

Lesson 12
John 12:1-50
Christ and the Crisis

Memory verse: “While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light” (John 12:36 NJKV).

John 12 records the second major crisis in the ministry of our Lord as seen by John the apostle. The first occurred when many of His disciples would no longer walk with Him (John 6:66), even though He is “the way” (John 14:6). In this chapter, John tells us that many would not believe in Him (John 12:37ff.), even though He is “the truth.” The third crisis will come in John 19: even though He is “the life,” the leaders crucified Him.

John opened his book by telling us that Jesus “came unto his own [world], and his own [people] received him not” (John 1:11). In the first twelve chapters, John presented one witness after another and one proof after another, to convince us that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God. All of this evidence was seen firsthand by the leaders of the nation, and yet they rejected His claims. Having been rejected by “His own” nation, Jesus then retired with “his own” disciples (John 13:1), whom he loved to the uttermost.

In contrast to the hatred that the religious leaders manifested, stands the love that Mary demonstrated toward the One she had come to believe in as recorded in this chapter. Her act of sacrificial devotion is a model for all true disciples. This is the climax of belief in this section of the Gospel that records Jesus' public ministry (1:19—12:50). Chapter 12 records Jesus' last teaching before the general public.

At the close of the chapter, John added Jesus' words that follow as a climactic appeal to his readers to believe on Jesus. This exhortation summarizes and restates some of the major points that John recorded Jesus teaching earlier. These themes include faith, Jesus as the One sent by the Father, light and darkness, judgment now and later, and eternal life. Jesus evidently gave it to the crowd as a final challenge. He probably delivered it during His week of teaching in the temple during the Passover season.

Many people reject the truth simply because of the fear of man (John 12:42–43). Among those who will be in hell are “the fearful” (Rev. 21:8). Better to fear God and go to heaven than to fear men and go to hell!

The word judge is repeated four times in the closing words of this message, and a solemn word it is. Jesus did not come to judge; He came to save (John 3:18; 8:15). But if the sinner will not trust the Saviour, the Saviour must become the Judge. The sinner is actually passing judgment on himself, not on the Lord!

As you have studied these twelve chapters of the gospel of John, you have seen Jesus Christ in His life, His ministry, His miracles, His message, and His desire to save lost sinners.

You have considered the evidence. Have you come to the conviction that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God, the Saviour of the world?

Have you trusted Him and received everlasting life?

Scripture Reading: John 12:1-36

To learn in this lesson: 1) Some representatives of devoted people 2) No glory without suffering 3) The call to unbelieving Jews

Discussion Questions:

1) How can we be encouraged by some of the characters found in verses 1 to 11 in their devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ?

2) What can we learn from Jesus' final public ministry in the midst of the festive Passover found in verses 12 to 36?

3) Look at the key words “believe” and “judgement” found in verses 37 and 50 and discuss the final appeal by Jesus to the unbelieving Jews.