

“The Hour Has Come”

John chapter 12 marks the beginning of Jesus' final week before the cross. Jerusalem and the surrounding villages were buzzing with the news of how Jesus raised a man after four days in the tomb. It was six days before the Passover (12:1) and pilgrims were already pouring into the Holy City. Jesus had not been seen publicly since the miracle and some doubted that He would dare appear in Jerusalem.

“Six days before the Passover” refers to the preceding Saturday, which began Friday evening since the Jewish day began at sun down. John mentioned two earlier Passovers (2:13, 23; 6:4), and this third one, the one at the time of the crucifixion, he speaks of often (11:55; 12:1; 13:1; 18:28, 39; 19:14). To review the meaning of the Jewish Passover, refer to Lesson 4 (page 3) or consult a Bible dictionary.

Drawing Near: Dearest Jesus, thank You for humbling Yourself and becoming a man. Help me to learn from You that I may continually come before You in true humility.

1. As we move through the final days of Jesus' life on earth we will see a steady hardening of unbelief and increasing hostility on the part of His enemies, but also a deepening appreciation and devotion on the part of His own. This striking contrast is graphically illustrated in **John 11:55-12:3**. **Read** this section several times and record your overall impressions.
2. To obtain a more complete picture of the setting of Jesus' anointing **read** Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9 and John 12:1-11. Using the facts in these passages, write a brief summary of this event as if you were a reporter writing for the “Jerusalem Times.”

The Next Day: Read John 12:12-19.

8. On what day of the week did this event occur? Explain.

Consider the atmosphere and mood that surrounded Jesus as He entered Jerusalem for the last time. If time permits also **read** the account in Matthew 21:1-11.

9. How did Jesus choose to enter the city and what does this demonstrate about the kind of King Jesus would be?
10. In what ways did the “great crowd” gathered for the Passover (verse 12) and the crowd that accompanied Jesus and Lazarus from Bethany (verse 17) bear witness to Him on this historic day? (Also compare Zechariah 9:9 with John 12:15.)

The opening words being shouted by the crowd as they waved palm branches and went out to meet Jesus were part of a prayer from Psalm 118:25-26 that was regularly used with religious festivals, especially Passover. The Hebrew word translated “Hosanna” means “give salvation now.”

11. What do you think the people were expecting when they greeted Jesus at the gates of Jerusalem with such enthusiasm? Consider John 12:13c, 1:49, and 6:15.

Little did they know what it would cost this King to usher in His kingdom.

12. Why did Jesus’ disciples fail to grasp the implications of His entry into Jerusalem at this time?
13. The growing dynamic was becoming far too powerful for the Pharisees and other religious leaders. How did they react to the reception the crowds gave Jesus that day (John 12:19)?
14. What speaks to you the most about the scene in John 12:12-19 and why?

The narrative in **John 12:20-36** may have occurred a day or two after the account in the previous verses (12-19). **Read carefully verses 20-36.**

15. How does the coming of the Greeks (verses 20-22) underscore what the Pharisees said in verse 19?

The term “Greeks” was also used for Gentiles in general to distinguish them from the Jews. John’s reason for mentioning the Greeks becomes clearer as we look at the next few verses.

16. What does the coming of the Greeks or Gentiles signal (verse 23)?

Throughout the book of John there is a series of references to Jesus’ “hour” or “time” (2:4, 7:6, 8 and 8:20). That the hour has now come will be repeated in John 12:27, 13:1, 16:32 and 17:1.

17. As you consider and reflect on these statements as a whole what do they tell us about God?

Jesus’ “hour” was not simply a moment in time but an expression filled with great meaning. In John 12:24-26 we are given a glimpse into the deep and paradoxical truths that lay behind these simple words. **Read** verses 24-26 again, considering each phrase.

18. a. Explain the meaning and significance of this parable as it applies to Jesus.

b. As it applies to His servants.

19. What does it mean to “die” to oneself (2 Corinthians 4:11-12, 1 Corinthians 15:31)?

20. Describe Jesus’ emotional and spiritual anguish as His “hour” approaches (verses 27-28a).

At this precise moment a voice from heaven thundered across the skies and answered Jesus’ prayer for all to hear (verses 28b-30). *Pause and reflect on the oneness and unity of the Father and the Son as they set in motion the “hour” that would culminate at the cross.*

21. a From John 12:28 and 31-33 what will the victory of the cross accomplish?
- b. Define the meaning of “glorified” in this context.

John 12:34-36 records the last mention of the “crowd” in Jesus’ ministry. Sadly, they remain confused and perplexed to the end.

22. Consider Jesus’ warning to them in verses 35-36. What applications do you see here for modern readers and for your own life?

23. John offers an insightful commentary on the ministry of his Lord in **12:37-41**. **Read** these verses thoughtfully. How does John explain the fact that the Jews did not believe in Jesus? (See also Isaiah 53:1 and 6:10.)

Note: The fact that “He has blinded their eyes. . .” does not mean that the blinding takes place without the will or against the will of these people. The same is true with the hardening of their hearts. These people deliberately choose evil. God’s purposes are not frustrated by the opposition of evil people. They are accomplished (Romans 11:25).

24. In contrast to the widespread unbelief, what else does John say was happening in 12:42-44?

Personal Reflection: Does verse 43 describe you in any way? If so, under what circumstances are you tempted to seek the praise of men more than the praise of God? Ask the Lord to deal with any specific areas of your life where this might be a problem.

The words in 12:44-50 conclude and summarize what John recorded of Jesus’ public ministry. The fact that Jesus cried these words out shows their importance.

25. **Read** and **reflect** on this final exhortation from Jesus to believe (verses 44-50). When considering these verses along with the countless truths taught by Jesus during His public ministry, what changes have you observed in your own understanding of Jesus Christ?