

## Worksheet #13: John 12:1–50

**Summary:** Chapter twelve wraps up John’s Book of Signs by recounting four significant events that recap major emphases to this point and prepare the reader for the Book of Exaltation (the next major section). These four events include 1) the anointing of Jesus at Bethany (12:1–11), 2) the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (12:12–19), 3) Jesus’ limited interaction with Gentile “God-fearers” (12:20–36), and 4) Jesus’ final indictment of the Jews (12:37–50).

The anointing of Jesus includes a number of elements that recall past statements and also foreshadow what is to come. As Mary anoints Jesus’ feet with costly perfume (previously mentioned in 11:2), Jesus explains that this act anticipates his coming death and burial (12:7). John’s detailed description of Judas’ complaint (12:4–7) recalls prior references to Judas’ infidelity (6:70–71) and anticipates the coming betrayal (13:2, 27).

The other (more public) events in this chapter further intensify the conflict that is now turning toward the Crucifixion. The Triumphal Entry contrasts Jesus’ apparent popularity with the hatred of the Jewish authorities. Despite the rich allusions to Old Testament prophecies of a coming Davidic ruler, these connections are largely misunderstood at the time (12:16–19). When a group of “certain Greeks” desires an audience with Jesus (12:20–21), they are turned away because it is now the Son of Man’s “hour” (12:23). After receiving glory from a heavenly voice (12:28b), Jesus then predicts that he will draw all kinds of people to himself after his death (12:32). In the final episode of chapter twelve, Jesus makes a final judgment against the Jewish nation for their refusal to believe the self-evident message of his signs (12:37), an action which John explains as a fulfillment of Isaianic prophecy (12:38–41).

### Abbreviated Outline<sup>1</sup> (current passage in bold):

- I. INTRODUCTION: THE WORD MADE FLESH (1:1–18)
- II. THE BOOK OF SIGNS: THE SIGNS OF THE MESSIAH (1:19–12:50)
  - A. *The Forerunner and the Coming of the Messiah (1:19–51)*
  - B. *The Cana Cycle: Jesus’ Inaugural Signs and Representative Conversations (2:1–4:54)*
  - C. *The Festival Cycle: Additional Signs amidst Mounting Unbelief (5–10)*
  - D. **Final Passover: Climactic Sign, the Raising of Lazarus, and Other Events (11–12)**
    - 1. Sign 7: The Raising of Lazarus (11)
    - 2. **Final Events of Jesus’ Public Ministry (12)**
- III. THE BOOK OF EXALTATION: PREPARING THE NEW MESSIANIC COMMUNITY AND THE PASSION OF JESUS (13–20)
  - A. *The Cleansing and Instruction of the New Covenant Community, including Jesus’ Final Prayer (13–17)*
  - B. *The Passion Narrative (18–19)*
  - C. *Jesus’ Resurrection and Appearances, Commissioning of Disciples (20:1–29)*
  - D. *Concluding Purpose Statement (20:30–31)*
- IV. EPILOGUE: THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLES OF PETER AND THE BELOVED DISCIPLE (21)

---

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Andreas Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 307–308.

**Interpretation:** *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. How valuable was the quantity of perfume that Mary used to anoint Jesus (12:3, 5)? What does this reveal about Mary's belief in Jesus? [Note: You may wish to consult a study Bible or commentary as you consider this question.]  

---

---

---
2. What does 12:7 tell us about Jesus' prior understanding of his own death?  

---

---

---
3. Look back at the references to Lazarus in this chapter (12:1–2, 9–11, 17–19). What is it about Lazarus that serves as a catalyst for Jewish determination to kill Jesus?  

---

---

---
4. What does Jesus emphasize in his explanation of his impending death in 12:23–24? How does the emphasis on his “hour” help us understand his perspective?  

---

---

---
5. In what sense should we understand the voice from heaven (12:28b) to be “for your sake” (12:30)? In what sense does it contribute to “the judgment of this world” that would be accomplished at the cross (12:31)?  

---

---

---
6. Compare Isa. 53:1 and Rom. 10:16 with John 12:38, then compare Isa. 6:9–10 with John 12:39–41. How do these references help us understand Jesus' words in 12:44ff?  

---

---

---

**Application:** *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

7. What does this passage tell us about Jesus? How does it help us to understand “his place in the sweep of redemptive history”?<sup>2</sup>  

---

---

---
8. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?  

---

---

---
9. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?  

---

---

---

---

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 102.