

Study Questions for John 12: 1-19

Mary Anoints Jesus 12:1-8

- Background. In near eastern tradition, guests at a banquet would recline on the floor with their head facing a low-to-the-ground table and their feet stretched out behind them. They would prop themselves up with one arm and eat using the other. This posture made it easy for Mary to come up behind Jesus and anoint His feet.
- Read **John 1:27**. Only the lowliest of household servants would attend to someone's feet. Since Mary anointed Jesus' feet and wiped the perfume with her hair, what does that tell you about Mary's attitude toward Jesus?
- Since Jewish women never unbound their hair in public, what do Mary's actions tell you about any possible criticism she might potentially receive?
- Those present at the dinner would have interpreted Mary's act as signifying devotion, humility, and above all, festivity. But how did Jesus interpret her actions? (**12:7**)
- How does Mary's act of extravagance have relevance to our priorities toward the Lord?
- Judas' criticism seemed to express compassion toward the poor but was really an expression of selfishness. How can we as Christians fall into this same trap?
- What is the best way to understand and interpret our Lord's remarks in **12:7-8**?

Triumphal Entry 12:9-19

- We're told the Jews met Jesus with palm branches. These had political overtones — they were carried when the temple was liberated from the Syrians in 164 BC and when the Jerusalem citadel was retaken from enemies in 142 BC. They symbolized kingship, victory, and nationalism. What do you think the Jews had in mind as Jesus entered the city riding on a donkey?
- The people shouted the biblical acclamation for the Messiah: "**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**" (Psalm 118:26) When the Galileans tried to proclaim Jesus King, He refused (6:15). Why do you think He accepted the acclaim this time? Do you think the timing of Passover had anything to do with it?
- Since Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, what did He intend to convey to the crowd as a response to their nationalistic expectations?
- We're told that **His disciples did not understand** (12:16). They too perceived that Jesus was at last claiming His rightful place as king. Find a passage from the Old Testament that expresses what they missed about the mission of the Messiah.
- What is the most important lesson that you personally took from this study?