

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

Jesus' time was now come, when He allowed wicked men to kill Him. They did not realise that Jesus gave up His life to save many... though they thought *they* had succeeded with their foul plan! They only succeeded because it was

God's

plan for them to succeed. The spite and viciousness of natural man knows no bounds. We see this today in many movements that oppose God and freedom of conscience.

Verses 1-3

1.

Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2.

There they made him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

3.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Jesus returned to Jerusalem six days before Passover, as required by Jewish tradition, but first He went back to Bethany to see Lazarus and his sisters. The sisters gladly made a meal in His honour: Martha served the food and Lazarus sat at table, with Jesus.

Meanwhile Mary brought a pound of spikenard to anoint Jesus' feet. Spikenard, *nardos*, (also called nardin or muskroot) was the tip of an exotic fragrant Eastern India plant that produced an exquisitely-smelling, amber-coloured, juice. It was used as a base for precious ointments and so was very expensive. Today it is still used as a perfume and medicine. The name has been applied to a variety of plants over time. And arch-enemy of God, Pope Francis, uses the spikenard in his coat of arms. The plant was important in ancient Hebrew rites as incense in the Tabernacle, and was even used to flavour foods. Mary had a whole pint of the ointment in an alabaster jar, and, as Judas pointed out, it was worth about a year's wages for a labourer.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

Yet, Mary ignored its monetary value and poured it all over Jesus' feet, and then wiped them dry with her own hair, such was her devotion. The whole house was filled with the odour. Would WE be willing to give up what we worked hard for, so that Jesus could be honoured? Would we be willing to think of everything we own as belonging to God? Indeed, would we be willing to think of our belongings as nothing, if it meant serving the Lord? Very few would do so.

Verses 4-8

1.

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

2.

Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

3.

This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

4.

Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

5.

For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.

Judas Iscariot, who would soon turn traitor, complained to Jesus about this use of such an expensive ointment. He was not really concerned with the value (300 pence; what a labourer earned in a year), or with its alternative use (given to the poor). As the keeper of the apostles' purse, he just did not like money being used at all! There is even a hint that the money he kept for the apostles and Jesus was pilfered at times, for his own use (verse 6).

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

Jesus stopped his complaint, saying that Mary was using the ointment as a pre-burial rite, so its use was allowed. How can ANY thing not be allowed if given to God? And Jesus added a statement He had already made previously – that while the poor are always a feature of every society, Jesus was only on this earth for a very short time... so make the most of His presence.

Do we get our priorities straight? Do we give charity money to the poor just because they are poor (and even when their poverty is well-deserved)? Or, do we give only to poor brethren who need help? In Old Testament days giving to the poor was a national duty, and money was given to the priests for that purpose (but was abused, as we read). It was mainly given for the upkeep of the Temple. But, today there is no Temple. Should our money be used to upkeep unnecessary buildings that are used just once or twice a week? Or, should we think carefully and give to those who are called by God to preach and teach?

As I have said many times, poverty itself is not the real problem. The problem arises when poverty is sudden, and not the person's fault, rendering him unable to pay his bills and loans. I mention this because it happened to me, striking down my life like a lightning bolt, when I witnessed to truth.

So, poverty is not necessarily a problem, but it becomes a problem when debts cannot be repaid (bear in mind that ordinary things such as mortgages are also debts). Even then, arrangements can usually be made, if the creditor is willing. But, many avoid this route, because they fear never having credit again... something I feared greatly, but which proved to be a blessing! Others fear the perceived shame. So, this incident with Mary has many ramifications and side-issues! Basically, the things of Jesus are far more important.

Verses 9-11

1.

Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

2.

But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

3.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

Because that by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

The whereabouts of Jesus was made known far and wide. Many people went to Bethany to see both Jesus and the man He raised from the dead, Lazarus. Because of this increasing popularity, the Pharisees thought about not just killing Jesus, but also Lazarus. They thought that if he was no longer alive, people would quickly forget about Jesus as a powerful figure. (I can almost guarantee that the Pharisees would have probably poisoned Lazarus secretly, so that they could claim Jesus did not raise him after all, but only brought him out of a swoon! Any other method of murder would have raised doubts).

The real reason the Pharisees wanted Jesus dead... was that He was more popular than they were! Jealousy can lead to many horrible ends, including murder. But, it was more multi-layered than jealousy: if Jesus continued gathering Jews to His side, they feared the political balance would be upset and they would lose their positions of power, status and wealth, and that Rome would send in more troops to clamp down on Judaea. Never underestimate the way vanity and greed can drive a man to illicit activities and hatred.

Verses 12-16

1.

On the next day much people that were come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

2.

Took branches of palm trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord.

3.

And Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,

4.

Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

5.

These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

The day after Jesus had His meal with Lazarus, the time had come for Jesus to begin His fatal last days. He knew what was coming, but did not flinch. By this time everyone in Jerusalem knew Jesus was going to enter the city, and huge crowds began preparations for Him at the east gate (facing the Mount of Olives).

As they would with a royal visitor, they hacked down the fronds of palm/date trees, and as Jesus entered, they waved the leaves in praise and threw some to the ground to be walked on. There was no mistaking the cries of adulation, which must have driven the Pharisees wild with hatred: **“Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord”!** ‘Hosanna’ is from the Hebrew, *Hoshana*, ‘Save, we pray’, though it came to be used in praise rather than as a request, and this is how it was used on this day.

These spontaneous words from Psalm 118, shouted with great joy, were also used in response to the words of the priest at the Feast of Tabernacles (the great Hallel), as they waved palm leaves and willow branches. The final day of this Feast was known as the “great hosanna” (the branches were also called ‘hosannas’. Also see Matthew 21:9).

These actions at the city gate proved beyond doubt that the majority of the Jews saw Jesus as the Messiah, Son of David. This call went out later that day in the Temple, because the people were asking Jesus to save them. Was this salvation from sin... or salvation from the Romans? Probably, a mixture of both. Either way, the Pharisees became more and more incensed with every hour Jesus was in Jerusalem.

Jesus entered the city on an ass, as was prophesied in Zechariah 9:9. So, while the people treated Him as a triumphant king, He Himself rode in as a lowly saviour. How incongruous, then,

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

to see how so many preachers and teachers enjoy the accolades of men, and expect high honours for their work, so opposite to the attitude of Jesus!

Verses 17-19

1.

The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

2.

For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

3.

The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

Note something interesting here, especially in the face of so many deniers of truth... these events were testified to by those who saw Lazarus raised from the dead. This is as much an historical record as any found in dusty ruins! These same people were with Jesus when He entered Jerusalem, and many who waved palms had heard of this mighty miracle and the Lord Who performed it.

The Pharisees were consumed with their hate. They asked each other what they could do to stop this ever-growing praise for someone they wrongly presumed to be a candidate for the physical throne of Judaea. It seems the majority of the Jews were now behind Jesus, as the words "the world" signify. But, as we see later, the same crowd that praised Jesus into the city were some of those who also called for His crucifixion. Sadly, the world is made up of people who are fickle, wanting 'bread and circuses' more than salvation. Charismatics are of this kind, as they seek ever more thrills and excitement at their faked meetings, rejecting the sober word of God in all its simplicity and directness.

Verses 20-23

1.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

And there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast:

2.

The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

3.

22 Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

4.

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

Amongst the huge crowds were visiting Greeks (*Hellēn*). Usually, this term was used of non-Jews/Gentiles, but in this text it appears that these were Jews who lived in Greek territories. A Gentile would not come to Jerusalem to “worship at the feast”, hence my interpretation.

After coming such a long way to the Passover celebrations, the Greeks asked one of the apostles, Philip (who came from Bethsaida in Galilee), if they could see Jesus. Philip related the request to Andrew, and both of them went to Jesus. But, Jesus has something far more important on His mind. He told the apostles that the time had come. He was soon to be glorified. The apostles did not grasp the true meaning. After saying this, Jesus went on to speak of His coming death.

Verses 24-28

1.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

2.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

3.

If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.

4.

Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

5.

Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

This was no time for Jesus to satisfy the curiosity of foreign Jews. He was not an icon or a diva! He knew His death was imminent and needed to talk about that to His apostles, who would later carry the same message to the world. This same message was also heard by many Jews as they waited to see what He had to say.

Using the language of husbandmen, He told them that before a seed of corn could grow into a full stalk of wheat, the seed firstly had to die in the ground. The seed was just one seed, but its fruit would be bountiful. Of course, He was referring to His own sacrifice, but the apostles did not yet understand the connection, though they understood the agricultural meaning.

It is true to say that many Christians know what scripture says, but very few manage to interpret it properly or apply it to modern life. Sometimes, this inability is due to poor Christian knowledge and slowness to learn; sometimes it is due to the spiritual fact that not all will have such knowledge or ability to begin with, because God gives each of us our spiritual understanding by measure.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

Thus, some will understand more than others. It has nothing to do with capability, but with God's decision to impart knowledge and ability at that time. This, really, is the difference between a genuine Bible teacher and other Christians. Neither has anything special within themselves, but both are acted upon by the Holy Spirit in the way He thinks fit. The one given extra knowledge or spiritual abilities cannot boast, for the abilities are given to him for a purpose by God; he is only a conduit carrying a message from the Lord.

Having told of His role as a seed containing a future glory, Jesus then spoke of those who might follow Him... they must hold to their lives lightly. It does not mean we must jump at the opportunity to become martyrs! Verse 25 is saying that a man who says he wants to follow Jesus should be aware that his own life is as nothing, so he should not try to pursue the things of this life at the expense of spiritual life. If they do, then their eternal salvation is not just in doubt, it is non-existent. Unfortunately, today, Christians tend to ignore this very severe statement, because they fear treating others as unbelievers. Yet, this is what Jesus demands.

If the same man 'hateth' his life on this earth, he will be welcomed into Heaven. 'Hateth', *miseō*, means to detest. It is a fact that God gave us our lives and created us to live on this earth prior to entering Heaven; for this reason 'hateth' does not in this verse mean to loathe our time on earth. Rather, it means to have an aversion to evil; it also is a statement of opposites – a preference for what is godly instead of for what is worldly and sinful. In other words, such a man wants only to live an holy and pure life, and not follow the ways of worldly men into sin. Such a desire proves his true allegiance to the Lord.

For this reason, those who wanted to serve Him, or be ministers, had to first follow Him. This is not so obvious to most people! (Note: Though Jesus here speaks of general followers and ministers, the word used also refers to deacons: *diakoneō*). To follow Him is not just to tag-along as a fan or observer; it is to follow what He said and did, copying His holy life and words. Today, someone who follows, say, a great musician, will want to hear everything he wrote and played, and will go to his concerts, read everything about him, etc. His own life will be structured to reflect his admiration. How many Christians do you know who reflect Christ, whose words and actions are portrayals and copies of the way Jesus would think, speak and act?

In this way the servant will be where the Master is: the man's life will be a reflection of the life of Christ. In doing so, the Christian will be rewarded by the Father and honoured... he will be praised and valued highly. Is this your desire? Or, is your life fixed on to whatever the world can give you – money, status, job, possessions, etc?

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

Of course, as Jesus was relating this to His disciples and apostles, He was also speaking to the Greek Jews who wanted to meet with Him, and to whoever was surrounding Him.

Verse 27 contains a curious statement, but I suggest that the colon could easily be a question mark. He said that His soul was troubled. He did not explain why, but we know from scripture that His time was very close, so as an human being He had to face suffering. So, He was troubled or distressed.

'What, then, can I say?' he asks the disciples. His question was rhetorical, for He had no doubts about what was to come. He was 'speaking aloud' for the sake of those listening to Him, just as He did before He raised Lazarus. 'Shall I say Father save me from what is to come?' His self-answer is His reply: 'No, I came to earth for this very reason – to die, and soon'. These are the thoughts we can legitimately insert between the words.

Instead of concentrating on Himself, Jesus then said the Father's name was to be glorified by what was about to happen. Then, a voice boomed from Heaven confirming that the Father had already glorified His own name and would do so again. While the wicked of the world try their best to obliterate God and His glory, God continues to show His glory through the sacrifice of His Son, and through everything created! His glory cannot be stopped.

Verses 29-33

1.

The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

2.

Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

3.

Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

4.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.

5.

This he said, signifying what death he should die.

The people who were around Jesus attested to the fact that they heard thunder, and wondered if an angel spoke to Jesus. In itself this was miraculous, because the voice cut through normal earthly physics. Thunder accompanied the voice. It was a physical sign that Jesus was Who He said He was. And those around Him – many – heard the voice and the thunder. Of course, unbelievers would want to dismiss this testimony of hundreds of people, by rejecting what is written as history!

When Jesus resurrected Lazarus He said that He spoke out loud so that people would associate what He was doing with God and the miraculous. Now, the same principle was used – God spoke to His Son audibly, so that listeners would see the link between Jesus and the Father.

He added that NOW was the time for judgment of the world. And NOW would the prince of this world (Satan) be cast out. Not from the world itself, because he is still controlling millions, but from his prime position as ruler. When Jesus sacrificed Himself, He toppled Satan from his age-long position.

Jesus then hinted at His mode of death, by saying He would be “lifted up”. It not only refers to His mode of death, but also to His exaltation (*hypsōō*). The very death of crucifixion was despised by the people, but it was to the glory of God! His death drew all men to Himself. Not ‘all’ in the sense of ‘everyone’, but all who are elect.

Verses 34-36

1.

The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

2.

Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

3.

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.

The people (and there would have been hundreds around Him) agreed that the Messiah abides forever, because Moses said so. But, they did not know Who the “Son of man” was and asked for His identity. By becoming human, Jesus associated Himself with humanity as its Head. Only He could take this position because only He was perfect. Some also say He used the title to show His lowliness, as opposed to the idea of a warrior king, so desired by the Jews.

As was His habit, Jesus did not answer directly, probably because everything He had said and done in His ministry years proved, time and again, that HE was the Son of Man and the Son of God! Why should He again repeat what He had already made plain? Instead, He again referred to Himself as ‘the Light of the world’, saying that time was very short and they should obey God while He was still amongst them. The darkness would come soon, and swiftly, and when it came they would be unable to find their way, and would stumble.

This is a warning for all people in every age... no man or woman knows when their time is up, and they should obey God when they can. This is not an Arminian message, but a truism, for everyone elected will be saved, and these people *must* follow the Light because of their calling. The unsaved have no idea what they are doing, but the saved are led by the Holy Spirit and know their path. And those who *genuinel*
y say
they believe in the Light
will
follow Him; only these are the “children of Light (i.e. God)”. Those who change God’s word are not His children, but are fakes and deceivers.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

After saying these things Jesus went away and “hid” Himself from the crowds. He needed time to Himself to prepare for the coming wickedness done to Him.

Verses 37-41

1.

But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him:

2.

That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?

3.

Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again,

4.

He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

5.

These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him.

This was Jesus' last few words to the people, yet most did not believe! They witnessed His miracles, including the amazing miracle of raising Lazarus; they heard His teachings. Yet, they did not believe! This fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias (Isaiah), that God had blinded them to truth, so that they hardened their hearts. This meant their precondition of wickedness prevented them from seeing even the most obvious of signs, and so, from believing.

Their hearts did not understand, and so they *could not* be converted to be healed of their sins. In this text 'converted', *epistrephō*, means to turn to the One True God in worship and obedience. Sadly, it can also mean to turn

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

inwards to ones' self – as these people did, a fatal error. “Who hath believed our report?” asked Isaiah, and who has God revealed Himself to? Very few. And this has been the case from the dawn of time... those who are elect are very few, by God's own choice.

Because the choice is God's and not man's (as Arminians insist on thinking), man **“could not believe”**. A man can use any tactic he wishes, but if God has not chosen him, he WILL NOT believe. They CANNOT believe, said Isaiah, because God has blinded them and hardened their hearts. (Remember Pharaoh?). It is simply not possible for any man to come to his own conclusions and be saved. If God has not elected Him he will be unable to understand what his eyes, ears and brain tell him! So, all those Arminianistic preachers and ministries that spend millions trying to persuade men to believe are a waste of time, effort and money.

Isaiah said what he said because he had seen God's glory and believed. Thus, he spoke of God's glory and intentions. Have YOU seen and heard this glory?

Verses 42-47

1.

Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

2.

For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

3.

Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

4.

And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

5.

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

6.

And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

Here we have a very interesting thing that few have noticed: Many chief rulers believed on Jesus, but were afraid to say so, for fear of being cast out of their synagogues. This would have been tantamount to being 'excommunicated'. The 'chief rulers' would have included local pastors and teachers, but it primarily refers to some of the Sanhedrin, such as former high priests. As in any age, fear of men can often lead a man to hide and be silent.

We see this today, in many churches. They dare not upset the status quo or oppose the popular belief, because they do not want to be attacked or identified. Indeed, many who are like this will go along with persecuting open believers, keeping up their pretence. They decide to want men's praise, but not their anger. In this way they forego the praise of God reserved for all who honour Him.

Jesus said out loud: 'Those who believe in Me actually believe in the Father'. This was a vital statement, because the Jews claimed to believe the Father. Therefore, NOT to believe in Jesus the Messiah was NOT to believe in the Father! And, to see Jesus (that is, believe in Him) was really to see the Father, Who sent Him.

Jesus said He was in the world as the Light, a light that overcame darkness and sin. Those who followed Him (as believers) would, then, never again live in the darkness of sin and evil. However, those who heard Him and did not believe would not be judged by Jesus, for He did not come to make such judgment, but came to save the elect. Of course, they were ALREADY judged by their own actions and non-belief, and Jesus, as God, *knew* who would not believe; they would be judged at the end of time before the great throne. Therefore, Jesus did not need to judge them when He was on this earth... their judgment had already been made in eternity, and would be ratified on the Day of Judgment.

Verses 48-50

1.

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.

2.

For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

3.

And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

Those who rejected Him and His word would be judged “in the last day” by “one that judgeth him” – the Father. This was the same Father Who sent Jesus to earth, to warn them and to save. It was the father Who gave Jesus the exact words to say and the exact things to do. Throughout His ministry Jesus gave glory and honour to the Father, and this was partly because the Jews KNEW the Father and honoured Him... but by their rejection of the Messiah sent by the Father, they thereby rejected their own religion and negated their supposed faith!

Everything said by the Father, and so by Jesus, was the key to “life everlasting”. In this particular verse, ‘everlasting’ (*aiōnios*) does NOT mean ‘without beginning or end’, but means ‘without end’. No human being can have no beginning and no end, because such a state only belongs to God, Who is eternal. Mankind can only be ‘everlasting’, not eternal.

Having said this, while human beings have a beginning and no end, the decision by God to save them IS eternal!

© April 2015

---oOo---

John 12

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 07 April 2015 10:53

{loadposition btm_address}