

HOLY MONDAY

Study Notes for the Christian Layperson

by: Rev. Andrew Richard



John 12:1–36 ESV

Author and Date:

Written by the Apostle John around 90 AD. This is the historical account of Christ's betrayal, suffering, crucifixion, and death.

¹ Six days before the Passover, Jesus therefore came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. ² So they gave a dinner for him there. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those reclining with him at table. ³ Mary therefore took a pound of expensive ointment made from pure nard, and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (he who was about to betray him), said, ⁵ "Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?" ⁶ He said this, not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief, and having charge of the moneybag he used to help himself to what was put into it. ⁷ Jesus said, "Leave her alone, so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸ For the poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me."

- This dinner took place on the Saturday before Holy Week. This was the Sabbath rest before Jesus' Passion; he would spend His next Sabbath resting in the tomb.
- Bethany was the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. See Luke 10:38-42 for the well-known account of Mary and Martha and their hospitality toward Jesus and the disciples. Lazarus is noted because he was dead and then raised to life in John 11.
- In Luke 7:36-50 a sinner woman anointed Jesus' feet and wiped them with her hair. We should distinguish that event from this one. Luke 7 took place in the house of Simon the Pharisee, whereas John 12 takes place in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.
- This passage shows not only that Judas Iscariot loved money, but it is the one place that mentions he was a thief. In him we see Jesus' warning very clearly, "No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13).
- None of the accounts of the Gospel mention the women bringing spices. On Good Friday when Jesus' body was placed

in the tomb, Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes (John 19:39), and the women "prepared spices and ointments" (Luke 23:56). The women didn't actually come with the spices until the Day of the Resurrection (Luke 24:1). So although Mary kept the rest of this ointment for Jesus' burial it seems she never got to use it for that purpose.

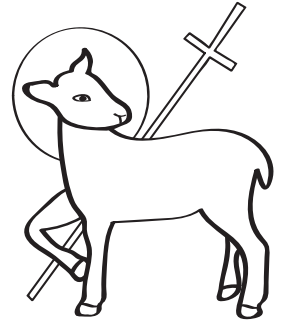
⁹ When the large crowd of the Jews learned that Jesus was there, they came, not only on account of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ So the chief priests made plans to put Lazarus to death as well, ¹¹ because on account of him many of the Jews were going away and believing in Jesus. ¹² The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. ¹³ So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" ¹⁴ And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, ¹⁵ "Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!" ¹⁶ His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. ¹⁷ The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. ¹⁸ The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. ¹⁹ So the Pharisees said to one another, "You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him."

- "The next day" was what became known as Palm Sunday.
- All four of the evangelists record Jesus' entry into Jerusalem: Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-10, Luke 19:28-40. Verses 16-19 are unique to John's account of the Gospel.
- While Matthew and Mark mention branches, only John mentions that they were specifically palm branches. Palm branches were a sign of victory (e.g. those coming out of the great tribulation in Rev. 7:9 hold palm branches). Palm branches also call to mind the Feast of Tabernacles (aka, Feast of Booths), which happened on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, at the end of harvest. "And you shall take on the first day the fruit

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of splendid trees, branches of palm trees and boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days” (Leviticus 23:40).

- The people quote Psalm 118:25-26. The word “Hosanna” is Hebrew, and appears in Psalm 118:25 where it is translated as “Save us!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord,” is directly from Psalm 118:26.
- John structured his account of the Gospel around seven signs of Jesus: 1) Turning water into wine, John 2:1-11, 2) Healing the official’s son, John 4:46-54, 3) Healing the man at the pool of Bethesda, John 5:1-17, 4) Feeding the five thousand, John 6:1-15, 5) Walking on water, John 6:16-21, 6) Healing the man born blind, John 9:1-41, 7) Raising Lazarus, John 11:1-44. The signs of Jesus do one of two things: they either lead a person to faith or harden a person in unbelief (see John 11:45-48, 12:37-43).

²⁰ Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. ²¹ So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” ²² Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. ²³ And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. ²⁴ Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. ²⁵ Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. 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.

- Jesus says that His hour has come because Gentiles are seeking Him in faith, which was to be a sign of the Lord’s salvation. See Isaiah 60 and Revelation 21:9-27 (which frequently alludes to Isaiah 60). A sample: “The LORD will rise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising” (Isaiah 60:2-3). Themes of light and darkness and the ingathering of all nations permeate Isaiah 60, and we see those three themes in John 12.
- In John 2:4 Jesus said, “My hour has not yet come.” In John 7:30 the people of Jerusalem sought to arrest Jesus, but did not “because His hour had not yet come.” Similarly in John 8:20 “no one arrested Him, because His hour had not yet come.” Now, in John 12, Jesus says that His hour has come, the hour for Him to be glorified. Jesus’ glorification in John refers to His crucifixion.
- Jesus’ image of the grain of wheat refers to His crucifixion. Those who believe in Him are the fruit.

²⁷ “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.

²⁸ Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven: “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.” ²⁹ The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” ³⁰ Jesus answered, “This voice has come for your sake, not mine. ³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out. ³² And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” ³³

He said this to show by what kind of death he was going to die.

³⁴ So the crowd answered him, “We have heard from the Law that the Christ remains forever. How can you say that the Son of Man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” ³⁵ So Jesus said to them, “The light is among you for a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you. The one who walks in the darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” When Jesus had said these things, he departed and hid himself from them.

- The word translated “judgment” is krisis in Greek, from which we get the word “crisis.” In a crisis one cannot remain idle or lackadaisical, but must go along one course or another. Jesus’ crucifixion is a crisis in the same way His signs were a crisis: they either led to faith or hardened in unbelief, but they always did something. The death of Jesus is the ultimate crisis: it will either be a glorious fragrance or a stench, it will either grant faith or confirm disobedience, and it will always be either one extreme or the other.
- Certainly the devil still “prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour” (1 Peter 5:8). The devil isn’t gone. But he has been defeated. He is now an outcast in his own realm.
- The verb translated “lifted up” is the same verb that means “exalted.” In His death Jesus is glorified and exalted. He uses this sort of language to teach us how we should think of His crucifixion: it was not His defeat, but His victory; it was not a mutiny, but the King taking up His throne in His kingdom. We can also say that Jesus was glorified and exalted in His death because the crucifixion is where God most clearly revealed what it means that He is God: He loves His people unto His own death. Jesus’ death magnifies God in a way that nothing else does.
- The language of light and darkness again comes from Isaiah 60. “While you have the light” does not in any way imply that the light is going away. Rather, like a traveler on the road, if we idle about and disregard our goal and destination we will be overcome by darkness and not attain what we wanted. Walking in the light stands in parallel with the phrase “believe in the light,” and that’s what walking in the light means: believing in Jesus. Those who believe in Him have the promise of Isaiah 60:20, “Your sun shall no more go down, nor your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended.”



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