the cost of the ointment, but about Jesus allowing such a person to keep touching Him. This led to Jesus defending her and pronouncing her forgiven of her sins.

There are also a few obvious likenesses in these accounts. Does this mean it was one event? A woman anointed Jesus during a meal in the sight of other guests and wiped His feet with her hair. Some teachers assume with that much detail that the Gospels simply give different versions of the same event. There is no contradiction among the three accounts in Matthew, Mark, and John. Truthful people do not need to give identical versions in order to be truthful. Two different women at different times in different places anointed Jesus for different reasons. It is that simple.

Matthew and Mark say Jesus' head was anointed, while John and Luke refer to His feet. Probably all the Luke 7 woman did was His feet, with an unspecified amount of ointment. The cost of it was not an issue. She also used her tears and wiped His feet with her hair. This was a grateful woman with a deep sense of sinfulness. The other woman, Mary, also anointed Jesus' feet as well as His head. In Matthew and Mark, Jesus said His *body* had been anointed, which implies that it was more than His head. Since Mary broke the flask and poured it out, it is quite clear that she used up the whole amount, and that is what provoked the criticism of her. If she began at His head, that would be quite observable to the men at the table. I suggest she anointed the length of His body in a way similar to the way they prepared a body for burial. It is not a contradiction for one Gospel to say she anointed His head and for another Gospel to say she anointed His feet, because Mary did both. When John speaks of wiping with her hair, that is a detail not mentioned in Matthew and Mark. The defense Jesus gave of the two women is very different. The woman in Luke 7 showed gratitude concerning her sins, and Mary anointed in anticipation of Jesus' burial.

The Holy Spirit carried the writers of Scripture to write truth as men who spoke from God (2 Peter 1:21), thus they wrote accurately. Christians should remember the promise of 14:26. We are not left with a Bible that has confused and contradictory accounts. All good Bible teachers recognize this.

Feet in the Gospel of John! John the Baptist tells us he was not worthy to untie Jesus' sandals (1:27). That kind of demeaning work was done by low-ranking servants. In this way the Baptist spoke of the greatness

of Christ. Mary considered it a privilege to anoint Him, a very sharp contrast with the views of those who planned to kill Him. John shows love and murder side by side when he placed the murder that was still in the planning stage and Mary's devotion so close together. Very soon in this Gospel (chapter 13) Jesus will wash His disciples' feet and teach them that they need to do the same with others. Thus reporting Mary's attention to Jesus' feet fits in well as a way to contrast the different responses to Jesus. John always wrote with the issue of believing or rejecting in mind.

**12:4-6 The Attitude of Judas** Judas deplored such "waste". This money did not go through his hands, so in the ointment Mary used, he was unable to "help himself". He was a devil (6:70) who did not love the Lord. Mary's act of giving such a costly gift to Christ was strange to his greedy heart. As a liar, Judas was like his father the devil (8:44). He spoke without sincerity concerning the poor. Soon Satan would enter into him (13:2,27). Soon he would betray the Lord with a kiss; soon Judas would be dead. Mary's gift was worth a year's wages. Judas made a deal to show where Jesus could be captured away from the public eye of the crowd. For thirty silver coins (Matthew 26:15), Judas sold Jesus cheap; it was the price of a slave (Exodus 21:32).

**12:7,8 Jesus' Defense of Mary** The Lord's words here are difficult to interpret. I think Jesus meant that Mary had been keeping the expensive nard for His future burial. However, when the One who had raised her brother was present again in Bethany, she took that opportunity and anointed Him then. Had she waited till His burial, she might not have had opportunity to use it. Joseph and Nicodemus cared for the body of Christ (19:38-42), but the speed of the Resurrection prevented the Galilean women from using their spices after the Sabbath was over (Luke 23:55,56). If Mary had in mind Jesus' burial, then she understood the many predictions of Jesus more than His disciples did. She knew His death was coming, probably because she listened to Him and believed what He told her.

**12:8** "*The poor you will always have with you...*" When the Lord said this, He was not being hard-hearted to the poor. He is the Lord Who said all the things found in Scripture about the poor. His words are so close to what He said in Deuteronomy 15:11, that He may have been quoting that text: "*For there will never cease to be poor in the land. Therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor, in your land.'*" Most of Deuteronomy 15 commands generosity to the poor. Jesus' point in John 12 was that Mary took an opportunity that would quickly pass away. He meant that soon you will have the poor but not Me. He was not saying helping the poor is futility. 2 Corinthians 8 & 9 reveals that Paul urged giving for the poor among the Gentile churches. He said in Galatians 2:10 that remembering the poor was a thing he was eager to do!

## 12:9-19 The Triumphal Entry

**12:9** Who knew that Jesus was moving toward Jerusalem? Vv. 9,12,17 show that a large crowd knew Jesus was in Bethany and went there to see Him and Lazarus (v.9). When He was traveling to Jerusalem, pilgrims who had come to the feast came out to meet Him (v.12). A major cause of some others going out to see Him was the testimony of those who observed Jesus calling Lazarus out of the tomb (v.19). So a large crowd was in Bethany before the Triumphal Entry began, and many others in Jerusalem went out to meet Him.

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| <p><b>A fickle crowd?</b> Some teachers assume that the crowd who blessed Jesus as King was the same one that later cried out for Jesus' crucifixion (Mark 15:11-15). I urge caution in adopting that suggestion. There is no indication that the <i>crowd</i> in Mark 15 is the same <i>crowd</i> in John 12, especially among those who were witnesses of Jesus calling Lazarus out of his tomb (12:17). Many of those Jews believed (11:45); not all the witnesses of that sign ran to Jesus' enemies among the Pharisees with the news of Lazarus. Furthermore, at the time of Pilate's decision many lamented its cruel injustice. They did not consent to it, so they must not have been ones who called for it (Luke 23:27,28).</p> |
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After all the threats on the Lord's life, and even attempts on His life, riding into Jerusalem was a very public thing to do. In 11:56 those looking to arrest Him were confident He would not come into the city, yet here He was making His most spectacular entrance ever! Some time earlier, "*when the days drew near for him to be taken up* [i.e., on the cross], *he set his face to go to Jerusalem,*" Luke 9:51. He never wavered in His

determination to go to Jerusalem to be the offering for our sin. The Lord was careful earlier about allowing knowledge of His movements as to when He would go to the Feast of Tabernacles (7:1-9). His brothers said, “*Show yourself to the world!*” (7:4), but that was not the chosen hour (7:7,8). The time was getting close in chapter 7, but it was the wrong feast. Passover in the following spring was His hour, so He approached the city in full public view with a large crowd proclaiming Him as the King of Israel.

The authorities wanted to locate Him. At this feast Jesus again appeared in public, though when He was not in a very public setting He hid Himself (12:36). However, His being cheered passionately by a crowd on His way to the Temple (Mark 11:11) was not what the authorities were hoping for! They were delighted that Judas, for a small fee, would do for them what they wanted. Judas would show them where to find Jesus at night far from the view of the crowds in Jerusalem. (A Passover in Jerusalem could have more than two million present.)

**Jesus’ predictions of His death** The deliberate act of such a public entry into Jerusalem fits many of Christ’s predictions of His death. The OT revealed that the Messiah would reign forever and that the Messiah would die. Daniel 7:13,14 and 9:26 are examples of these predictions. The classic OT texts are Isaiah 52:13- 53:12 and Psalm 22. Then while He was still an infant, Simeon told His mother that a sword would pierce her soul, a reference to Jesus’ death (Luke 2:25-35).

Matthew 12:38-42 reports Jesus’ word about being in the heart of the earth. All three Synoptic Gospels record three different predictions about what would happen when Christ went to Jerusalem for that final time.

- a) Matthew 16:21-27 = Mark 8:31-38; = Luke 9:22-27
- b) Matthew 17:22,23 = Mark 9:30-32; = Luke 9:37-43
- c) Matthew 20:17-19 = Mark 10:32-34; = Luke 18:31-34

### **Within this Gospel of John:**

One year prior to Passion Week (when He would actually give His body and shed His blood!), Jesus taught in 6:50-58 that eternal life comes only for those who eat of His flesh and blood. **In light of all this, the Triumphal Entry is a deliberate step in Jesus’ intention to go to the cross.**

In the first year of His public ministry, Jesus predicted His death and resurrection (2:19). His word in 3:14 about being *lifted up* is the first NT statement that implied a crucifixion. Later, He told His enemies they would lift Him up (8:28). John closed his writing about Jesus’ public ministry in chapter 12; there again he recorded another reference by Christ to His crucifixion (12:32,33).

**12:9-11** Naturally, many had a great interest in seeing Lazarus. He had become famous. The chief priests realized that if they killed only Jesus, there was still this well-known man Lazarus walking around whom Jesus had raised. People were “going away” from them (12:11), so faith in Christ was a threat to their idea of proper unity. (Proper unity in their opinion meant that everyone should follow them!) They decided to kill the Lord and also the living, walking evidence (Lazarus) that Jesus was the Christ. The Bible never says that they would be relieved if all of Jesus’ other miracles could be reversed as well, but they were not happy about any of them. The Pharisees taught that He did them in the power of the devil (Matthew 12:22-24).

The hostile treatment of the man born blind in chapter 9, revealed that the leaders who threw him out of their synagogue fellowship (see 16:2) were false shepherds (chapter 10). That hatred intensified into the intended murder (see 16:2) of Lazarus by officials of the Lord within Israel. These men were priests of the Lord, descendents of Aaron. A similar hatred will fall on all who belong to the Lord (16:3). In John 9 and 12, John gives examples of excommunication, hatred, and a murder plot in advance of the Lord’s teaching on this in chapter 16.

**12:12-13** *The next day* must be a Sunday, the day after the dinner in Jesus’ honor in Bethany. Only John records the use of palm branches. (See the chart: The Triumphal Entry.) Spreading palms in front of an entering dignitary was an honor to them. Palms had a nationalistic connotation. Judea was noted for palm trees. More than 160 years before the people spread palms in front of Jesus, there was a Jewish hero, the military leader who drove the Syrians out of Jerusalem. They did the same for him. Just as some wanted to make Jesus king after

He fed the 5000 (6:14,15), people in the crowd could be hoping for a “messiah” who would stir up and lead the people against Rome. Note in the chart below that all four Gospels show the intensity of the people’s passion. Jesus corrected a false notion of His mission by sitting on a young donkey that had never had a rider on it before (Luke 19:30). He did not appear as a mighty conqueror sitting on a warhorse. The Bible does present Jesus in that imagery in Revelation 19:11-16, where Jesus at His second coming will ride on a white horse leading an army. The Lord never confused His first and second coming! According to 1 Peter 1:11 the sufferings of Christ precede the glories that would follow. We are still in a time of bearing the cross and sharing in His sufferings. Later, the glory of His spectacular coming will bring glory to His people (2 Thessalonians 1:10).

**12:13 Psalm 118** The people understood Psalm 118 to refer to the Messiah. So when they cried out, “*Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord,*” that was a way of saying that they looked on Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah. The people said this on their own at that time; it is not a later explanation of the event by the Gospel writers. (An example of an Apostle applying a text later to an event is 2:17.) This text fits this Gospel well since John often recorded the Lord speaking of Himself as the Sent One Who had come down from heaven (6:33). (See Appendix 12 B below The Triumphal Entry.)

**12:13 “Hosanna”** is Hebrew for “save us now”. Such a plea should only be said to God the Savior. Prayer must be offered to God alone! The people did not understand (but Mary did) that for Jesus *to save us now*, He must continue into Jerusalem. There He was not to be declared King, so He could sit *on the throne* of David immediately; rather, Jesus must first be the Priest Who would make Himself a sacrifice *on the cross*. Only then would He sit on His throne (Psalm 110:1 & 4; Hebrews 10:12). Their Hosanna might have meant, “Please save us from these terrible Romans!” The priority in salvation that Jesus came to accomplish was first to deliver His subjects from sin.

**12:14-16** (See Appendix 12 C: Zechariah 9:9 and the Triumphal Entry below.) Jesus found the donkey by sending disciples to fetch it. (In their language it was common to speak of the one causing as the one who did it.) It is not clear here what time John meant by “only after Jesus was glorified” in v.16. John especially points out that Christ was glorified in *the hour* of His death (12:27-33). Probably 12:16 means that the disciples realized what Zechariah 9:9 meant only after Jesus was glorified in the Resurrection. (See 2:22.)

**12:17-19** See 12:9 above for comments on who were present to see the Triumphal Entry. The crowd giving such high praise to Christ provoked a stern reaction among the Pharisees (Luke 19:39,40). John shows that it only increased their resolve to put a stop to His influence among the people. They were even more convinced that Caiaphas’ proposal to kill Jesus was the best ‘solution’ (11:49,50).

## The Interest of the Greeks 12:20-22

Just as John condensed the finding of the colt for Jesus to ride, we have another incident with little detail. Yet John deliberately includes it. The Jewish leaders were planning the murder of Jesus and even Lazarus. Jesus came to His own and was rejected (1:11); Gentiles were doing the opposite. They were present in Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel, while the Jewish leadership was intent on killing Him.

The Pharisees complained that *the whole world has gone after Him* (v.19). They meant the attention Jesus received from the many Jewish pilgrims as well as the residents of Jerusalem. John knew their words and showed how it was more true than they realized (vv. 20,21). These Greeks represented the outside world, and they were seeking Jesus, an early example of the Gentile response to the gospel that would soon spread throughout the world. In Paul’s words, the rejection by Israel led to *the reconciliation of the world* (Romans 11:15). These Greeks were typical of the *other sheep* Christ would bring into His fold (10:16).

**12:22** Philip and Andrew both had Greek names. It is not surprising the Greeks made their request to them. Whether they saw Jesus at this time is not known. The hour had come and He needed to die so there could be a gospel. The gospel is not Jesus talking to people, but a message of what He did for people on the cross.

**12:23-26** It is at this precise point that the Lord said His hour had come. We may wonder why He did not say that hour had arrived at some other prominent moment, such as the Garden of Gethsemane or at His entrance into Jerusalem. The Jews reject and the Greeks seek; clearly a great turning point in history has arrived. The rejection will be His death, which will draw Gentiles from the entire world to Him (v.32).

He could have said that it was His time to die, but instead He said it was time for the Son of Man to be glorified. (When “Son of Man” is used in this Gospel, it usually appears in a context of grandeur or of Jesus’ death.) Thus His death is not only a benefit for sinners. It is a death that glorified Christ by showing something glorious about Him! His sacrifice is extremely productive – *much fruit* (v.24) – yet even such a good purpose for His people is overshadowed by the motivation to honor His Father. Losing (giving up) His life reveals the glory of Christ, especially the glory of His submission and obedience to the Father. In our day, we are quick to see that Jesus died *for us* and slow to see that He died *to God* (Hebrews 9:14). The Father sent the Son, and the Son obeyed the Father. He always has and always will! Jesus’ mission meant He had to lose His life by hating His life. Hating in their language meant to prefer something else so much more (such as the Father’s will), that the other thing that might be loved (such as His own life) is set aside.

The result of Jesus’ preference to serve the Father was His being honored/glorified by the Father in His resurrection, ascension, being seated at the Father’s right hand, and receiving eternally the gratitude of the redeemed (Revelation 1:5,6; 5:9-11). In order to glorify the Father, all must bow and confess Jesus Christ as Lord (Philippians 2:9-11). This shows that the One who gave His life has gained the Father’s honor. Having lost His life in obedience, Jesus keeps it eternally.

Before the Lord said more of what was ahead for the Gentiles (v.32), He applied to all of us the principle of losing lives for the sake of God’s will. (This was part of His answer when the Greeks wished to see Him!) He taught that this is essential, the common principle of every decision. In other words, Jesus’ giving His life was not an obedience with nothing parallel expected in anyone else. Only Christ by Himself bore the wrath of God for sinners; only Christ has brought the reconciliation of God to us and satisfaction for sin to God. In that service Jesus is unique. But Christ was not alone in dying to self as the condition of a fruitful God-honoring life. Just as a kernel of grain must die for a fruitful plant to emerge from the ground, we too must give up what would please us by being pleased to do what pleases God. In holiness, God cannot demand less than full obedience; in justice, He cannot forget love shown to Him (Hebrews 6:10) and in grace, He will honor the one who serves Him. Obedience to the Lord, though it is contrary to our sinful nature, yields a double benefit: a) God’s honor to the one obeying, and b) a productive ministry blessing others. The person who will not obey God, does not know God; he will suffer a double loss: the life he now loves, and the eternal life he never had.

**12:26** When one serves Christ, a claim made by every Christian, he must follow in the specific issue addressed in this context (dying to self). This is not optional! The Lord promises to honor His servants. It is difficult to understand how a God so high Who owes us nothing can honor lowly creatures. Former sinners receive praise from God (1 Corinthians 4:5). His kindness (Ephesians 2:7) reaches its ultimate when Jesus’ servants will be with Him where He is (14:3) to see His glory. This is far beyond a king giving gifts. It is God taking mankind into His presence and fellowship, bestowing such a title upon us as “friend of God” (James 2:23). Having us with Him forever is the yearning of Christ revealed in promise (14:3) and prayer (17:24). All Christians will be with Him; yet only those who serve Him will be with Him, therefore all Christians choose to lose their lives in this world.

**12:27** The hour had come (v.23) and Jesus was greatly troubled. (The same verb in 11:33 is a strong word that means to be in turmoil.) The troubling was directly connected to His impending hour of trial and death. How should Christ respond in His inner trouble when it was the will of God (Hebrews 10:7-10) that He should be offered as the Lamb of God (1:29)? Should He say to His Father “save Me” from the very thing God sent Him to do? That makes no sense. His response was a strong “No!”. He would not make such a request, since He knew the Father’s will. Though His hour would be an excruciating prospect, His settled response was, “*Father, glorify your name.*” In this way, Jesus chose not to love His life so that He could glorify God. By Jesus’ obedience, the Father was demonstrating His love (Romans 5:8). Because of that God-glorifying hour, we praise His glorious grace (Ephesians 1:6). Jesus’ prayer that the Father be glorified was His decision to drink the cup His Father had

given Him (Matthew 20:22; 26:39). He hated His life in the sense of 12:25. He was troubled (Hebrews 5:7-9), but He still accepted the guilt of sins He never committed and endured the wrath of God in the place of sinners.

Since the reason Christ came was for the hour of His death, we must see the priority He gave to it. Other things He did fit in with it, but His teaching and miracles could never save us if He had been “saved from this hour.” We need a Savior, and only Christ can be our Savior, but only if He goes to the cross. He did not come to show a way back to God as a great teacher; He came to be the way (14:6) as our priest and sacrifice. For Paul, the cross was the core of his message (Galatians 6:14; 1 Corinthians 1:18, 22-25; 2:2; 9:16); for Christ, dying on the cross was the core of His mission. John does not record Jesus’ time of anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42); he gives these other words from Christ that reveal the same commitment to pursue the Father’s will.

**12:28-30** The Father answered, even though the crowd did not discern the words. Jesus knew the reply from heaven, and they did not. They all knew there was some response, even if they assumed it was an angel. The Father’s reply to the Son reveals great unity of purpose. The Son’s determination is connected with the Father’s determination to make this hour a success. The request this time is for the Father to be glorified; later Jesus will seek from the Father His own glorification (17:1-5). Neither can be glorified unless the other is. The Father has been active (5:36) in all that Christ has done, so He said, “I have glorified it.” The Father will glorify His Name further by what is just ahead in Jesus’ death. Thus in Christ, God the Father is properly credited for the Son’s accomplishments. God loved the world and sent the Son (3:16); God was in Christ making reconciliation (2Corinthians 5:19). The gospel of Christ is the same as the gospel of God (Mark 1:14; Romans 1:1; 15:16).

John has given many examples (7:12-15, 20, 52 and 12:34) of people having different opinions. Here in 12:29 both explanations are wrong; it was neither thunder nor an angel. All their lives the disciples would remember this moment. Having learned from Jesus what the Father had said, they benefited from this supernatural word that explained to them the significance of the cross. The voice was timely, coming just before His sacrifice. It is not enough to know Jesus died; we need to know why.

**12:31-34** Jesus’ emphasis on *now* continues (See 12:27), because His hour had come: now judgment, now the devil cast out. Christ was the light that the world could neither overcome (1:4,5), nor love (3:19-21). In this hour that had finally arrived, the world was being judged for its response to Christ. In the world’s view it appeared that Jesus was on trial, but in Jesus’ death the guilt of the world was exposed. Unbelief eventually hardened into murder.

*Now* the devil too (the ruler of this world), was being cast out. This cannot mean that the devil is inactive. (Note 1 Thessalonians 2:18 and 2 Thessalonians 2:9.) Satan still resists and deceives, but his power is broken. He has been bound by Christ (Matthew 12:25-29) so that he is unable to maintain his former grip on his slaves. Christ has destroyed the one who held people in slavery (Hebrews 2:14,15). In Luke 10:16-19 when the disciples cast out demons, it demonstrated Satan’s fall from power. *Now* in His death the Lord will defeat the devil. His death served as ours and has freed us from condemnation and eternal death. Christ represented us and God has punished our sins in Him. Death, as separation from God, has no more hold on us, so Satan’s grip is broken. He can hold us no longer; we will not share his hell; we do not believe his lies; we are no longer part of His kingdom (Colossians 1:13,14). His reign over us has been taken over by the true Lord (1 Corinthians 8:4-6). Before His final judgment (Revelation 20:10), Satan has been condemned (16:11), confined (Matthew 12:29), defeated (Luke 4:13; 1 John 3:8), and frustrated (Revelation 12:12). By saying *now*, Jesus pointed to His cross as the specific moment in history that marked Satan’s defeat. The devil was active in getting Judas to betray Christ, but in three days all that the devil had hoped for was ruined; Jesus the Victor emerged from the grave.

**12:32** It would be foolish to think that no one is currently being deceived by Satan (Acts 5:3; 2 Corinthians 2:11). Hell will not be empty. How can both things be true: that the ruler of this world is cast out, while a multitude of mankind remain under Satan’s power (1 Timothy 5:15) and perish in their sins (8:24)? I think the answer is found in Jesus’ next words that He will draw all to Himself. Just as in John 6:44 this drawing is effective, yet those God never drew to Christ never come, and so remain in Satan’s kingdom. Does the Bible contradict itself by making the hour of Jesus’ death the moment when the ruler of this world is cast out?

**Is the Atonement Universal?** In my opinion we face today a common confusion. Many evangelicals hold to a universal atonement. They think that Jesus died for all in the same way, yet they do not think that all mankind will be saved. Most do not notice that an atonement for all, which does not produce the salvation of all, is an atonement that does not save. So in this view, the cause of conversion has changed (probably unintentionally) from Jesus drawing people, to man by his 'free will' deciding his own salvation. In other words, we are the ones who make the cross of Christ effective or ineffective in our own case.

Yet Jesus did say that when He was lifted up He would draw all. In our time most evangelicals do not think that the Lord's drawing people is what actually causes anyone to come. In much popular thought, Christ's drawing has fallen to the level of little more than a sincere invitation. In such an understanding, the Savior's effectiveness depends on the human response. Probably no Christian really means to propose a powerful sinner and a weak Savior. If we are unaware that sinners are truly dead in sins apart from the regenerating power of God (Ephesians 2:1), we are vulnerable to thinking that salvation is within the reach of all in the power of their own 'free will'. Against such a view, the Lord in v.32 claimed He would draw all successfully, and in the same context asserted that there is nothing the devil can do to stop Him (v.31).

In the triumph of the cross, the devil is cast out (12:31), and Jesus when lifted up, will draw all to Himself. Yet we do not see all mankind coming! Surely the Lord was not speaking a falsehood! I think the solution is that each and every one drawn by the Father (6:44) or Christ\* will come (12:32) to Him. That saved person has been lost to Satan's kingdom. The devil is unable to retain anyone that God removes from his kingdom. Further, Satan is unable to retrieve them afterwards (10:28,29). On the cross Christ so thoroughly defeated Satan that He proceeds to take apart that evil kingdom as He builds His church (Matthew 16:18) with the reaction of the devil unable to prevent it. Not one the Father has given to Christ will remain in Satan's grip. \*[Note that 5:19 teaches that whatever the Father does the Son also does.]

Often my fellow believers argue that the Bible says that Jesus represented each and every human being in His sacrifice. They note that the Bible uses such terms as *all* and *the whole world*. In 12:19 *world* does not mean each and every individual without exception. Here as in 1 John 2:2, it means all kinds without distinction. The Greeks who came are an example of the *all* people Jesus will draw. Gentile sheep from all the world will be brought by Christ into His fold (10:16). So Christ draws to Himself taking from Satan all the ones the Father had given Him (6:37,39; 17:2). These are the sheep for whom He laid down His life (10:11,14-16). Satan, overpowered by Christ on the cross, is unable to prevent this.

There is no contradiction. Satan has truly been cast out, evident by the Lord drawing from his kingdom all those He chooses (5:21). Satan is powerless to stop this. Jesus' famous "*My hour*" and His repeated *now* (three times in vv.27 & 31) is the moment of triumph. In earlier times God overlooked (Acts 17:30), but in the coming of Christ He went on the offensive to rescue and save (Luke 1:74-77). That coming was like the rising of the sun (Luke 1:78,79); the darkness could not withstand it. By His blood shed for them, Christ redeems slaves at will from Satan's Kingdom. This is the effective outcome of His being lifted up on the cross. If we believe in a universal atonement, the words of Christ that claim that Satan has been cast out, do not fit the reality of the devil's continued grip on so many. But if we accept a particular atonement that saves everyone God has chosen to save, then we have a doctrine consistent with the devil being cast out as Christ removes from him all the Lord has chosen from all nations.

**12:32** When the gospel is spread throughout the world, we naturally hope and pray for its success. Here is a statement that reveals the intention of God. He will draw without limitation from every part of this planet, from every nation and family and tribe (Revelation 7:9). This is our greatest encouragement.

**12:33,34** By saying *lifted up*, Jesus indicated a crucifixion, not a stoning. In 3:14 He announced the kind of death He would die before His enemies even decided to kill Him (5:18). The idea of the death of the Messiah puzzled the crowd. Their knowledge of the OT Scriptures was so limited they saw only the glory of Messiah's reign and missed the clear assertions of His vicarious suffering in Psalm 22 and Isaiah 52,53 and elsewhere (Luke 24:44-47). They had in mind only some of God's revealed truth.

In v.23 Jesus called Himself the Son of Man, also from the OT in Daniel 7:13. In His presence the crowd wondered aloud how He could speak of the Son of Man/ Messiah being killed in such a fashion and who the Son of Man might be. In light of all He taught and did, their words reveal unbelief. The darkness in their minds happened in the presence of the light!

**12:35,36** This is the way the Lord described the situation. He is the light that would be among them very briefly. The person who has no light cannot walk with assurance or see or know where he is going. The person who rejects Christ walks in willful darkness, and that is what those who rejected Christ were doing. They had

been given enough so that they could believe. In 5:31-47 and 8:12-18, Christ gave reasons to believe. He did much more than state reasons, He really did do the signs that were so contested but well-known. He spoke on many topics and reasoned with them from the Scriptures, Scriptures they knew to be the Word of God. In the public ministry of Jesus, much light had been shining in their direction. False teaching could not refute nor overcome it, and blind eyes could not see it. (John 1:5 is sufficiently ambiguous to allow both meanings, overcoming and comprehending.)

Christians may be described in terms of how we become one; we are saved when we believe. Christians may also be described in terms of the effect becoming one has in us. Here Jesus describes true believers as those who have been transformed. They not only receive light in the mind; they are characterized by it and become *sons of light*. As we read in the Prologue, Jesus came to His own; He was the Light Who brought light. They had this Light among them but did not believe in Him. Since they did not believe, they did not “see His glory, the glory of the Only Begotten, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (1:14).

**12:36-43** Having made His last appeal to believe, Jesus withdrew from public ministry. (See the notes below for 12:44-50.) The Apostle John then followed with a sobering analysis of the horror of unbelief. He had written his Prologue in a way that emphasized becoming *children of God* (another way to say *sons of light!*) by receiving Christ, which is the same as believing in Him (1:12). The Lord’s last word to unbelieving Israel was the same message. Next John dealt with unbelief.

**12:37.38** Signs alone do not bring people to faith. Those today who propose an evangelistic strategy stressing supernatural signs as the most convincing work of God, should remember what the Apostle said. John wrote five NT books and never reports to us one sign that he personally did, though as an apostle (2 Corinthians 12:12) there must have been many. (See also 14:11-14.) This Gospel does not report that any of the miracles in John 5,6,9 & 11 produced faith in those who were well aware of them. (Note also Matthew 11:20-24.)

Israel’s unbelief fit in with God’s great plan, a plan that the Messiah would be rejected and the gospel would go to the nations (Romans 11:11-15; 25). If we do not understand such things, our duty is to discover what the Bible tells us in order to believe everything it says. This is an example of man’s sin, with man freely choosing his sin, yet God used man’s sin to accomplish His gracious salvation. He used Satan and Judas in His grand design of salvation. God is God and He may use something prepared for destruction to make known the riches of His glory (Romans 9:22,23).

Isaiah predicted not only the death of Christ, but also the unbelief of God’s covenant people Israel. The OT presents us often with the anomaly that people with false gods were very loyal to them, and those who had the true God were faithless to Him. Isaiah said Gentile nations would some day understand the truth of God’s Servant (Isaiah 52:15). That was an amazing prediction. Isaiah followed immediately in 53:1 by asking who believed, and to whom the Arm of the Lord had been revealed? The Arm of the Lord is the Lord; here in v.37 He is Christ Who showed Himself in mighty works. But who believed? The assumption of Isaiah 53:1-3 is that Israel was unbelieving. In Romans 10:16, Paul used Isaiah 53:1 to show that “*not all the Israelites accepted the good news.*” The Apostle John also wrote that even Israel’s unbelief was a fulfillment of divine prophecy.

The *Arm of the Lord* had been revealed to Israel (1:31). Christ as the Lord God of Israel blinded the eyes and hardened the hearts of those who resisted all He had showed them and all His warnings. After His appeals to men (12:35,36; see also Romans 10:21), God condemns and punishes people by locking them into what they have chosen to be. This response of God is often called *judicial* hardening. (See Romans 11:25.) When God does that, all further overtures of the Spirit are denied to the reprobate. They are *given over* to their chosen sin and made to be its slaves, never to escape from it (Romans 1:24,26,28). Those who reject are blinded, so they cannot see and hardened so they *cannot* believe. What God promised Israel in the new covenant was the cleansing of the new birth, with hearts changed from hard stone to soft flesh (Ezekiel 36:25,26). Christ is the Mediator of that new covenant (Hebrews 9:15). Rejecting the One Who would bring these blessings was to lose them and to live in blindness all the while thinking that they could see (John 9:41).

**12:40,41** One of the most familiar OT visions of the Lord God of Israel is Isaiah’s call to his prophetic ministry (Isaiah 6). God called him to a ministry in which he would not be heard. The effect of Isaiah’s

proclamation of the Word was that his hearers would be hardened according to Isaiah 6:9,10. This text is quoted in all four Gospels and Acts as an explanation of spiritual resistance. (See Matthew 13:14,15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10 & 19:42; Acts 28:26,27). John shows the hardness of unbelief in Jesus' day. Then at the end of his quotation he added that the glory that Isaiah saw that day was Jesus' glory. Thus, just as in 8:58, this Gospel adds to its theme that the Word made flesh is none other than the Lord God of Israel Himself. At the opening and close of the Prologue, the Word is called *God*, the One Whose glory was seen when He tabernacled among us on this earth. Isaiah saw the glory of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that Son is Jesus. John hopes his readers will believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God (20:30,31).

Some teach, though they should not, that Isaiah was written by more than one Isaiah. Here John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says that quotations from Isaiah 53 and Isaiah 6 are both from and by the Prophet Isaiah!

**12:42,43** The evidence that Christ is the true Messiah of Israel according to the Scriptures (1 Corinthians 15:3,4) was sufficient to convince even leaders to believe. This they believed in a cognitive sense, but a higher priority than the fear of God dominated their hearts. (See 7:12,13.) They could see truth, but they chose not to confess Christ before others (see 9:22 and Matthew 10:32-29). They had a greater love for the glory that comes from man than the glory of God. They missed the comfort of 12:26, "*If anyone serves me, he must follow me; and where I am, there will my servant be also. If anyone serves me, the Father will honor him.*" (See also 5:44 and Romans 2:29.) Their minds could see some light of truth; their hearts rejected its call to glorify God as Christ did (12:28). The darkness overtook them (12:35); the light would be with them only a little while longer (12:35). Where He went they could not go; many died in their sins (8:21), knowing that Jesus was the Messiah, or wondering if He was. Hopefully when they heard the gospel proclaimed after the resurrection of Christ, some of them were included, as "a large number of priests became obedient to the faith," (Acts 6:7). God has shown us all His mercy. Repentance is one of His blessings! (Acts 3:26).

## The Finale of Jesus' Public Ministry 12:44-50

The preceding Biblical explanation on unbelief (vv.37-43) is part of the way John closes His account of the public ministry of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel. To finish, John quotes things Jesus had said at some time, not necessarily after He had finished speaking in v.36!

These words have much in common with the way this Gospel began in 1:1-18. Seek the Appendix 12D below The Prologue of this Gospel Compared with Final Summary Quotations in 12:44-50

- In the Prologue, John speaks of Christ entirely in the third person. In the finale Christ is quoted; He speaks only in the first person.
- The prologue opens with the Father and Son together in the old creation (1:3). In the finale, they work together in the new creation (eternal life, v. 50). Both the old and new creation come from God calling something into existence through Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).
- In the prologue, light appears in the darkness (1:5); the finale speaks of people *remaining* in darkness (12:46). The only way to remain in darkness is to reject the light.
- In the prologue, John the Baptist is also a messenger from God. By John 12 John the Baptist's role has been completed. The bridegroom's voice (Christ's) has replaced John's (3:29), so that in the finale only one Messenger speaks.
- The prologue says there was unbelief (1:11), but it does not mention judgment on unbelievers. In the finale, judgment is emphasized in vv.47,48. The last word of public appeal from Christ was "Believe in the light ..." (12:36).
- In the prologue, believing has only Christ mentioned as its object (1:12); in the finale, faith is in the Father as well. (Note also 5:24.)
- In the prologue, life is the result of a (new) birth from God, Who is the cause of this birth (1:13); in the finale eternal life comes through the communicated word, which is the means to new life (12:49,50). The first is the transformation of the person into life; in the second, eternal life is delivered by means of the word.

- The prologue does not elaborate on believing/receiving; in the finale, the continuing nature of true faith shows that hearing leads to keeping His words (12:47). Faith always leads to a life of obedience (8:31,32,52).
- In the prologue, Christ is the Word, a title never repeated after the prologue, but in the finale it is Jesus' *words* that must be received. In 1:12 and 12:48 receiving Christ and receiving what He said are the same response. To believe in Christ the Person is the same as believing a promise He has made.
- The prologue says the law was given to us through Moses (1:17); in the finale, Jesus said a commandment has been given to Him (12:49) that brings eternal life to us. It was a command from the Father to lay down His life for His sheep (10:18). Giving eternal life is something God's law through Moses could not do (Galatians 3:21,22), so grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (1:17). The Son obeyed the commandment of God, and thus the grace of God in Christ brings eternal life. Christ the Light brought to us in darkness the truth of God expressed in words from God; by those words we have eternal life (6:68).

The Lord Jesus ended His public ministry by speaking about His words. Jesus' final way of putting His message in v.50 was something similar to saying: "I say what He said." This is the essence of the ministry of every true prophet, but Christ was not a prophet like the others. When people heard Christ, they heard the One Who was God the Word, the Only Begotten of the Father. They did not hear and see only an agent of God, but God in the flesh among them. His chief emphasis in vv.44-50 is that His words are the message of the Father. Rejecting Christ is a major issue for John as he completes this section. Rejecting Jesus is a rejection of the Father Who sent Him, since all He said had been authorized by the Father. To have and reject the words of Moses was to be judged by those words. But much more truth has come through Christ, and to reject His words is to be judged by them (12:48). Christ made the Father known (1:18) because the Father spoke in the Son (12:49,50). Belief in Christ is the way to believe (12:44), just as seeing the Son is seeing the unseen God (12:45; 1:18). [With this I end my lectures notes on John 1-12, hopefully to resume the remainder later.]

**A major omission!** Much emphasis in preaching today is that it needs to be positive. Certainly the "Good News" cannot be communicated without the positive hope of eternal life received by simple faith, and given by our truthful God Who is faithful to His promise. The gospel is filled with positives. John wrote this Gospel to convince of truth with an appeal to believe (20:30,31). Yet in this section, John was compelled by the Holy Spirit to show that unbelief was predicted (12:37,38). It was impossible for those who had seen so many signs but rejected Christ anyway to escape their unbelief. They were under a severe judgment of God (12:39,40 & Romans 11:22). John shows one motivation for unbelief among many who knew the truth was true, yet refused to confess Christ. The strong note of judgment was appropriate and needed. It is one thing to speak of the benefits of faith, but what of the consequence of unbelief? People need to be reminded that rejecting light leaves them in darkness (12:46). It is Christ they are rejecting! He was not just Jesus of Nazareth Who appeared to be no more than a man to human eyes. He is God the Son Who was sent by the Father! The truth they heard from Jesus would be the basis of the more terrible judgment they would face. Christ did not come to condemn but to save (3:17), yet He will be the Judge (5:27) for all who have done evil in "*the resurrection of judgment*" (5:29). John does not use the word "hell" in this Gospel; he did not need to. The warning is clear: those who reject Jesus' words cannot escape; they will face Christ on the Last Day (12:48).

In His preaching, Jesus did not omit the element of judgment and the Judgment Day. It is commonly passed over today, as if such a theme is not suitable or winsome in the way we present Christ to the world. The trouble with that mistaken notion is that it does not fit the way Jesus preached, and so it does not represent Him properly.

## Appendix 12 A

# Jesus Anointed by a Woman

|                                  | <b>Matthew</b>   | <b>Mark</b>  | <b>John</b>                                    | <b>Luke</b>                   |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--|-------------------------------|
|                                  | 26:6-16  | 14:3-11  | 12:1-8   | 7:36-50                       |
| Location                         | Bethany  | Bethany  | Bethany  | Galilee ?                     |
| Whose house                      | Simon the leper  | Simon the leper  | ~~   | Pharisee's house              |
| Triumphal Entry                  | <u>after</u>   | <u>after</u>   | <u>before</u>                                  | ~~                            |
| Time                             | Last Passover  | Last Passover  | Last Passover                                  | much earlier                  |
| Woman                            | unnamed woman  | unnamed woman  | Mary   | a "sinner"                    |
| Ointment                         | expensive ointment                                     | pure nard  | pure nard                                      | Ointment/tears                |
| Flask broken?                    | ~~   | Yes  | ~~   | ~~                            |
| Aroma                            | ~~   |  | house filled                                   |                               |
| Poured out?                      | Yes  | Yes  | contents gone ?                                | simply anointed               |
| Cost                             | very expensive   | 300 denarii  | 300 denarii                                    | ~~                            |
| Part anointed                    | <u>head</u> / body                                     | <u>head</u> / body                                     | <u>feet</u>                                    | <u>feet</u>                   |
| Wipe with hair?                  | ~~   | ~~   | <u>yes</u>                                     | <u>yes</u>                    |
| Who was indignant                | disciples<br>\$\$                                      | some to themselves<br>\$\$                             | <b>Judas</b><br>\$\$                           | the Pharisee                  |
| Who was scolded?                 | ~~   | the woman  | ~~   | Jesus                         |
| Objection<br>Waste vs. character | could have been sold for the poor<br>\$\$              | could have been sold for the poor<br>\$\$              | could be sold for the poor<br>\$\$             | sinful woman is touching you! |
| Jesus' response 1                | my burial<br>+ her act remembered                      | my burial<br>+ her act remembered                      | my burial                                      | forgiveness<br>Go in peace    |
| Jesus' response 2                | <b>defended the woman</b>                              | <b>defended the woman</b>                              | <b>defended the woman</b>                      | <b>defended the woman</b>     |
| Continuing narrative             | <b>Judas</b> to <u>chief priests</u> to betray<br>\$\$ | <b>Judas</b> to <u>chief priests</u> to betray<br>\$\$ | <u>Chief priests'</u> plan to kill Lazarus too | ~~                            |

## Appendix 12 B

| <i><b>The Triumphal Entry</b></i>         |   |                                   |  |  |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|--|--|
|   | Matthew   | Mark                              | Luke   | John   |
|   | 21:1-11   | 11:1-12                           | 19:28-44   | 12:9-19  |
| <i>Details of finding the colt</i>        | Yes   | Yes                               | Yes  | No, Jesus found a young donkey                             |
| <i>Zechariah 9</i>                        | <b>Yes, a fulfillment</b>                                 | No mention                        | No mention   | <b>Yes, understood later</b>                               |
| <i>Psalm 118 stated by the people</i>     | Yes   | Yes                               | Yes  | Yes  |
| <i>Hosanna Intensity of passion (NIV)</i> | Yes, 2x<br>Shouting                                       | Yes, 2x<br>Shouting               | No<br>A loud voice   | Yes, 1x<br>Crying out                                      |
| <i>Animal</i>                             | Donkey & colt   | Colt                              | Colt   | Young donkey   |
| <i>King</i>                               | Son of David  | Kingdom of our father David       | The King   | The King of Israel   |
| <i>Things spread</i>                      | Cloaks & branches   | Cloaks & leafy branches           | Cloaks   | Branches of Palms  |
| <i>Subsequent information</i>             | When He entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up. | To the Temple and back to Bethany | Challenged to rebuke His disciples. He wept over Jerusalem | Disciples did not grasp significance<br>Pharisees dismayed |

## Appendix 12 C

### Zechariah 9:9 and the Triumphal Entry

Matthew and John both quote Zechariah 9:9. This prophecy was not what the people recited during Jesus' approach to Jerusalem. They did quote Psalm 118:26 (*Blessed is He Who comes in the Name of the Lord.*) Zechariah 9:9 is a later explanation given by the apostles. When Jesus sent two disciples for the colt, He did not quote this text as the reason. As in John 2:22, the apostles understood later how Zechariah's description fit the way Jesus entered Jerusalem that day. For many centuries Jews believed that Zechariah 9 was speaking of the coming Messiah. The Lord Jesus' action was a way of communicating to them Who He was.

**The Context of the Quotation** Zechariah 9 predicted the advance of Alexander the Great through Syria and south into Israel (vv. 1-6). The Lord guarded Jerusalem (v.8) so that no foreigner marched against it, so when v.9 speaks of the approach of Israel's king towards Jerusalem, the contrast is very clear. Their king, the Messiah, would not come like Alexander on a warhorse but on a young colt. He would not come to conquer and enslave. He would come with salvation to bring peace. This He would do without weapons, and He would be so successful that eventually the boundaries of Israel would include the entire world (v.10).

**The Quotation Itself** At such good news they should *rejoice*. The Coming One is *your king*, not a foreign invader, so He would have to be a son of David. He would approach a vulnerable people called here *the Daughter of Zion*. Other nations had abused her. Now a king approached not to molest but *having salvation* for her. This king is different; He is both *righteous* (John 8:46) and *humble* (Mark 10:42-45). The people of *Jerusalem* could *see* such a king as this *riding on a young donkey*.

**The Clarity of the Prophecy** The prophecy does not speak only of the specific kind of animal Jesus would ride. It also said He would be righteous (John 18:23; Acts 10:36-39). That prediction narrowed the possible fulfillment to Jesus alone. Further, He would be a humble king. Though He was the Son of God from heaven, on earth Christ was a king Who never lived in a palace (Luke 9:58). To have two donkeys (Matthew 21:2,7) brought to Christ and for Him to sit on the smaller one – probably contrary to what the watching people were expecting – was a way to show that this specific prophecy was being fulfilled.

The rest of Zechariah 9 promises victory for the Jews over the Greeks who would treat Israel with contempt. Under their leader, Judas Maccabaeus, the Jews would drive out the foreign tyrant (v.13) around 167 BC. In v.8 the Lord prevented an attack by Alexander; in vv.11-17 He would give later military success in resisting the Greeks that came after Alexander. In the days of Roman oppression, Jesus the King of Israel (John 12:13) marched not against Romans, but against the devil to drive him out (12:31). Jesus was not a zealot opposing Rome (the lesser enemy) but a Savior who destroyed the ultimate enemy, Satan. By His death, Jesus (without earthly weapons) destroyed *him who holds the power of death* (Hebrews 2:14).

The Greeks thought they could treat Israel the way they treated other nations, but God said, because of the blood of His covenant with them, that He would free them. The same passage that tells how the gentle Messiah would ride into the city on a young donkey, tells of the faithfulness of God to save them. He had made with them a covenant in blood. When God made a covenant with sinful Israel in Exodus 24, He knew what He was doing. He was making a covenant with sinners who had never obeyed as God required, and except for Christ, not one soul in covenant with the Lord ever has. How can the Holy God ever call such people His own? He would have to act to remove their sin! The ceremonial blood of the covenant served to warn them of the consequences of breaking it. But for the Lord, the blood of the young bulls (Exodus 24:4-8) was the application of innocent blood. In the Triumphal Entry, Jesus entered Jerusalem to be the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of God's sinful people. Our Holy Lord had committed to having certain sinners as His people. Having Christ die to remove our sin is the only way God could call us His people without violating His holiness. Jesus entered Jerusalem to bring peace with God (Luke 19:42; Romans 5:1,2), not by ceremonial blood, but His own saving blood, the blood of the eternal covenant (Hebrews 13:20). This blood He shed as our Priest after entering Jerusalem five days earlier as the King of Israel riding on a young donkey.

## Appendix 12 D : The Prologue Compared with Final Summary Quotations in 12:44-50

### JOHN 12:44-50

- 44 And Jesus cried out and said, **"Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me.**
- 45 And **whoever sees me sees him who sent me.**
- 46 **I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.**
- 47 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 The one who **rejects me** and does not receive **my** words has a judge; the word that **I** have spoken will judge him on the last day.
- 49 **For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment – what to say and what to speak.**
- 50 And I know that **his commandment** is eternal life. **What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me."**

### JOHN 1:1-18, The Prologue

- 1 In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with *God*, and **the Word** was *God*. 2 **He** was in the beginning with *God*.
- 3 All things were made through **him**, and without **him** was not any thing made that was made. 4 In **him** was life, and the life was **the light** of men. 5 **The light** shines in the **darkness**, and the **darkness** has not overcome it.
- 6 There was a man sent from *God*, whose name was John.
- 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about **the light**, that **all** might **believe** through him.
- 8 He was not **the light**, but came to bear witness about **the light**. 9 **The true light**, which **enlightens everyone**, was **coming into the world**.
- 10 **He was in the world**, and the world was made through **him**, yet the **world did not know him**.
- 11 **He came** to **his** own, and **his own people did not receive him**.
- 12 But **to all who did receive him, who believed** in **his name**, **he** gave the right to become children of *God*,
- 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of *God*.
- 14 And **the Word** became flesh and **dwelt among us**, and **we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father**, full of grace and truth.
- 15 (John bore witness about **him**, and cried out, "This was **he** of whom I said, **He** who comes after me ranks before me, because **he** was before me.")
- 16 And from **his** fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.
- 17 For **the law was given** through Moses; grace and truth came through **Jesus Christ**.
- 18 No one has ever **seen God**; **the only God**, who is at *the Father's side*, **he has made him known**.

Note that all reference to the *Father* is in italics, and all reference to the **Son** is in a box. The other content is indicated by color coding.