

GOSPEL OF YOHANAN

Chapter 12

With this chapter, we begin our walk onto the road leading to the crucifixion of the Messiah. In less than a week from verse 1, Yeshua is to be killed, and the death He will experience is one that no one had ever experienced before nor could ever experience. Because, at His death, He will be taking on Himself all the consequences of the sins of all human beings that ever existed and will ever exist in this world.

The shadow of this excruciating experience started to haunt the Son of Man. In this chapter, as the time was approaching, Yeshua began to voice this concern. We see this in **John 12:27** *Now My soul is troubled, and what shall I say? `Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour.*

Even in His strength and determination as a Human Being, the contemplation of the pains that He would experience at the crucifixion weighed heavily on the heart of our Messiah. Even after He repeatedly demonstrated His divine power over all kinds of circumstances, He is now willing to put His divinity on the side and undergo this agonizing pain along with all the severe persecution that preceded it.

I don't think we will ever fully comprehend what our Messiah is about to go through. I believe that even in heaven, we will be amazed and full of gratitude for what He was about to do. This chapter begins to tell us how far our Messiah—our Friend—is willing to go in order to save us.

It is now that He begins to prepare Himself, His disciples and ourselves for this moment. The remaining chapters of **John** overflow with the love of the Messiah, as He speaks great words of comfort, gives advice to the believers and even prays for them. It is like a parent who is about to leave for a long journey and now spends valuable time with His family as He pours out His love and concern for them.

It is a very encouraging chapter for the believer; but it is also one that draws the final line between God and those who do not want to believe. The words contained in this chapter are the last of the Messiah's public words that we find in His ministry. Thus, the words of this chapter are very solemn.

The chapter begins with Yeshua's entry into Jerusalem for the preparation of His death and resurrection. It is in this chapter that we read of the Triumphant Entry. I am not sure why they called it as such, but I love to use this title as this entry led Him directly to be seated victoriously at the right hand of the Father. It is triumphant only in that He resurrected and ascended to heaven and will come back to establish His Kingdom. In this sense it would be triumphant; otherwise the events surrounding His entry into Jerusalem were difficult moments for our Messiah and were far from being triumphant.

Let's begin to read **John 12:12-16**, where we see the Messiah entering Jerusalem as a lamb led to the slaughter.

The next day a great multitude that had come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, took branches of palm trees and went out to meet Him, and cried out: "Hosanna! `Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" The King of Israel!"
Then Jesus, when He had found a young donkey, sat on it; as it is written: "Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt." His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

Why this euphoric situation, suddenly? Was not the Messiah to be crucified in only four days from now? Why then this seemingly triumphant entry? Why did the people use palm branches and even called the Messiah *King of Israel* when He was already utterly rejected?

The irony of it all is that, by then, man represented by the religious leaders and the civil authorities had completely rejected Yeshua. By this time in the ministry of Yeshua, there was nothing else for Him to do on this earth than to die and resurrect. So what were the people doing here? We are not speaking of a small multitude of people coming to greet Him here.

In the Mosaic Law, God asked the Israelites to come to the Temple to offer sacrifices at least 3 times a year, at Passover, Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles. Since most Jews lived outside the land of Israel at the time of Jesus, a lot of them had to flock to Jerusalem at Passover. By this time, you had thousands and thousands of Jews from all over the world who came to Jerusalem to offer the sacrifices.

We remember that in **Acts 2**, during the time of Pentecost, Luke listed some 14 different languages that were spoken; they came from everywhere. Historians speak of some 2 million people that came to Jerusalem at this time. That would explain why Jesus had to go to Bethany to spend every night of His stay in Jerusalem, until the crucifixion. Josephus speaks of some 255,600 Passover sacrifices made at this time.

In order to understand the people's actions, let's pause for a moment and look at the situation of the Israelites at the time. In **Matthew**, the final rejection of the Messiah is shown after these men committed the closing sin—the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. They had come back to Him and asked a question in **Matthew 12:38-39**:

... "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah."

The sign of the prophet Jonah was pointing to His own resurrection; as Jonah was three days and three nights in the fish, so will the Son of Man be in Hades for three days and three nights.

However, the sign of the prophet Jonah pointed to another resurrection as well; a last attempt for the people to see that they were not dealing with a mere man, but with the Word incarnate. This sign also pointed to the resurrection of Lazarus. This was a miracle that required the re-creation of a decomposed body, something that only God could do. Consequently many people, including the religious leaders, realized and believed.

This is told in **John 12:10-11**

But the chief priests plotted to put Lazarus to death also, because on account of him many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus.

This miracle did trigger a great turmoil in Jerusalem. Someone had done something extraordinary; the resurrection of Lazarus that prompted the people to welcome the Messiah as the *King of Israel*. They concluded and understood that He was the Messiah.

See **John 12:17-18**

Therefore the people, who were with Him when He called Lazarus out of his tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness.

For this reason the people also met Him, because they heard that He had done this sign.

The raising of Lazarus was not an ordinary miracle. This resurrection showed that the Messiah is the God of the Old Testament, the Creator who incarnated Himself.

All this was done despite the religious leaders' objections. It was perhaps the only event where the people acted on their own, without relying blindly on those leaders. Notice that they were carrying palm branches. Were not these branches something that was proper for the Feast of Tabernacles and not for the Feast of Passover? In the calendar of the feasts of Israel, the Feast of Tabernacle and Succoth were a type of the Messianic times; they pointed to the establishment of the Millennium.

In Jewish literature, Palm branches symbolize the victory of Israel over its accusers. This motif is even seen at the very end, in the book of **Revelation 7:9** where we read that the saved ones were *standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,*

In fact, this Feast of Tabernacles, which is associated with the palm branches, is the feast that the nations will be required to observe during the millennium, as we see in **Zechariah 14:15**. Therefore, by using palm branches and calling Yeshua *King of Israel*, the people of the time of **John 12** believed that He was the Messiah and thought that He was about to establish His Kingdom and deliver them from the Roman occupation.

Their theology was right. This is what the Messiah was called to do, but the timing was wrong because you cannot have the Feast of Tabernacles before the Feast of Passover, where the Lamb of God has to be sacrificed first. This is a truth that Israel should realize today as well. The Messiah had to come to die first. This is why there is no peace on earth now; at His Second Coming He will establish it.

The people greeted Yeshua exactly the way one was to greet the Messiah when He enters Israel.

John 12:13

... Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!

The term "hosanna" is a transliteration of a Hebrew word that means "give salvation now."

This phrase is taken from **Psalm 118:26**, *the Hallel* as well as this passage were understood to pertain to the Messiah. In the Talmud, for instance, in the book of **Pesachim 119a** one writer says: *We beseech Thee, O Lord, make us now to prosper! by David; Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord, by Jesse;*

Jesse is the father of David. The writer understood that the one to whom this title belongs is a descendant of David—the Messiah.

This is the phrase that the Jewish people will utter before the Second Coming of the Messiah. Jesus prophesied this instance in **Matthew 23:39**, and reminds us that this phrase needs yet to be fulfilled. Speaking to Israel, He says:

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!

See! Your house is left to you desolate;

for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'

There will come a day, very soon, when the Jewish nation will utter these words again and it will be at that time that the Messianic Kingdom will be established.

Since the people acted despite the religious leaders, this caused great dissension within the Pharisaic milieu.

John 12:19

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, "You see that you are accomplishing nothing. Look, the world has gone after Him!"

When things do not go well, people start to accuse each other. The way the verse is written looks like they all turned to each other and said *you see that you are accomplishing nothing, or you see it's your fault.*

The following is an illustration that applies to what is happening with the Pharisees.

In this world there are four kinds of people: Everybody, Somebody, Anybody, and Nobody. There was an important job to be done and Everybody was asked to do it. Everybody was sure that Somebody would do it. Anybody could have done it, but, Nobody did. Somebody got angry about it because it was Everybody's job. Everybody thought that Somebody would do it, but Nobody realized it wouldn't get done by Anybody. It ended up that not only the job was not done, but Everybody accused Somebody, and Nobody accepted the responsibility.

Moral: Everybody's job is Anybody's. Nobody can be Somebody unless they are willing to do Anybody's work.

Each Pharisee accused every other Pharisee and every Pharisee claimed innocence, but were all guilty.

Luke reports that, in their panic, they even turned to Jesus and asked him to help them.

Luke 19:39

And some of the Pharisees called to Him from the crowd, "Teacher, rebuke Your disciples."

They did not make sense anymore. In fact they could not make sense because they were rejecting truth, personified. See what Yeshua answers them:

Luke 19:40

But He answered and said to them, "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the stones would immediately cry out."

These words show that there will be no excuse whatsoever for rejecting the Messiah, especially after the great miracle of the Lazarus' resurrection. Even inanimate things would cry out at the Day of Judgment. The image of the stone crying brings us back to what God had said through the prophet, **Habakkuk 2:11,12**

*For the stone will cry out from the wall, And the beam from the timbers will answer it.
"Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed, Who establishes a city by iniquity!"*

Habakkuk defines well the state into which Jerusalem was at that time. The builders who established the city by iniquity were these very religious men, who were complaining to Yeshua.

The Gospel of Luke brings this finality in the following verses. After this so called Triumphant Entry, Yeshua wept over the city.

Luke 19:41-44

*Now as He drew near, He saw the city and wept over it,
saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.
"For days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you,
surround you and close you in on every side,
"and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."*

This is how "triumphant" this entry was; it only deepens the separation. Yeshua had to go to the cross.

So, let's not put our hopes up too high when we read, in **John 12**, that the people exclaimed "*Hosanna! `Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' The King of Israel!*" Only a few days later, their shouts were very different, when they all said in **John 19:15**:

"Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him! Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"

As James said, in **James 3:9**:
Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing...

The moment of this entry into Jerusalem really marked the beginning of Daniel's prophecy, where he says in **Daniel 9:26**:
And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself...

The very time of this event was prophesied. This is why, in **Luke**, He tells them that they did not know the *time of His visitation*.

This entry was accompanied with yet another miracle—a miracle that was prophesied before.
John 12:15
...your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey's colt.

Normally, if one rides a colt upon which no one has ever sat, the colt would buck because it has not yet been broken. In this case, the colt did not buck, showing Jesus' authority as the Messiah and as the Creator over the animal kingdom. The Gospels showed, over and over, that Jesus has dominion over the animal kingdom. He is their creator. What Adam lost, Jesus is reestablishing. Adam was called to have dominion over all the animals; he lost it because of sin. Jesus is seen as the second Adam. He has dominion over all the animals. There were actually two animals involved, the mother and the colt. Jesus sat on the colt with the mother walking alongside.

This verse in John is a quotation of **Zechariah 9:9**. It is in this book that we clearly see that the Messiah first comes, lowly, riding on a donkey, coming to die.
Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, Lowly and riding on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.

Here it is. The King Messiah will not come to establish His kingdom unless He comes first on the back of a donkey. Why did not the people know about this prophecy? Usually kings come on strong horses, but this was not the Messiah's will at his First Coming.

Notice the four elements that **Zechariah** brings out in this verse:

- 1) He is King; *behold, your King comes to you*. The people called Him *King of Israel*
- 2) He is just; *He is righteous*. He is the *tzaddik*.
- 3) He brings salvation; *and having salvation*. Who can give salvation but God?
- 4) He is humble; *meek*

But Zechariah does not stop here. Right in the next verse, he speaks of the Second Coming, when the Messiah comes back to establish His kingdom.

Zechariah 9:10

And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle bow shall be cut off; and He shall speak peace unto the heathen, and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

Here we see that the First and Second coming follow each other in the same prophecy. In **verse 9** we see the King riding on a colt; in **verse 10**, the events depicted herein will not be completely fulfilled until He comes again. This is what we call a double reference prophecy.

All this must have been puzzling to Zechariah and to the remnant of the Jews of the time. How can the Messiah come on a donkey, then cut off the chariot of Ephraim and even have dominion from sea to sea? This is still puzzling many people, today.

This passage along with the one in **Daniel 7:13** brought about the idea of two Messiahs in Judaism, Messiah ben Joseph and Messiah ben David. See what the **Talmud**, in the book of **Sanhedrin 98a**, says:

R. Alexandri said: R. Joshua opposed two verses: it is written, And behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven while [elsewhere] it is written, [behold, thy king cometh unto thee . . .] lowly, and riding upon a donkey —

If they are meritorious, [he will come] with the clouds of heaven; if not, lowly and riding upon an donkey.

This is how they resolve the two comings, in this part of the Talmud; there are two ways He can come, depending on the merit of the generation receiving him.

The prophet Zechariah puts an end to this controversy in **Zechariah 12:10**.

And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.

What Zechariah tells us, here, is that we must not be disturbed by the two comings because when the Messiah comes back Israel, as well as the nations, will recognize the one whom they have pierced. Many people were very disappointed after Yeshua announced His death because they were not aware of the two comings.

John 12:34

The people answered Him, "We have heard from the law that the Christ remains forever; and how can You say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this Son of Man?"

Why didn't they know this prophecy of Zechariah? How come no one taught them? This also tells us how far they were from the Word of God.

Despite this, we are told by the same prophet, Zechariah, that when the Messiah comes back He will restore Israel as a nation along with the remnant from the tribulation times. He will even restore double to it.

Zechariah 9:12

Return to the stronghold, You prisoners of hope. Even today I declare That I will restore double to you.

Why double? Do you think there is an unfairness, here, that God will restore double for Israel? Allow me to bring you to another verse that we find in **Isaiah**, where the Lord speaks of the same thing.

Isaiah 40:2

Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD'S hand Double for all her sins.

There is no unfairness then in restoring double for Israel, even if she did not believe.

The same prophet, **Zechariah** does speak of the restoration of the remnant within the Gentile nations. See this verse again, as it speaks of the salvation of the Gentiles as well.

Zechariah 9:10

..... He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion shall be `from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.'

Along with the restoration of Israel, we will have the restoration of the other fold. This is well seen in **John 12:20**, where we see an interesting passage that speaks of a remnant of Gentiles that were attracted to Yeshua at the time. These were a sample of *the other sheep ...which are not of this fold*, as we have seen in **John 10:16**.

John 12:20-24

Now there were certain Greeks among those who came up to worship at the feast. Then they came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

Philip came and told Andrew, and in turn Andrew and Philip told Jesus.

But Jesus answered them, saying, "The hour has come that the Son of Man should be glorified. "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

Who were these people and what were they doing there? These were Gentile believers who knew that God revealed Himself to Israel and so, they came to Jerusalem to worship Him, along with the Jews. These were probably proselytes, Gentiles who converted to Judaism. Or they were God fearers, the Gentiles that did not convert but stood at a distance yet worshipped the God of the Bible.

We remember that at the birth of the Messiah, three Gentile magi came from the east and asked: where is the King of the Jews? We see them again at His death; Gentiles come once again. I believe they are mentioned here because the time of their entrance into the fold of the remnant of Israel was drawing near. It was soon time for them to be grafted into the olive tree. In fact, in exactly 54 days from this time, the Church was to be born; these Gentiles along with the remnant of Israel were to compose that fold.

Notice what they said to Phillip: *Sir, we wish to see Jesus*. This is beautiful. Is not this great? Here are some people, on whom the Spirit of God was working, coming to God and saying: we wish to know you now. I am sure that melted Yeshua's heart. The Greek text indicates that they kept on asking Phillip but he did not quite know how to answer. This is why he calls Andrew and they both go to see Jesus. Jesus simply answers in **Verse 23**, that it was not yet time. It is here that He announces His death again.

John 12:24-26

Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.

He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.

If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also. If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.

We are not told what was the reaction of these Greek people, but having the Word of the Messiah addressed to them must have given them great strength and patience. He announced to them that He was to die and explained that His death will bring great blessings and salvation. Jesus used the image of a seed to illustrate a great truth; a seed has to die before it bears fruit. A commentator said: "... there can be no glory without suffering, no fruitful life without death, no victory without surrender. Of itself, a seed is weak and useless; but when it is planted, it "dies" and becomes fruitful "

That was true of the death of our Messiah and it is true of our spiritual life. When we first die to our sins, then we can bear much fruit.

Concerning this Entry, there is a beautiful thing that emerges. The majority of interpreters say that the Triumphal Entry was the time when *Yeshua* came and officially offered Himself as the King of the Jews and as Israel's Messiah. But how could this be? *Yeshua* had already been offering Himself as the Messiah and the King of the Jews for the previous three years. Israel had already rejected the Messiahship of Jesus as we see in **Matthew 12:22-45**, where the events had taken place over a year beforehand. This is where *Yeshua* said that the generation of His day was guilty of committing the "unpardonable sin," therefore they were under the judgment that would come in the year A.D. 70.

The Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem was not for the purpose of officially offering Himself as the King; there was a different purpose. Let's remember that the Triumphal Entry took place in the context of the Passover. At the Passover, God asked the Israelites to offer a lamb—the Pascal lamb—which typifies the Messiah. But before the offering, that lamb had to be bought four days before it was sacrificed. In these four days, the people had to make sure that the lamb was without blemish. According to **Exodus 12:3-6**, it was on the tenth day of the month of Nisan that the lamb was to be set aside. Between the tenth and the fourteenth of the month, the lamb was to be inspected and tested to be sure that it was without spot and *without blemish* (**Exodus 12:5**).

It is on this same date that the Triumphal Entry occurred, on the tenth day of the month, four days before His crucifixion. He was crucified at nine o'clock in the morning, at the very same time that lamb was to be sacrificed.

Jesus had come to Jerusalem to be sacrificed. The Triumphal Entry was falsely perceived as triumphant, because the people expected Him to establish the Messianic Kingdom. They had forgotten the Word of God that teaches that He is first comes to die. This entry should be named the Sacrificial Entry.

As the lamb was to be tested to see if it was without blemish, so was Jesus tested by the religious and civil authorities. We will first look at the religious authorities who were comprised of the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Scribes and the Herodians or the Essenes. One theory explains that the Essenes became referred to as the Herodians because a member of the Essenes had once prophesied that Herod will be king in Israel. This is a very possible theory.

One attack came from a coalition of the Pharisees and the Herodians who asked a political question, recorded in **Mark 12:14** where we read:
... Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

They wanted Yeshua to compromise Himself so they could get Him arrested. If Jesus had answered, "Yes, it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar," that would have raised the anger of the people. Furthermore, *Yeshua* would have been discredited among the masses who had proclaimed Him to be the Messiah on the day of the Triumphal Entry. But if *Yeshua* had said, "No, do not pay tribute to Caesar," then Jesus could have been charged with sedition and rebellion against Rome.

But they had not yet realized that they were trying to corner God Himself. Here, the Messiah spoke in such a way that their own question condemned them. He answered by asking one to bring a coin, then he showed them that coin and asked them: "*Whose image and inscription is this?*" (**Mark 12:16**)

The only answer they could give was: *Caesar's*. So He said to them in **Mark 12:17**:
... Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's

Also, this is where He added: *and to God the things that are God's*

Remember, in the previous chapter, he called them thieves and robbers. They were not thieves of money, but worse, they were thieves of the things that belong to God.

Another attack was made by the Sadducees. Here they asked Him a lengthy question concerning the resurrection of the dead, and Yeshua plainly answered them in **Mark 12:24**:
Are you not therefore mistaken, because you do not know the Scriptures nor the power of God?

Yeshua's answer really sums up how far all these religious people were from the Word of God. Their question, like their rejection of the Messiah, stemmed from an ignorance of the Word. Shortly after this, the prophecy of **Isaiah** was about to be fulfilled. In **Isaiah 5:13** the Lord says:
Therefore my people have gone into captivity, Because they have no knowledge;

According to the prophets, this lack of consideration for Scriptures has brought them to the present day Diaspora.

Concerning the civil authorities, not once but at least three times, Pontius Pilate declared Yeshua innocent. See what he said when they brought Yeshua to him.

John 18:38

... he went out again to the Jews, and said to them, "I find no fault in Him at all.

Even worse, it is not only Pontius Pilate who found him innocent, but Herod as well. He was the one who put John the Baptist to death.

Luke 23:13-15

Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; "no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him.

Here we have the testimony of two of the most despot men in history, Pontius Pilate and Herod Antipas, declaring Yeshua innocent. What are these religious leaders going to tell Jesus at the White Throne Judgment?

But all this tells us that the Lamb of God, as **Exodus 12** prescribed, was without blemish and was fit to die for us.

There is yet another dimension to these four days of examination. When you keep such a lovely animal like a lamb in your house, you get attached to it and you grow fond of it. It is not for nothing that, from Chapter 12 of John and on, we see Yeshua's concern for the believers grow more and more. It is during the laps of time, between **John 12** and the time He is arrested, that Yeshua washes the feet of the disciples. This is where He tells them not to worry; someone else is coming to dwell with them, the Comforter—the Spirit of God.

It is the time where He pronounced the High Priestly prayer for us, His friends. This entry into Jerusalem marks the beginning of a new phase in the life and ministry of our Messiah—a new phase in His relationship with His disciples.

I love what Peter concluded in **1 Peter**. Let's not forget that Peter was with Jesus during this whole week. Later on, in his life he says in **1 Peter 1:18-19**
knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

In **1 Peter**, Peter remembered and understood that Yeshua represented the Passover Lamb without blemish and without spot. In fact, three times in the Gospel of John, it is written that the disciples remembered this later on.

John 2:17

Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

John 2:22

Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

John 12:16

His disciples did not understand these things at first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written about Him and that they had done these things to Him.

There is yet another very strong and comforting message for the believer in this chapter. As the people were expecting the Messiah to establish His Kingdom, we learn that there was a belief that the Kingdom would start with a great banquet. The banquet is a biblical motif referring to the consummation of the age when all of God's people will be brought together in the kingdom to enjoy God's blessings.

In Jewish belief, this event is symbolized by a lavish banquet in which all the past and present giants of the faith will partake together. In his book "The Messiah Texts" Raphael Patai speaks of a legend that says that a great banquet will usher in the Messianic times; a banquet where the Holy One himself will come down and join at the table. It further says that the Holy One, will bring them wine that was preserved in its grapes since the six days of creation. This legend is probably taken from **Isaiah 25:6**, where it says:

And in this mountain The LORD of hosts will make for all people A feast of choice pieces, A feast of wines on the lees, Of fat things full of marrow, Of well-refined wines on the lees

In fact the Hebrew word for *covenant* is ברית, from the word eat (bera), which means an eating together or banquet. Therefore, they believe that the Messianic times will be ushered in by a banquet.

But notice how **Chapter 12** begins.

John 12: 1-3

Then, six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was who had been dead, whom He had raised from the dead.

There they made Him a supper; and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with Him.

Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil.

Why are we told that Lazarus and Jesus and others were sitting at a supper table? I believe it is surely to tell the believers, that even though Yeshua was about to die and resurrect, we may presently experience the same intimacy that we will have with Him at this supper.

This chapter begins by showing us that Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead, was at the table having supper with the Messiah. This is a great image of every believer. We were dead in our trespasses and now we are brought to eat with Yeshua. There two great suppers that the believer will have: the marriage supper of the lamb in heaven and the supper with God on earth. Both are mentioned in **Revelation 19**. Even though this is yet in the future, the unconditional promises of God for the believers makes this experience possible right now.

We find, in this chapter, the last public Words of Yeshua's ministry. Notice the double edged effect of the Word of God for those who refused the invitation and rejected Him. John describes the response of the people in **verses 37-43**. In fact, they follow an action made by the Messiah that we see in **verse 36**.

John 12:36

These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

See what follows:

John 12:37-43

But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke: "Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?"

Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

"He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, Lest they should see with their eyes, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them."

These things Isaiah said when he saw His glory and spoke of Him.

Nevertheless even among the rulers many believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Notice the progression of refusal—the progression of the rejection of God. In **Verse 37**, it says that they did not believe amid the many signs—they **did not want** to believe. Moreover, because they refused to see the evidence, in **Verse 39**, we read that **they could not** believe. What happened next? God then had no choice but to blind them, as we see in **Verse 40**.

- (1) *They would not believe (v. 37) though they had seen the evidence for His divine Sonship.*
- (2) *They could not believe (v. 39) because their hearts became hard and their eyes blind.*
- (3) *Therefore, God blinded them (Vs.40).*

This is what happens when we flirt with the Word of God. There comes a time when a decision is taken either to believe or not to believe. **Verse 38** says: *Who has believed our report?* This phrase is the beginning of **Isaiah 53**, where it describes the death and resurrection of the Messiah.

Chapter 12 closes the record of the Messiah's public ministry. It is a warning to remind man not to belittle spiritual opportunities. In the last verses we have Jesus' last message to those who do not want to believe in Him.

John 12: 44-50

Then Jesus cried out and said, "He who believes in Me, believes not in Me but in Him who sent Me.

"And he who sees Me sees Him who sent Me.

"I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.

"And if anyone hears My words and does not believe, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world.

"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him----the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.

"For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak.

"And I know that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak."

The word *judge* is repeated four times in these last verses of **John 12**. While we are told that Jesus did not come to judge, the very Words that He pronounces to save the people will be used

to judge them as well. By refusing Yeshua, the person passes judgment on himself or herself. This is severe, you might say, but consider how far God goes to save you. In fact, this passage could have ended with **Verse 31**, where we read: *Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*

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?

All these things were written so that you may believe in Him.

I conclude with this lovely prayer I once read:

It is fitting and right to sing of you, to praise you, to thank you, to adore you in all places of your dominion. For you are the inexpressible God, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, existing forever and yet ever the same, you and your only-begotten Son and your Holy Spirit. You brought us into being out of nothingness, and when we had fallen, you raised us up again. You have not ceased doing everything to lead us to heaven and to bestow upon us your future kingdom. For all this, do we thank you and your only-begotten Son and your Holy Spirit - for all the benefits of which we know and those of which we are ignorant, for those that are manifest to us and those that lie concealed. We thank you also for this sacrifice, which you are pleased to receive from our hands, even though there stand before you thousands of archangels and myriads of angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, six-winged and many-eyed, borne aloft on their wings who sing, proclaim, cry out, and chant the triumphal hymn: Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Hosts! Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest!