

v.11:1-3 Now a certain [man] was sick, [named] Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was [that] Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

It has been about four months since the last account recorded by John, that being, the confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees in the temple during the Feast of the Dedication. It is probably a good assumption that Jesus is still residing beyond the Jordan where He was baptized. (v. 10:40)

- a) Jesus enjoyed friendships just like any other man. He had grown especially close to Mary, her sister Martha and their brother Lazarus. The three are introduced here for the first time in this gospel. John refers to a particular incident in Mary's life to properly identify her to the readers. Although He will not relate the particular incident until the next chapter, he assumes that the readers are familiar with the story.
- b) The sisters send word to Jesus that Lazarus is sick. This supports the assumption that Jesus was still residing beyond the Jordan for they knew where He was and dispatched a messenger. They knew of the power of Jesus to heal and, as we find out later, this was their intent in sending for Him. (v. 21)

v.11:4-6 When Jesus heard [that], he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

From His response to the news of the illness of Lazarus it is apparent that Jesus knew exactly what was going to happen. He states that the sickness is not unto death or that death will not be the final outcome.

- a) Just as with the blind man, He states that this particular illness is to ultimately bring glory to God. Jesus would be glorified by this upcoming miracle. It would prove that He had the power of life within himself as He had previously proclaimed. (v. 5:21) It would prove that He was God.
- b) The author again mentions the special relationship that Jesus had with this family, probably to show that He intentionally waited two days before going to them. Based on His feelings for them He would have left immediately but He was on a divine timetable that called for a two-day delay. Was it so there could be no doubt or accusation as to Lazarus being dead?

v.11:7-10 Then after that saith he to [his] disciples, Let us go into Judaea again. [His] disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

Two days pass from the time Jesus receives the message concerning Lazarus. He informs the disciples that they would now go to Judea, an announcement to which His disciples immediately protest.

- a) The disciples remind Jesus that the last time they were in Judea the leaders had tried to stone Him. This was less than four months ago, and they believe that things had not yet sufficiently settled down.

- b) Jesus presents to them a common sense saying amounting to; if a man walks during the day, when it is light, he will not stumble. But if a man walks at night, he is prone to stumble because he cannot see. This saying is definitely given to be an illustration, however, since it is not explained, we cannot know the exact illustration intended by Jesus.
- c) In all probability the twelve hour day that He speaks of is the time fixed by His Father for Him to minister on the earth. This would be in accordance with His earlier saying. (vs. 9:4-5) The idea would then be that He must work up to the twelfth hour and will be able to do so safely. During this time He can see and avoid any danger that might present itself, just as He had done up to this point.

v.11:11-16 *These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.*

Jesus informs the disciples that they are going into the Judean region to awaken Lazarus who had fallen asleep. The disciples take Him literally and reply to Jesus that sleep is a good thing for Lazarus. Jesus then clearly tells them that Lazarus is dead.

- a) Comparing death to sleep was not unusual for there are examples in the Old Testament. (Gen. 47:30; II Sam 7:12) It was also a four day journey to where Lazarus lay, so why would the disciples take Jesus literally? They were probably confused for Jesus had already said that the sickness of Lazarus would not end in death. (v. 4) They probably thought that Jesus had healed Lazarus by His mere word since He did not immediately go to him. The topic of Lazarus re-surfacing after two days probably took them by surprise.
- b) The disciples now have something else to contemplate for the next several days during the journey. They know that Lazarus is dead and they know that Jesus said that He would wake him up. Jesus adds that what He will do will benefit the disciples. It will aid their belief. Cutting His explanation short, He tells them that it is time to go.
- c) The disciples were reluctant to go. They knew of Jesus' power, they saw His miracles, but did not view Him as invulnerable. They believed that He was the Messiah, but really didn't exactly know what it meant or what it entailed. They seemed to just be resigned to follow Him. He had a hold on them that they couldn't understand or explain. They just knew that they belonged with Him. (v. 6:67-69)
- d) The comment by Thomas seems to illustrate this. It was against their better judgment but they knew they had to go. Death would be preferable to cutting themselves off from Him. They could not be happy or find fulfillment anywhere else.

v.11:17-24 *Then when Jesus came, he found that he had [lain] in the grave four days already. Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she*

heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat [still] in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give [it] thee. Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

The town of Bethany where Lazarus lived, was a little less than two miles from Jerusalem. When Jesus was just outside of the town He found out that Lazarus had been in the grave for four days. Many people had gathered at the home of Mary and Martha to mourn the death of Lazarus and to comfort them.

- a) *Martha, hearing that Jesus was approaching, runs out to meet Him on the outskirts of town. Martha tells Jesus that she knows that if He had been there He would not have allowed her brother to die. This may be her way of comforting Jesus, telling Him that she realizes He had found out to late. It is probably synonymous with, "if only I could have gotten word to you sooner."*
- b) *Martha knows of Jesus' power, but also of the finality of death. The words spoken by Jesus that were brought back to her by the messenger, namely, that this sickness would not end in death, provides her with hope. Not wanting to underestimate the power of Jesus, she hints that possibly something could still be done.*
- c) *Martha had subtly inquired as to Jesus personally using His power in this instance, but His reply was impersonal. It was a common saying of consolation used by mourners which Martha had probably been hearing for the last several days.*
- d) *At this point any hope in her is probably extinguished and she replies that, yes, she understands that her brother will rise at the end of the world. This was in accordance with Old Testament belief and teaching. (Ps. 17:15, 73:24; Ezek. 37:12-14; Is. 26:19)*

v.11:25-27 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

Jesus states that He is the resurrection and the life personified, that is, He is the source of life and the cause of life. No one or nothing can have life apart from Him. As God, He is the author of life.

- a) *This is a strong statement that puts Jesus as the very reason for mans existence. He is the sole possessor, the sole giver and the sole restorer of life. All life is under His control and command. This is consistent with the earlier words of John in this gospel and verifies the earlier claims of Jesus. (v. 1:3-4, 5:21)*
- b) *As the resurrection He shows himself to be the conqueror of death. Death had no power over Him for He can take up His life again. Jesus is called the firstfruits, that is, the first to rise from the dead to die no more. (I Cor. 15:20-22) In Him it is shown that life rules over death.*
- c) *Jesus proclaims that He will impart life to those who believe in Him. Death is not the ultimate enemy for in Jesus Christ death has no hold on the believer. Just as Jesus followed after man in death, so will the believer follow after Him in the resurrection. (I Cor. 15:55-57; Col. 1:18)*

- d) Verse 26 does not say that the believer will never experience temporal death, but instead, strengthens the statement that temporal death is not the final outcome. A more literal translation would be, "Whosoever lives and believes in me shall by no means die forever."
- e) The idea is that life rules even over death. This life is appropriated to the believer by Jesus Christ. Temporal death is inevitable but by no means is it the final outcome.
- f) Jesus asks Martha if she believes what He had just revealed to her or more literally, if she was able to take in this saying. She replies in the affirmative but instead of specifically repeating what Jesus had just said, she puts Jesus the Messiah as the object of her belief.
- g) In all probability she did not completely understand the truth that Jesus proclaimed but accepts it based on her belief in Him. She believes and proclaims that He is the Messiah, the One called the Son of God, who the prophets proclaimed would come into the world.

v.11:28-30 *And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard [that], she arose quickly, and came unto him. Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.*

After confessing her belief that Jesus was the Christ, Martha, acting on the request of Jesus, went back to the house to get Mary her sister. This she did secretly, probably so Mary also could have a private audience with Jesus.

- a) Mary got up and came immediately to the place where Jesus was. There is much speculation as to why Jesus did not come to the house. The best guess is that He wanted a private audience with the women and that He was near the place where Lazarus was buried. Another reason is that He may not have wanted the Jews to know He was there.

v.11:31-35 *The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there. Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept.*

There were those at the house who had come to mourn with the sisters over their loss and to console them. When Mary got up and left in such a hurried fashion, those in the house assumed that she was going to the gravesite and followed her.

- a) She falls at the feet of Jesus and expresses the same faith in His power and in His love for her brother, as did Martha. If only He had been there this tragedy surely would not have occurred.
- b) The weeping of Mary and the weeping of those that had accompanied her had a great affect on Jesus. The word translated 'groan' is a word used to express any strong manifestation of inward emotion. The idea seems to be that Jesus was deeply touched and in trying to control His inward emotions it became obvious to all that He was extremely troubled.

- c) *Jesus manages to ask where the gravesite is before He emotionally breaks down and cries. These verses point out the true humanity of Jesus. As God, He knew that He would raise Lazarus, but as a man He shared in the sorrow and the sense of loss of the sisters and the crowd.*

Authors note:

The word translated 'groan' creates a bit of a problem in these verses. As explained above, in the original, it is a word used to denote the manifestation of strong inward emotion, however, the emotion is almost always anger. If this translation holds in this instance, then why was Jesus angry? It seems clear that it is the weeping that caused the emotion. Some think that Jesus here reflects upon sin and the misery that it causes. His emotion would then be directed toward sin and Satan as the source of such unhappiness. This may be a stretch. What we know for sure is that Jesus was not above emotion and here was deeply touched and affected by the sorrow around Him.

v.11:36-37 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?

The author next gives us insight into the feeling of the crowd. There are two reactions to this emotional scene which are common to human nature.

- a) *Some are comfortable with their emotions. They bond with Jesus and the family reflecting on their love for Lazarus and the great loss that they feel. They see the situation, accept it, and deal with it accordingly.*
- b) *Others are not as comfortable with their emotions so they try to transfer them to an analysis of the situation. They look for reasons, causes and sometimes even blame, reflecting on a more positive outcome that might have been. Their reasoning in this particular instance is, why didn't Jesus prevent this; surely He has the power. It is obvious to all that Jesus loved Lazarus so why didn't He do something?*
- c) *This second group does not seem to be mean spirited or sarcastic. Possibly they are more familiar with the miracles of Jesus and how He healed when not even present. In trying to deal with their emotions and understand the situation, they speculate as to why Jesus didn't act on behalf of His friend Lazarus.*

v.11:38-40 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been [dead] four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

Seeing the place where Lazarus was buried seems to evoke another emotional response on the part of Jesus. The grave was a cave with a stone or slab covering the entrance.

- a) *Jesus orders the stone to be lifted or moved. Martha immediately objects because the body of Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days. At this point she probably thinks that Jesus wants to enter the tomb to view the body. She probably thinks that being overcome with sorrow He is not thinking rationally but acting on emotion.*

- b) In turn, Jesus reminds Martha of all that He had said. (vs. 11:4, 23, 25-26) This is probably Martha's first clue that something unbelievable is going to take place. A certain amount of faith was required on the part of the sisters as well as some in the crowd, for it was against Jewish law to open the tomb and any contact with the body would cause defilement.

v.11:41-45 *Then they took away the stone [from the place] where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up [his] eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said [it], that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.. Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.*

The stone was removed but Jesus remains outside of the tomb and lifts His eyes to the heavens in prayer. He then summons Lazarus in a loud voice that all could hear. There could be no doubt that the words were spoken by Jesus and that they were directed to Lazarus.

- a) Jesus audibly prayed to the Father, attributing the miracle to God before it even had taken place. He did this by thanking the Father for hearing Him. Such a prayer was not necessary on the part of Jesus, for He and the Father are one. Jesus had the power of life within himself and His will was in complete harmony with that of the Godhead. In this respect the Father always heard Him just as He always heard the Father.
- b) The prayer was for the benefit of the people, to offer further proof to them that He indeed was from the Father and worked the works of the Father. Again, this time, Jesus attributes the miracle to God before it even takes place.
- c) Lazarus came out of the grave. Some believe that he "floated out" by the power of God because his body was probably wrapped in such a way that he could not have moved his legs or bend in any way. This was not some vision or apparition for the command of Jesus is to loose him and let him go. The life of Lazarus had been restored.
- d) As a direct result of this miracle many of those who had witnessed it came to believe in Jesus. The word translated 'had seen' means much more than to observe. It gives the idea that they studied it, scrutinized it and pondered it. They came to the conclusion that Jesus was one to be followed and listened to.

v.11:46-48 *But some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done. Then gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him thus alone, all [men] will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.*

Some who had witnessed the raising of Lazarus went back to Jerusalem and reported to the chief priests the things that had occurred. The last two recorded miracles had gotten the peoples attention and many believed in Him as the Messiah.

- a) As word of this latest miracle spread the leaders came to realize that they were losing control of the people. Feeling threatened, an official meeting of the Sanhedrin is called to address the latest

developments. They concluded that action must be taken, for if the people accept Jesus as the Messiah the Romans will move in, take all the power from the Jewish leaders and the nation itself would fall.

- b) These conclusions were based on several factors. First, the belief that the Messiah would be a political figure. Second, that Jesus was not the Messiah and finally, on their belief that the people were totally ignorant and in need of their constant guidance.
- c) Their reasoning was that if the people accepted Jesus as the Messiah the Romans would quickly move in to stop an insurrection. Jesus, not being the Messiah, would quickly fall. As a result, Israel would lose all autonomy and the leaders would be stripped of all power. Not under the guidance of the leaders, the people would simply be absorbed into the Roman state. "Our place" probably refers to the temple that was representative of them as well as the nation.

v.11:49-52 *And one of them, [named] Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, Nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; And not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.*

As we have seen, many opinions existed concerning Jesus, even among the leaders of Israel. Chaos and confusion probably ruled this meeting of the Sanhedrin as they were now being forced to take a stand. Evidently a solution to the problem at hand could not be reached and so Caiaphas, the high priest, speaks out.

- a) Caiaphas rebukes and belittles his fellow leaders telling them that they know nothing. His mind was made up and the solution to the problem was simple. He was frustrated with the lack of insight displayed by his colleagues or their timidity that prevented them from considering the ultimate solution.
- b) The solution was that Jesus must die. His death would secure their positions as leaders as well as the arrangement they had with Rome that provided them with some autonomy as a nation. This would save many Jewish lives and in the end the nation itself. To Caiaphas the choice was simple, one man or a nation.
- c) The author interrupts his narrative to show that the words of Caiaphas, through the divine providence of God, had a much deeper meaning. His words proved to be false in the physical sense that he intended. Within 40 years the temple would be destroyed by the Romans and the nation scattered. In fact, it was the death of Jesus that sealed their physical fate, the exact opposite of the reasoning of Caiaphas.
- d) In a spiritual sense, the prophecy of Caiaphas was right on. Jesus would die for the Jewish nation as the spiritual Messiah. He was the sacrificial Lamb of God, and the suffering servant spoken of by Isaiah. (Is. 53:4-6)
- e) John also tells us that the "nation" had a much broader meaning than Caiaphas could ever have imagined. Jesus would not only die for the sheep of Israel, but also for the "other flock" or nation which was the gentiles. (v. 10:16) The children of God would be gathered together through the

death of Jesus to form one nation, which is the spiritual Israel or the church. (Rom. 9:6-8)

[It was fitting that Caiaphas, the last 'legitimate' high priest of the Jewish system, would speak these words. Jesus would soon usher in the superior priesthood of Melchisedec, He himself being the One True High Priest forever. (Heb. 7:21-24)]

v.11: 53-57 Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples. And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand: and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem before the passover, to purify themselves. Then sought they for Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast? Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees had given a commandment, that, if any man knew where he were, he should shew [it], that they might take him.

The meeting of the Sanhedrin concludes and the motion put forth by Caiaphas, the high priest, was adopted. Jesus must die to save their positions, the temple and so the nation of Israel itself. The sentence was passed without any trial, evidence, witnesses or verdict. It was simply decided that He must die and from that time on they worked together as a group to bring about His death.

- a) *Jesus, aware of their plan, no longer taught openly, but retreated to a city called Ephraim. The exact location of this town is unknown but it is thought to have bordered the desert of Judea. Jesus remained in seclusion for a time with His disciples.*
- b) *It was the month of March and the Passover was fast approaching. Being one of the pilgrim feasts everyone from the surrounding towns began to make their way to Jerusalem. Many came early to fulfill certain purification rites before the feast began.*
- c) *The popularity of Jesus with the people was at its peak with the raising of Lazarus from the dead. The coming of Jesus to Jerusalem had been the highlight of the feasts for the past three years. This time there was concern that He would not come because the leaders had made it known that He would be arrested. Anyone that might know where He stayed was commanded to inform the authorities.*
- d) *Jesus was once again the talk of the town. He had never feared the leaders before. Would He come and confront them once and for all, defending himself before the high priest and the Sanhedrin? On the other hand, the rulers had finally joined together and had much power. Would Jesus lay low?*

v.12:1-2 *Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.*

Although not recorded by John, the journey from Ephraim to Bethany was eventful. Jesus evidently went through Jericho where He healed Bartimaeus and met Zaccheus. This is recorded in Luke 18:35-19:10. The account of John resumes with Jesus returning to the town of Lazarus six days before His final Passover feast.

- a) A dinner was prepared for Jesus in the house of Simon the leper. (Mark 14:3) He obviously was a friend of the family of Lazarus who was also present along with Mary and Martha. It can be assumed that Simon had also experienced the healing power of Jesus although the story is not told.

v.12:3-6 *Then 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. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's [son], which should betray him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This 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.*

Probably sometime after the meal Mary anoints Jesus with a very costly and fragrant ointment. Although it doesn't seem very appealing today, it was a very loving gesture by Mary. Two other gospel writers have Mary pouring the ointment on Jesus' head, while John mentions her anointing Jesus' feet. In all probably she did both. (Matt. 26:7; Mark 14:3)

- a) Nard is an herb that grows in the Himalayas. This ointment was made out of pure nard and its worth was a year's wages. John identifies Judas as the one who immediately objected to this apparent extravagance.
- b) Two of the other gospels tell us that some or all of the other disciples soon followed suit in this complaint. (Matt. 26:8-9; Mark 14:4) They evidently thought that Jesus would also object and so they backed-up Judas. Imagine their surprise when instead Jesus defends Mary.
- c) John shares with his readers what he eventually found out about Judas, namely, that his true motivation was greed, and that he was a thief that would end up betraying Jesus. John as well as the other disciples were fooled by him.

v.12:7-8 *Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.*

Jesus comes to Mary's defense and in so doing predicts His death. He basically says that Mary had kept the ointment, as opposed to selling it, to prepare Him for burial or to anoint Him in advance of His burial. The meaning is plainer in the other gospels. (Matt. 26:12; Mark 14:8)

- a) He also alludes to His death when He states that He would not be with them much longer. This was a unique time in human history. The One who came to serve and to give himself was now to be honored in this way. In the divine plan this anointing was to take place and took precedence even over the care of the poor.

- b) Jesus not only defends the actions of Mary but also honors her by promising that wherever the gospel is preached this deed would be mentioned in memory of her. (Mark 14:9) This prophecy was given by Jesus before the gospels were penned and has come true even as we remember Mary now.

v. 12:9-11 *Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there; and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.*

For the Feast of the Tabernacles Jesus traveled to Jerusalem in secret. (v. 7:10) However now, on His way to Jerusalem to die, He did not travel secretly. It was common knowledge that He had stopped and was staying in Bethany.

- a) Many came to Bethany to see Jesus as well as Lazarus whom He had raised from the dead. These were probably the same people who had come to the feast early and now took the short journey from Jerusalem to Bethany. (v. 11:55:56)
- b) The chief priests who had already given orders to take Jesus (V. 11:57) and had already decided that Jesus would die, (v. 11:49-50) did not make a move against Him at this time because of the crowds.
- c) They had further decided that Lazarus would also be put to death. It was because of the miracle of raising Lazarus that many believed on Jesus. Killing Lazarus would undo the miracle, so to speak, and get rid of the evidence that it had occurred. Whether this plot was ever carried out we do not know.

[John devotes the final 9 1/2 chapters of this gospel to recount to his readers the events that took place in the final week of the life of Jesus Christ upon this earth. John's account centers on what Jesus said, what He felt and what He went through, all the while focusing on the dual nature of Jesus. The other gospels will be used to provide a proper chronology and background for the events mentioned by John.]

v.12:12-15 *On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed [is] the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.*

The day after enjoying a meal with His friends at Bethany (the meal at which He was anointed by Mary) He sets out for Jerusalem that was about a two-mile journey.

- a) The crowd that had assembled in Bethany accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem. (v. 12:9) As this caravan neared the Mount of Olives, which was on the way, Jesus sent two of His disciples into the town to secure for Him a donkey. (Matt. 21:1-3, 6-7)
- b) The means by which He would enter Jerusalem, that is, upon a colt of a donkey, was in fulfillment of prophecy. (Matt 21:4-5; Zech 9:9) The horse was an animal of war, but Jesus came on the colt of a donkey. He was a Messiah of meekness and peace.

[Zechariah, chapters 9-14, speak of the Shepherd-King of Zion, of His rejection and subsequent glory]

- c) *Those that are in Jerusalem hear that He is coming and rush out of the city to meet Him. At some point the two crowds come together and usher Jesus into the city. Those who had come from Jerusalem are going before Him while the crowd from Bethany is following.*
- d) *Palm trees lined the road from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives. Those who had come out of Jerusalem to meet Jesus cut branches from the palm trees. In the scriptures palms are symbolic of righteousness, joy and victory. (Ps. 92:12; Lev. 23:40)*
- e) *The people waved the palms and lined the road with them as well as with their garments as Jesus passed. Apparently they believed that Jesus was coming to liberate the city from the Romans as well as from their religious leaders.*

[According to the Apocryphal books of First and Second Macabees, Simon Macabee as well as his brother Judas received the same welcome after liberating the city.]

- f) *This feeling of victory and triumph was reflected in their shouts. Hosanna can be interpreted "save now." It amounts to a prayer directed to God for full and immediate deliverance.*
- g) *They viewed Jesus as the King of Israel who would re-establish the kingdom of David. They quote Psalm 118 which reflects their thoughts and expectations. (Ps. 118:22-26) It must also be remembered that this was the Passover, a feast of deliverance. This greatly added to the mood of the crowd.*

v.12:16-18 These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and [that] they had done these things unto him. The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record. For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

John interrupts his narrative to give the reader insight into the thoughts of the disciples as well as what had helped to motivate the crowd into such a frenzy.

- a) *John tells us that the disciples did not understand the things that were going on in light of the scriptures. They did not know that at this moment that John is describing, that they were viewing and taking part in prophecy being fulfilled.*
- b) *They did not understand Jesus as the spiritual Messiah. These things were hid from them until through the agency of the Holy Spirit they were revealed. (v. 16:12-14, Luke 24:25-27)*
- c) *The crowd was driven by the testimony of those who had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead. This event was witnessed and confirmed by many. They came to see the man who had exhibited power over death. In all probability Lazarus too accompanied Jesus to Jerusalem.*

v.12:19 The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

The Pharisees, who were in the crowd, took exception to the above scriptural proclamations being

associated with Jesus. They no doubt think it to be blasphemy.

[John does not include in his account the actual entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. He simply tries to capture the spirit of frustration shared by the Leaders during this happening. Other gospels give information not provided by John of this time when Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem.]

- a) In the eyes of the leaders, those in the crowd were ignorant and unlearned. Knowing that at this point they had no chance with the crowd, they appeal to Jesus. Surely Jesus wouldn't accept the praise and worship being given to Him. Surely He must know better. Instead, Jesus sides with the crowd and rebukes the leaders. (Luke 19:38-40)
- b) Jerusalem soon comes into view, but before entering the city, Jesus is overcome with emotion and begins to weep. It had been the city of God, the place where He dwelt and the home of His people. Jesus knows of the destruction and misery that will soon come upon this city and He grieves. (Luke 19:41-44)
- c) Jesus enters the city along with the multitude and goes straight to the temple. He cleanses the temple of all the moneychangers. He had begun His ministry in the same manner (v. 2:13-17) On both occasions it was just prior to the feast of the Passover. (Matt. 21:10-13)
- d) The sick and the blind come to Him in the temple and He begins to heal them. During this time, the children in the temple begin to sing His praises. Once again, the leaders are appalled and ask Him if He is going to accept this praise. Jesus again rebukes the leaders. (Matt. 21:14-16)
- e) The worst nightmare of the Pharisees was coming true. Jesus was being proclaimed to be the Messiah by the people. The Pharisees were certain that such acceptance would be the end for the nation. (v. 11:50)
- f) John makes the readers privy to a dispute among the leaders that probably took place shortly after Jesus had entered the city. Verse 19 amounts to; "We are gaining nothing by waiting. His support is growing to the point where everyone is following Him. We should have taken Him sooner."

v.12:20-22 *And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.*

There was a group of Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the feast and were worshipping at the temple. These Greeks desired an audience with Jesus and so approached Phillip.

- a) In all probability these Greeks were proselytes to the Jewish faith. As such, they were only permitted in the court of the gentiles and could not go where Jesus was preaching. They ask Phillip, who's name is Greek, to approach Jesus on their behalf.

v.12:23 *And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.*

Jesus begins a discourse that appears to be directed toward these Greeks. It seems to be in response to a question. Whether this discourse was given directly to the Greeks by Jesus or whether it was to be delivered to them by Phillip and Andrew is not known.

- a) Jesus proclaims that the time had arrived in which He would be glorified. In the context, glorified would mean proven. His claims would be verified and He would receive the proper honor as the Messiah.

v.12:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

The manner in which Jesus would be glorified was not the way the crowd was anticipating. We see through this discourse that it was Jesus himself who settled down the crowds from their state of frenzy by explaining himself as a spiritual Messiah.

- a) Throughout His ministry it has been seen how quickly the opinions of a crowd could turn when He disagreed with their conclusion or told them what they did not want to hear. Some of His disciples had earlier left Him over His teachings and crowds turned from being friendly toward His cause to wanting to kill Him.
- b) Beginning with the words *verily, verily* which is a signal for a solemn truth, Jesus explains the way in which He would be glorified. He uses the example of a seed. Unless a seed falls to the ground and is buried it remains alone as a seed and produces no fruit. If however, it is cut-off from the plant and is buried nature takes its course and much fruit is the result.
- c) In the same way, only by His death would He be glorified in the resulting salvation of men. Just like the seed, He must die and be buried to produce a harvest. If He remained alive He would abide alone. It is through His death that He received the ultimate glory. (Heb. 2:9, 12:2; Eph. 1:20-23)

v.12:25-26 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will [my] Father honour.

Jesus continues His discourse in the temple, directed to some Greek proselytes, explaining himself to be a spiritual Messiah.

- a) Many were prepared to usher Jesus into power with the least bit of encouragement on His part, but instead, He had just predicted His death and spoke of the true glory that would result from it. The great expectation of many is quickly changing to disappointment.
- b) The apparent paradox between loving your life and losing it, as opposed to hating your life and keeping it, must be understood in the spiritual sense. Jesus exhorts them as to the necessity of focusing on the spiritual, where true power and glory is attained.
- c) All of His followers must see the spiritual as more important than the physical and in this way "hate their life." The true servant of Jesus must follow His lead, forsaking their own lives, not necessarily in the literal sense, but by denying themselves and following Him. (Matt. 16:24-26)

- d) *They must accept whatever this complete allegiance to Him might bring their way, and oftentimes it may very well result in physical hardship.*
- e) *Both positive as well as negative examples abound in the scriptures in regards to this principal of forsaking one's life to truly save it. Paul would forsake his life in this way by totally discounting the things of the flesh. He acknowledged that righteousness was not the result of a physical birthright or of works of the flesh. (Phil. 3:4-9)*
- f) *Peter recognized the corruptible and temporary nature of the flesh comparing it to grass. He acknowledged the word of God as the incorruptible seed by which glory was to be obtained. (1 Peter 1:23-25)*
- g) *James recognized the enmity that exists between God and the world. (James 4:4) John took these words of Jesus to heart and would enforce them in his first epistle. (1 John 2:15-17)*
- h) *Even the patriarchs of the Old Testament recognized the temporary nature of life and sought to attain a permanent dwelling place not of this world. (Heb. 11:13-16)*
- i) *The negative examples are the rich young ruler and later Demas. Both had to great of an affection for the things of the world. (Luke 18:22-24; 2 Tim. 4:10) As we will soon see the things of the world held back certain Pharisees from coming to Jesus. (vs. 42-43)*
- j) *Jesus had told them previously that where He was going they could not come. (v. 7:34, 8:21) Here He tells them that by following and rendering service to Him they would be with Him. Such would be honored by the Father.*
- k) *Through the Holy Spirit the believer is a citizen of heaven and in essence with Jesus in heaven. A more literal interpretation would be that Jesus is referring to the reunion that would take place with the believer in death. (v. 14:3)*

v.12:27-28 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, [saying], I have both glorified [it], and will glorify [it] again.

Reflecting on His upcoming suffering and death, Jesus expresses that He is experiencing great distress and anguish within. The tense used in the original language implies that this "trouble" had been there for some time, but was now greatly increasing in intensity. It was building as the time grew nearer and seems to have peaked at Gethsemane. (Luke 22:42-44)

- a) *The question, "What shall I say?" manifests the struggle that Jesus was experiencing within. His human nature, characterized by self-preservation, the desire to avoid pain and a sense of mortality, was seeking reconciliation with the divine will and purpose.*
- b) *Jesus was a man. He experienced the full range of human emotion. As we have seen previously, even more intensely, for His emotions were pure and uncompromised. He was in control of His fate. He could stop it, but the divine will and purpose said to go on. (v. 10:18)*
- c) *Jesus was seeking an option. He was searching for a solution that would appease and reconcile His dual nature. This was the ultimate temptation. The ultimate struggle. The learning of obedience. (Heb. 5:7-9)*

- d) His prayer presents the paradox to the Father. He prays that God would give Him a way out but then reasons that the suffering before Him was the very purpose of His coming. The matter is resolved in giving glory to God. The great and overriding purpose of both the human as well as the divine nature is to bring glory to the Godhead.
- e) The Father affirms the conclusion arrived at by Jesus in an audible voice. He states that He has glorified His name and will glorify it again.
- f) God had glorified His name in Jesus Christ. In the incarnation, the miracles and the wisdom that came out of the mouth of Jesus. He would be glorified again in the sufferings, death and resurrection of Jesus.

[The response of God is not limited to the above. He had glorified His name in creation, in the covenants and in the law. He had glorified His name in the lives of the apostles and in the lives of all Christians. He will yet glorify His name with His second coming and the full accomplishment of His plan.]

v.12:29-30 *The people therefore, that stood by, and heard [it], said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him. Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.*

The voice of the Father responding to the prayer of Jesus creates a controversy among the crowd. They are no doubt taken completely by surprise. Some refusing to believe their own senses say that the voice was merely thunder. Others admit that it was an audible voice and attributed it to an angel.

- a) Jesus confirms to them that it was indeed a voice. It was a voice that was intended for their sakes. It was one more proof and one more verification that He was the Messiah.

v.12:31-33 *Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all [men] unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die.*

Jesus knew the type of death that He was going to die. He understood what He would go through physically as well as spiritually. It was this knowledge that was the source of His troubled spirit. He tells the crowd that He will die and more specifically that He will die on the cross; lifted up from the earth for the world to see.

- a) By the presence of Jesus on the earth, as a man, the world was being judged. He was directly communicating the ways of God and His was setting the example or the standard. The ways of the world and even the teachings and traditions of the Jewish leaders were coming under the condemnation of God. He was the Light shining in darkness.
- b) His death would be the final judgment against the world. Man would put to death the Creator and the source of their life. It was a final demonstration of the world's wickedness and hopelessness. More specifically it would be a judgment rendered against Satan, the author of darkness. It would break the power that the devil held over the nations of the earth.
- c) Israel was the only nation that had been set apart by God and afforded divine protection. It was the only nation that possessed the truth and the hope of salvation. The rest of the world had "changed the truth of God into a lie." (Rom. 1:23-25)

- d) *These Greek proselytes had eventually come to realize this for they had taken on the Jewish faith. Now, through His death, every one of all nations could come to God. In this way He would draw all people to himself. The way of truth and salvation would be open and plain to all.*

v.12:34 *The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?*

Some in the crowd immediately object to these latest words of Jesus concerning His death and openly challenge Him. According to their understanding of the scriptures Jesus was contradicting himself and they demanded an answer.

- a) *The people rightly considered the Old Testament term, Son of man, as being synonymous with the Christ. Both terms referred to the Messiah they were seeking and whom Jesus claimed to be.*
- b) *The law, in its broadest sense, referred to the scriptures or the Old Testament. With their pre-conceived idea of a political Messiah they interpreted the scriptures very literally and believed that the Son of man would setup his kingdom and rule forever on earth. (Ps. 110:4; Is. 9:7; Ez. 37:25; Dan. 7:13-14)*
- c) *Jesus many times declared himself to be the Son of man. He began this very address referring to himself using this term. (v. 23) He now declares the He, the Son of man, would die.*
- d) *The questions, "How sayest thou?" and "Who is this Son of man?" reflect the confusion on the part of the people. They amount to, "How can this be" or "What are you talking about?"*

v.12:35-36 *Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.*

The crowd had just challenged Jesus as to His knowledge of the scriptures, specifically, that the Son of man would die. According to their understanding Jesus could not be the Son of man or the Messiah as He claimed because He was now predicting His death.

- a) *Jesus does not directly answer their questions, neither does He explain himself to be a spiritual Messiah, but simply affirms His words to be truth while challenging them as to their spiritual condition. Using the example of one walking in the light as opposed to darkness, He exhorts them to believe His words.*
- b) *Light represents the truth that He speaks, while darkness represents the ignorance of their pre-conceived ideas and traditional beliefs. They must believe the truth and wisdom of His words. They must become the children of truth and abandon the darkness of their ignorance.*
- c) *These ideas were not new to them. Jesus had already referred to himself as the Light and to His words as their deliverance from darkness. (v. 8:12, 9:5) The words of Jesus seem to express a sense of urgency as He warns them that the time is short.*

[With the words "departed and hid himself from them" the public ministry of Jesus comes to a close. John records little of the things that happened between the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and the

Passover supper celebrated with the apostles. The other gospels devote whole chapters to these several days. (Matt. 21:12 – 26:16; Mark 11:15 – 14:11; Luke 20:1 – 22:6) The only event recorded by John during this time is the discourse of Jesus to the Greek proselytes. So John's account of the triumphal entry ends with verse 19 while the discourse that begins in verse 20 probably took place on the day before Passover.]

v.12:37 But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

Although John presents little information on the events that took place on the days immediately preceding the death of Jesus he successfully demonstrates the quick change in the mood of the people and here attributes it to unbelief as he briefly leaves his narration.

- a) *After Jesus entered the city in triumph it quickly became apparent to the people that He was not going to seize control, that He was not going to overthrow the Roman's and lead Israel to what they believed was its prophesied greatness.*
- b) *The miracles that Jesus worked were meant to be a confirmation from God that the words He spoke were truth. Blinded by their own prejudices they would not believe the words of Jesus.*
- c) *They saw the miracles and believed in His power. Some of the leaders even proclaimed that only a man empowered by God could do the things that He did. (v. 9:16) The people were willing to accept the miracles only if they could fit them into their own agenda. They wanted Him to use His power to liberate them and to provide for them. They were blinded to the true will and intent of God. They could not accept the true meaning of Messiah over their own erroneous hopes. They would not believe on Him.*

v.12:38-41 That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with [their] eyes, nor understand with [their] heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

The spirit of unbelief was prophesied by the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament. Isaiah spoke these words concerning the people of his own day, but John explains that these words were at the same time a prediction of the people's rejection of the Christ and the truth of God that He proclaimed.

- a) *The "arm of the Lord" always represents His power. So the people are held responsible not only for not responding to the word (report) but also for not seeing the significance of the demonstration of God's power (miracles). (Is. 53:1)*
- b) *John further quotes the prophet Isaiah showing that the people now could not believe anymore than the people in the time of Isaiah. (Is. 6:9-10) The judgment of God was pronounced upon man after the fall of Adam.*
- c) *God gave man over to the natural consequences of his sin and to the unrighteousness that he loved. (Rom. 1:21-22, 24, 26, 28) The fallen nature of man was incapable of grasping spiritual truth. (1 Cor. 2:14) This truth holds even today. All men are dependent upon the grace and mercy of God for conversion and subsequent healing.*

[These verses are directed to the Jews in particular but hold true for all men. God did blind the eyes and harden the hearts of men, but again, it was the righteous sentence of their sin and persistent unbelief. It was this blindness that led to the death of Christ, so it was through their hardened hearts that God chose to make His mercy available. God gave man over to his own foolishness knowing that man could never come to the truth or even recognize it on his own. This is what He had told man through the prophet Isaiah and which had proven to be true, especially by the Jewish nation. Men do not have truth within themselves but are dependent upon God to regenerate their fallen nature]

- d) *John affirms that these words of Isaiah were directly spoken to him by the Lord in a vision. They are words that prove that God is sovereign and words that every save individual can ponder and give glory to God.*

v.12:42-43 Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess [him], lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Throughout this period of spiritual darkness Christ remained the life that was the light of men. His light shown in the darkness but as stated in Isaiah and affirmed in this gospel, was not generally comprehended. (vs. 1:4-5, 9-11)

- a) *Through God's grace some recognized the Light and God showed mercy to them in varying degrees. The patriarchs, the prophets and a remnant of the people believed, were afforded mercy and given a veiled view of the truth.*
- b) *This was even truer in the time of Jesus. The Light had come into the world to reveal himself to man. Many of the leaders recognized Him and yet were unwilling to act. They would not step out in faith to pursue the Light but clung to their old ways and fears. The apostles and some disciples did step out in faith against the established order, and yet even their understanding and commitment were limited by the frailty of their nature.*

v.12:44-45 Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

After a few brief comments, John returns to his narrative. In all likelihood these last verses of this chapter are a portion of the previous discourse that John now adds as an afterthought or it could be a separate discourse to which no background is given. Nevertheless, these verses provide a summary of the teaching of Jesus. Everything that He says here had been dealt with in detail in previous discourses. It provides an approximate ending to John's narrative to the public ministry of Jesus.

- a) *Jesus cries out to the crowd probably out of an emotional mix of love, frustration and anger. He tells them that His doctrine is not His own. They should not believe in Jesus the man, but in Jesus as the Messiah and the manifestation of God to man. They must see beyond His physical nature.*
- b) *Jesus affirms His deity. If they believe Him then they believe in God. If they observe what He tells them then they are doing the will of God (vs. 7:16, 8:19, 8:42)*

v.12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

Jesus tells them that they are in darkness. He states that He has come to deliver from darkness anyone who believes that He is the manifestation of God.

- a) Light in the scriptures represents truth, holiness and knowledge. Jesus is the source of this light and imparts it to those who believe. (vs. 8:12, 9:5)

v.12:47-48 *And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.*

Belief equals enlightenment and life, while the consequence of rejection is judgment.

- a) Jesus states that He did not come into the world for the purpose of judgment. On the contrary, the world had already been judged and Jesus had come into the world to save. (v. 3:17-18)
- b) Those that reject Jesus will be judged by the words of truth that He speaks. He spoke the words of the Godhead. He was commanded or commissioned according to the divine will and purpose to speak the divine decree.
- c) The Father and Son are subject to the truth of the word. Judgment is not personal (God is not a respecter of persons) but according to the unbiased truth of the word. God's judgment is not selective or compromising but absolute. He cannot go against His word even if in His mercy He might desire to do so.

[Can this be why the scripture states that God will have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth, or that He is not willing that any should perish? (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9) Is it the decree of His word, the divine truth, that perfectly limits His mercy? Don't we function in a similar manner? We can truly want the best for the lost. We can love them and share in their joys and sorrows. We can hope for their happiness and salvation, prompting them in the way of truth. Yet we know that it is the truth of the word the divine decree that will judge them.]

v.12:49-50 *For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.*

Jesus speaks the word of God. The primary purpose of the word that He speaks is to reveal and to be the means of securing everlasting life. Its secondary purpose is judgment for those who do not accept it. It is the word that will decide the destiny of every man. (vs. 5:24, 45-47, 8:31, 37, 51)