

STRUCTURE

From Jayce:

The Beginning of Jesus's Last Week (12:1–8)

- 11:1 – John notes it was “Six days before the Passover” to signify to us that this marks the beginning of the last week of Jesus's life
- Jesus spends the beginning of his last week with Lazarus, Martha, Mary, his disciples, and others at a feast celebrating the raising of Lazarus from the dead
- During this feast, Mary anoints the feet of Jesus with valuable ointment
- Judas casts judgment on this act of Mary and, in doing so, exposes his love of money
- 11:8 – Jesus proclaims in response to Judas “For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me.”

The Response of the Chief Priests and Sadducees (12:9–11)

- Many Jews who heard Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead came to see Lazarus for proof
- The chief priests, many of whom did not believe in resurrection, plotted to kill Lazarus

The Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (12:12–19)

- Many who had come to the feast to witness Lazarus's raising from the dead put out palm branches to celebrate Jesus coming to Jerusalem
- Jesus fulfilled the prophecy that the Messiah would come on a donkey's colt
- John tells the reader that the disciples did not comprehend the significance of these events in the present time
- The Pharisees were further motivated to pursue Jesus's death due to their hardness of heart

From Mary: *Immediately preceding context:* John notes that the **Passover is at hand** (third Passover mentioned in John), comments on festival pilgrims' speculations in temple about whether Jesus would come to the feast, and reiterates the Jerusalem leaders' resolve to arrest Jesus on the spot (*so that they could kill him; see 11:53*). Jesus's death is impending.

(12:1–11) Advancing toward His Hour: The Messiah Humbly Receives His Burial Anointment

Six days before Passover at Bethany [Saturday before “Palm Sunday”]

- **12:1–8**, At dinner in Bethany, Mary anoints Jesus in grateful worship, to thieving Judas's dismay, and Jesus commends Mary's actions
- **12:9–11**, Crowds come to Bethany to see Jesus and Lazarus, whom the chief priests also resolve to kill to suppress the evidence of his bodily resurrection by Jesus

(12:12–19) Advancing toward His Hour: The Messiah Humbly Receives His Short-Lived Acclaim as He Comes to His City in Peace

Five days before Passover [“Palm Sunday”]

- **12:12–15, Account:** large festival crowd meets Jesus as he approaches Jerusalem to acclaim him as Israel's king
 - (v. 12) Large festival crowd hears of Jesus's intent to come to Jerusalem for Passover
 - (v. 13) Crowd waves palm branches while they loudly pronounce blessing on him according to Psalm 118:25–26 and proclaim him to be the Messiah
 - (vv. 14–15) Jesus fulfills Messianic promise of Zechariah 9:9 by peaceably riding into Jerusalem on a young donkey (compare Genesis 49)
- **12:16–19, Commentary**
 - (v. 16) Disciples only understand the meaning of these events after Jesus's death
 - (vv. 17–18) Those witnesses to Lazarus's resurrection kept testifying to Jesus, which increases and inspires crowds to acclaim Jesus upon his arrival (*further elucidating 11:4*)
 - (v. 19) Pharisees become increasingly dismayed by Jesus's popularity

Unifying Theme

From Jayce: Those who believed continued to have their faith deepened and bear witness to Jesus as the promised Messiah, while those whose hearts were hard continued to grow in bitterness and anger which further hardened their hearts.

From Mary: Jesus shows his resolve to lay down his life as the Passover lamb *at Bethany* by receiving Mary's anointing and defending her against Judas and *coming to Jerusalem* by receiving the crowd's short-lived acclaim and fulfilling Scripture's promise that the Messiah will ride into the city humbly and in peace, on a donkey.

Author's Aim

From Jayce: John aims to highlight the pure joy and worship that flows from followers of Jesus while contrasting that against those who are still living behind the veil of ignorance.

From Mary: John aims to keep illustrating the mounting tensions as Jesus's "hour" approaches so that John's readers/hearers will understand Jesus's decisive resolve to fulfill the Messianic mission given to him by the Father and not imagine for a moment that the greedy, murderous actions of Judas and the Jerusalem elite occur outside of the Father's purposes to glorify his Son.

Teaching outline

First vignette [*in Bethany, inside Simon the leper's house*]

- Vv. 1–3 **The light shines**—*Jesus is honored by Mary's act of self-forgetful devotion*
- vv. 4–6 **in the darkness**—*Mary is scorned by Judas, in his self-interested greed*
- vv. 7–8 **and the darkness has not overcome it**—*Jesus defends Mary's act*

Second vignette [*in Bethany, presumably beyond a private home*]

- V. 9 **The light shines**—*Jesus is honored by evidence-seeking crowd*
- v. 10 **in the darkness**—*Jesus is scorned by evidence-suppressing chief priests*
- v. 11 **and the darkness has not overcome it**—*widespread conversion among the Jews*

Third vignette [*entering Jerusalem, on public street*]

- vv. 12–18 **The light shines**—*Jesus is honored by emboldened Passover pilgrims*
(*emboldened by the testimony of witnesses to Lazarus's resurrection*)
- v. 19 **in the darkness**—*Jesus is scorned by exasperated Pharisees*
- v. 19b **and the darkness has not overcome it**—*widespread conversion among "the world"*

So what?

- Diligent self-examination
- Defiant hope (*especially through bold, glad evangelism*)