

Episode #1-46 – Jesus or the Poor?

I. The purpose of the gospel of John is to produce believers in the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the One anointed by God to be the Savior of the world, and that Jesus is the Son of God, God represented in human form.

II. In John 12, the Lord arrives in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover on which He would die for our sins. We begin to trace out the events and teachings of His last few days of ministry before this great event.

III. John 12:1-8. Mary, Judas, and the Lord Jesus.

- A. V.1. The Lord leaves His retreat and comes back to Bethany. Lazarus had been dead.
- B. V.2. They were rich, so this supper was probably quite a big deal. Martha serves, typical of her. Lazarus sits at the table with Him.
- C. V.3. This seems strange to us. Pound=litra=12 ounces. Spikenard is pure nard. One thing a woman could do to make money at that time was to create “oil of attar” from flower petals. This was a huge amount, worth much money. There were three anointings of Jesus like this: Luke 7:36-50, here, Matt. 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9. These women copied each other.
- D. V.4. Judas’ greed interrupts. The other disciples listened to Judas not Jesus, as we can see from the subsequent anointing!
- E. V.5. Pence=denarius=a day’s wages. Say a day’s wage is \$100, this is \$30,000!
- F. V.6. Judas’ real motivation: he was their treasurer, and was embezzling from the funds given to the Lord! His clever argument made it seem as if the rich woman was not showing compassion for the poor. Yet this shows how little he valued the Lord Jesus! The other disciples were convinced by Judas’ argument, as we can see from Matt. 26:8, Mark 14:4-5. We must be careful whom we listen to. Many like Judas try to use the plight of the poor to enrich themselves. What will be the final fate of Judas? I Cor. 6:9-10. Thieves have no place in God’s kingdom!
- G. V.7. The Lord speaks up for Mary. (But the disciples did not listen.) Ultimately, the Lord judges our actions. This nard had been kept by Mary for His burial. She no longer waits, but gives it to Him now to honor Him for what He did for Lazarus.
- H. V.8. Even in the richest country, some will not work or save, or will drink or gamble their money away. Service for the poor can be good, but service for the Lord Jesus is always best. Finding ways to honor Him can be much harder than finding ways to help the poor!

IV. Conclusion: Mary wanted to honor the Lord for what He had done for their family, but her actions were misunderstood because of Judas. Yet the Lord knew her heart, and pleaded her cause. We can be sure that the Lord understands our hearts when we truly seek to honor Him. Even if other people do not understand, He knows. Let us honor Him with a sincere heart, then, and know that He will be pleased with us for doing so!