

## Overview

**21<sup>st</sup> May 2020**

1. Review of Major Lessons Learnt About Jesus from John 10 & 11
2. Continuation of the Lazarus Episode (11:36-57)
3. John 12 – Mary Anoints Jesus and **Jesus' Triumphant** Entry into Jerusalem

To embrace Jesus is to be reconciled to God and to intentionally immerse into His Story.

His Story can unlock something inside us and liberate us from our worn out and uninspiring life script.



'Unfinished business' - how to leave it behind you...



His Story is our inspirational source from which we draw in the editing and rewriting of our life script.

Unfinished Business Has Deep Roots!

However, for His Story to properly inhabit and enliven us, we must study and understand the context of His world.

From the day of His birth, Jesus acted and interacted within the context of the Jewish culture and Hellenistic/Roman influences.



THE SEPTUAGINT



## Six Major Middle Eastern Empires

In biblical history, the land of Israel/Palestine was ruled by six major empires:

**Egyptians**



**Assyrians**



**Babylonians**



**Persians**



**Greeks**



**Romans**



He lived, talked, taught, prayed like a Jew.

His words, actions, and teaching methods were keeping with the Jewish customs and traditions of His time.



He was raised among a people who were embroiled in political turmoil, impatient for a Messiah to liberate them from the Romans.

If we are to better understand and appreciate Him and His teachings, we need to recognise this.

When we do, we are ensuring that the story we inhabit is correctly aligned with **God's** ultimate purpose for us.

Understanding Jesus in context also gives us a clearer understanding of God.



His Story is about God in the flesh.



It provides us with a portrait of God in daily setting.

- What is He like to friends and those who oppose Him?
- How does He respond to human suffering?



Knowing the context restrains us from embellishing or blemishing the true face of God.

**JESUS**  
EMMANUEL  
god with us

In Jesus we see

- a God who is deeply affected by our pain,
- a God who is moved to compassion because of our suffering,
- a God who weeps with us,
- a God who desires to answer our prayers
- and bring healing to our lives.

Hebrews 1:3  
He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature

## Major Lessons Learnt About Jesus:

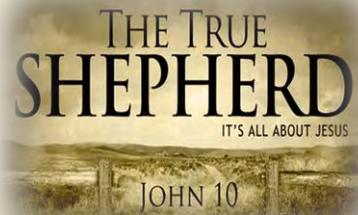
### 1. He Protects us and Secures our Destiny

10:29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand.

God is very tightfisted when it comes to the security of His sheep.



Security comes when we realise that the True Shepherd knows all about us and loves us anyway!



We can learn to live above our failures, our mistakes, and our circumstances because we personally know the God who is greater than our greatest fears.

He loves us with a binding commitment that will not let us go!

**Hesed** describes a sense of love, loyalty and devotion that inspires merciful and compassionate behaviour toward another person.



The OT describes God many times as **“abounding in”** hesed (can be translated as **“love,” “unfailing love,” “faithful love,” “steadfast love,”** and **“loyal love**).



*Agape* is a sacrificial love that voluntarily and unconditionally suffers inconvenience, pain, and even death for the benefit of another.

## Major Lessons Learnt About Jesus:

### 2. He and the Father are One (10:30)

His Claim is Validated by His miracles

10:32-33 - but Jesus said to them, “I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone **me?**”

Jesus Turns Water into Wine	John 2:1-11
Jesus Heals the Official's Son	John 4:43-54
Jesus Makes the Lame Walk	John 5:1-15
Jesus Walks on Water	John 6:16-24
Jesus Feeds the Multitudes	John 6:1-15
Jesus gives sight to the Blind	John 9:1-38
Jesus raises Lazarus from the Dead	John 11:1-44

John recorded only seven miracles.

The miracles themselves were not the point.

The miracles actually served as “**signs**” pointing to a greater reality i.e. His divinity



Peter declares that “**Jesus** of Nazareth was a man accredited by God by miracles, wonders and **signs**” (Acts 2:22, *The Message*).

The miracles substantiated His claims to be the Son of God.

## Major Lessons Learnt About Jesus:

3. He Lived on a **“Divine Timetable,”** Marked Out for Him by the Father.

= The hour for Him to show Himself as Messiah and King of the Jews

His hour did not **“fully come”** until He was crucified



His timing is unfailing and impeccable.

Resist the urge to make things happen on our own.

Waiting on the Lord is not about being placed in a penalty box of tension and frustration.

It is an opportunity to exercise our faith.

Faith is not overwhelmed by time or by what we fear, but by what our heart senses in His presence.



Our willingness to trust God in every situation, circumstance, or crisis depends on our confidence in His availability and dependability.



All uncertainty on our part is an expression of our doubt and distrust

Nothing is impossible for Him. But sometimes the impossible may take a bit longer.

Joy really does come in the morning (Psalm 30:5) – not always in the morning of our choosing, but it does eventually come.

*Joy comes in the morning!*



Hope is never lost, no matter how far gone it seems.

Help is always on its way!

## Major Lessons Learnt About Jesus:

4. He Has Power and Authority over Death -- Even a Decomposing Body Could be Raised From the Grave!

The one who believes in Christ has eternal life that transcends the fear of physical and spiritual death.

Eternal life must become our first and ultimate point of reference. We are redeemed for it. So rejoice in it and live it!

## Major Lessons Learnt About Jesus:

5. He Weeps with Those in Their Grief

Nobody grieves more than God Himself.

When we begin to understand God as a God who weeps, we begin to see Him as Someone safe to run to as our refuge, comfort and strength in the midst of our pain.

We are never abandoned in our grief.



## Psalm 56:8

You have kept count of my  
tossings (or wanderings);  
put my tears in your bottle.  
Are they not in your book?

And who's to say which is more incredible — a  
**man who raises the dead ... or a God who weeps?**

- Ken Gire, *Incredible Moments with the Saviour*

## A Christian's Understanding of Death

- Death is a sleep. (1 Thessalonians 4:14).
- Death is a state of rest from the toils and cares of the world (Revelation 14:13).
- Death is a departure. Death occurs when the spirit leaves the body (James 2:26).
- Death is union with the Lord. Jesus informed the dying thief, **“today** you shall be with me in **paradise**” (Luke 23:43).
- **“To** be absent from the **body**” (i.e., be dead) is, in reality, **“to** be at home with the **Lord**” (2 Corinthians 5:8).

36-37 Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

### Two Different Opinions:

Opinions are subjective judgments based on their interpretation of facts, framed by their perspectives and prejudices.

Opinions can also be influenced by hearsay, rumours and gossips.

The healing of the blind man must have created a quite a stir in Jerusalem since it was remembered several months after it had occurred.



## (38-40) Jesus Commands the Stone to be Removed.

38-39 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, **“Take** away the stone.”



Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, **“Lord,** by this time there will be an odour, for he has been dead four days.”

Jesus wanted the stone removed.

- He never did for anyone what they themselves are capable of doing.
- He had the power to cause the stone to roll back of its own accord; but He commanded that men move it.



His intent was still not obvious to the people or even Martha.

Perhaps she thought He just wanted to see the body – and that He forgot how long Lazarus had been dead.

40 Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?"

To Jesus, the raising of Lazarus was not a problem.

Perhaps the biggest problem was **Martha's** hesitancy and possibly doubt that the glory of God would be revealed to her and all present.

Whenever doubt is present, so is fear. The energy of doubt appears whenever you are unsure and when you are unsure, mental confusion takes over.

### (41-44) Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

41 So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me."



Not a prayer of petition but of thanks to the Father. He knew His request would be answered!

It may be hard for us to believe our prayers are going to be answered when things do not look that way.

But if we know it is the **Lord's** will, then we must learn to see the blessed realities behind it and thank God in advance!



Humans are very attached to guaranteed outcomes.

We say we trust God but behind the scenes we often try to arrange or manipulate for the desired outcome.

*Believe*

We must find the courage to believe in what we cannot see and the strength to let go of our fear of unanswered prayer!

42 "I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

The purpose of the miracle was so that the people might believe that God had sent Him.

Note: His purpose was not primarily to alleviate all suffering but to lead people to believe.

43 When he had said this, Jesus called in a **loud voice**, "Lazarus, come out!"

Why called loudly? Surely, a *soft whisper* could have achieved the same result.

A loud voice could be a sign of His confidence in the Father to perform the miracle.

Or, it was to ensure that everyone present knows that it was by His power and intent that the miracle occurred.

So, they could testify to others of the event.

44 The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

Jesus involved those around him in the happy work of unwrapping Lazarus.



## Two Reactions

### 1. (45) The reaction of faith

45 Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, put their faith in him.

### 2. (46-57) The reaction of unbelief

46-47 But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin. "What are we accomplishing?" they asked.

Right question but not open to its most obvious answer

47b **"Here** is this man performing many miraculous signs."

Even Jesus' most hardened enemies admitted He performed miracles.

This is solid confirmation that the miracles did happen.

The enemies could not disprove them in **Jesus'** lifetime. How then could anyone today, 2,000 years later, disprove them?

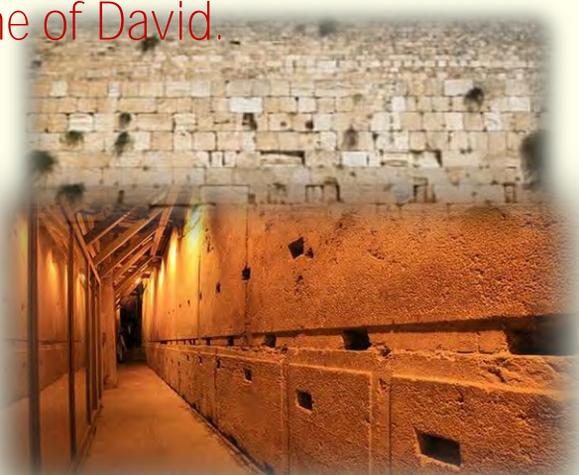
48 If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

Ironically, their crucifixion of Jesus did not prevent the Romans from taking away both their place and nation in A.D. 70 when the armies of Vespasian and Titus sacked and destroyed the city.



Historian Josephus recorded that over a million Jews were killed in the siege. According to historian Eusebius, Romans hunted down and killed all descendants of the royal line of David.

The Jewish Temple was so completely destroyed that only the foundation stones of the Temple Mount were left, which are the bottom rows of the Western Wall.



In 135 AD, Roman Emperor Hadrian massacred 500,000 Jews during Bar Kokhba's revolt.



## Syria Palaestina!

Hadrian believed the source of Jewish rebellion was their faith, so he executed Jewish scholars, prohibited the Torah, circumcision and the Hebrew calendar, and burned the sacred scroll on the Temple Mount.

49-50 Then one of them, named Caiaphas (served 18 years), who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

He missed the actual plan of God – exchanging **Jesus'** life for the salvation of anyone who believes.

He was thinking in terms of political expedience. He failed to see the spiritual implications of **Christ's** death.

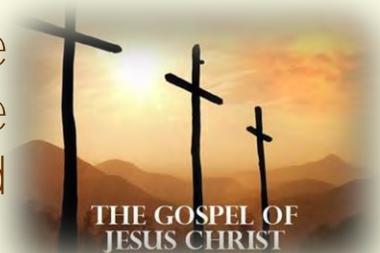


51-53 He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

His idea was that they should try to kill Jesus in order to prevent the nation being destroyed by the Romans.

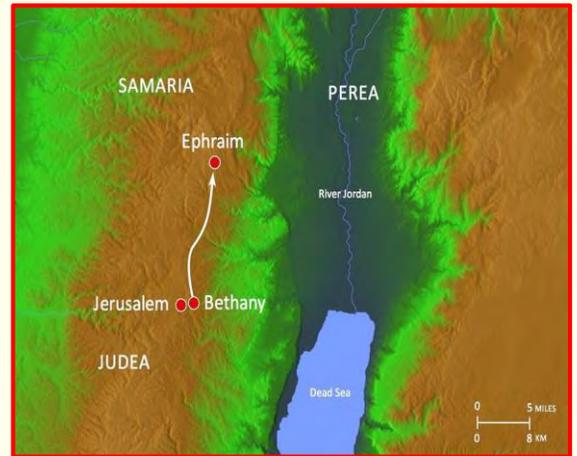
This was the conclusion the council reached (verse 53). It was (in their view) better to kill one man than to have the whole nation destroyed.

What God really meant was that the death of Jesus would lead to the spiritual salvation of the Jews and also those who were scattered abroad.



54 Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the Jews.

Instead he withdrew to a region near the desert, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.



Again, Jesus did not do this out of fear, but because *His hour had not yet come* (as in John 7:30). But it was soon to come.

55-57 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover.

They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple area they asked one another, "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the Feast at all?"

But the chief priests and Pharisees had given orders that if anyone found out where Jesus was, he should report it so that they might arrest him.

The Passover feast was attended by all the adult male population of Israel with ability to attend it.



Little did the people realize that the true and holy Passover for all men would be sacrificed soon.

To them, it was only another Passover; but to the Christians of all ages since then, it has been the one sacrifice of the True Passover for all men.

The scene was set for the final confrontation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders.

- He had repeatedly proved He was from God.
- He had even done one of His most amazing miracles in their place of jurisdiction.
- They had determined their only course of action was to kill Him.

Would Jesus now stay away to avoid conflict?

Or would He attend the feast and continue the confrontation, knowing His life was at stake?

His followers, of course, hoped He would lead a violent uprising, even if necessary.

We will see how the story unfolds in the next chapter.

**Mary Anoints  
Jesus  
12:1-11**



## John 12:1-11

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 money bag 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.”

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.



1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus arrived at Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead.

John 11:54 Jesus went to Ephraim to be alone with His disciples. From there He returned to Galilee for a while.

Jesus was no longer seeking to avoid conflict with the Jewish leaders. The time had come for the final confrontation and His death.

2a Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honour.

Six days before Passover – i.e. He was almost coming to the end of His ministry.

Yet He was willing to be with His dear friends, probably to celebrate the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

2b Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.

The meal was held at Simon the **Leper's** home (Matt 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9). Probably he was related to **Lazarus'** family.

IN LUKE 7:36-50	IN JOHN 12:1-11
In home of Simon the Pharisee.	In home of Simon the leper.
Dinner given by a critic of Jesus.	Dinner given by friends.
Dinner was not in Jesus' honour.	Dinner was in Jesus' honour.
Occurred a year before the Lord's death.	Occurred the last week of the Lord's life.
This took place in Galilee.	This occurred in Bethany.
The woman here was a "sinner."	This woman was noble Mary.
The woman wept.	Mary did not weep.
This woman wiped her tears from Jesus' feet.	Mary wiped the excess ointment from His feet.
Here, Simon the Pharisee was rebuked.	In this, Jesus rebuked Judas Iscariot.
Jesus forgave the woman's sins but not Simon's sins.	The sins of Mary are not in view at all.
This was received as a token of the woman's love.	This was received as a preparation for His burial.

3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard (also called **“spikenard”**), an expensive perfume (from the mountains of India); she poured (or anointed) it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

She considered her precious ointment only good enough for His feet!

Mary is an Example of devotion to Jesus:

- **Luke 10:39: She sat at Jesus' feet and learned**
- **John 11:32: She fell at Jesus' feet and yielded**
- **John 12:3: She anointed Jesus' feet and honoured Jesus**



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spikenard>



Spikenard also called nard, nardin, and muskroot, is a class of aromatic amber-colored essential oil derived from *Nardostachys jatamansi*, a flowering plant of the valerian family which grows in the Himalayas of Nepal, China, and India.

The oil has been used over centuries as a perfume, a traditional medicine, or in religious ceremonies across a wide territory from India to Europe.

According to 12:5, this particular nard was worth 300 denarii (the equivalent of a **year's** wages)

Nard was used to anoint kings.

Mary presented it as an offering of love and gratitude.



Gratitude takes nothing for granted, is never unresponsive, is constantly awakening to new wonder and to praise the goodness of God.

Wiping His feet with her hair was a gesture of utmost devotion and reverence.

*Gratitude*  
IS THE BEST  
*attitude*

Gratitude is the celebration of the goodness of God, the act of living with the fundamental conviction that God is very, very good.

The alternative postures are complaint and entitlement.

Every day presents countless opportunities to stop and appreciate who God is, what He has given, is giving, is yet to give!

There were 4 **Mary's** in the NT:

1. The Mary, human mother of Jesus
2. Mary of Magdala (Mary Magdalene)
3. Mary, sister of Martha and Lazarus (Mary of Bethany)
4. Mary, the mother of James and Joses (wife of Cleophas) John 19:25

4-5 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages."

The Rest Joined In!

Matt 26:8 When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked.

Mark 14:4 Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume?"

Why were the rest persuaded?

Judas managed to successfully hide the darkness of his heart from everyone except Jesus.

**“Whatever you condemn, you have done yourself”**

Many people have a religious facade that hides secret sin.

6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

He did not care for anyone except himself. And here he even resented money used to honour Jesus.



Since Jesus knew all men and what was in men (2:24) and who would betray Him (6:64), why did He allow Judas to be the treasurer?

7 **“Leave her alone,”** Jesus replied. **“It** was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial.”

In contrast to **Mary’s** sacrificial gift to Jesus, Judas sold his **master’s** life for thirty pieces of silver, the price one paid a slave owner if **one’s** ox gored one of his slaves

Exodus 21:32 If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull must be stoned.

**It’s** doubtful that Mary knew Jesus was about to be buried.

She was willing to honour Jesus while He was still alive.

**HONOR**  
JESUS CHRIST

Here He used it as an opportunity to remind them about His destiny.

They would have Him for even less time than they realized.

8 **“You** will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.”

The truth is, the poor are always with us (Deuteronomy 15:11). This does not mean that we should ignore or avoid them.

Jesus did not come to solve all the physical problems of mankind. We ought to show compassion for them.

If we wait till all the poverty is removed before we give gifts to honour God, we will never honour Him.

Mark 14:9 I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.”

Jesus is precious – to have Him with us is the best we could ask for in life. Let us seize the opportunities to demonstrate our love to Him.

Jesus appreciates humble deeds when done according to His will from a sincere heart.

If we are extravagant in our love for Jesus, *He* will not criticize us; that is what Judas did.

Are we like Mary, extravagant in our love for Jesus, or are we like Judas, criticizing others who are?

9-11 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and putting their faith in him.

The chief priests were mostly Sadducees, and the Sadducees **didn't** believe in the resurrection.

Lazarus was a living example of life after death, and that challenged and disproved their theological framework.

For them, there was only one solution - put Lazarus to death also.

They wanted to kill Jesus based on the claim that He was guilty of blasphemy and violation of the Sabbath.

But here they even sought to kill a completely innocent man, simply because Jesus had raised him from the dead!

Religious people can be blind to their faults and evil intents.

The leaders were determined, regardless of cost, to exterminate whatever contradicts their religious framework.

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life (Proverbs 4:23).

We are to guard our hearts as well as to keep **God's** instructions within our hearts. **God's** instructions "**are** life to those who find **them**" (Proverbs 4:22).

The preoccupation of our hearts determines the story of our lives.

If our hearts are full of God, His Word, and His promises, then they will overflow into every area of our lives.



If not, we open ourselves to all kinds of evil.

The goal of our faith is not behaviour modification but heart transformation.

If we allow the Holy Spirit access to every area of our heart, we will see results in every area of life.

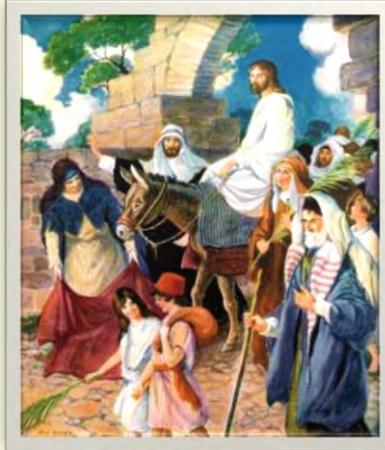
Authentic spirituality will always make us more deeply human, more compassionate, more connected and much more.



It will not simply be merely conforming to religious standards or traditions.

Far too easily we settle for superficial holiness rather than genuine wholeness, conformity rather than authenticity

Never confuse our religious performance with the transforming agenda of the Spirit of God.



## JESUS RIDES INTO JERUSALEM 12:12-19

### John 12:12-19

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,

## John 12:12-19

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.

## John 12:12-19

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.”

12-13 The next day the great crowd that had come for the Feast heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!" "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" "Blessed is the King of Israel!"

They applied to Him Psalm 118:25-26, one of the songs customarily sung by Passover pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. These words ascribed to Him a messianic title as the coming king of Israel.

Such demonstrations of honour would definitely catch the attention of the Roman authorities, especially during the time of such a great feast.

This was mainly the religious **leaders'** worry.



Fear: a sense of foreboding, caused by the presence or nearness of a perceived danger or pain that is real or imagined.

In just a few days time, the same people who cried out "**Hosanna**" would be calling out "**Crucify Him!**"

People who do not understand **God's** plan can easily be swayed from truth to error.

14-15 Jesus found a young donkey and sat upon it, as it is written, "Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey's colt."



The crowds had in mind political salvation from the oppression of the Romans.

But Jesus showed that His purpose was peace by riding a donkey, in fulfillment of prophecy (the cited passage in Zechariah 9:9).

16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that they had done these things to him.



When they were with Jesus, their focus was on themselves and on their preferred future.

They were paying attention to **Jesus'** words but were wishing it were otherwise.

They did not have collective wisdom to discern!

17-19 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word.

Many people, because they had heard that he had given this miraculous sign, went out to meet him.

So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

Those who oppose Christ make a hopeless effort. People who have set out to discredit Him have ended up drawing a blank.

The Pharisees were right when they said, **"This is getting us nowhere"**!

In **men's** eyes, Jesus was at the height of His popularity. Who could believe that just a few days later He would be executed as a common criminal?

Apparent success and honour in the eyes of society can be a very fleeting thing.

We must not seek it for its own sake nor trust in it when it appears we have it.

**God's** people will not always have the favour of people for long.

