

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Ch. 12

Our audacious mission is to demystify the Bible. It's been said, "To know God, you've must understand the Bible. To understand the Bible, you've must learn about Jesus. To learn about Jesus, you've must read the Gospels."

Dallas Willard writes, "A pilot was practicing high-speed maneuvers in a jet fighter. She turned the controls for a steep ascent but flew straight into the ground, unaware that she'd been flying upside down. Most of us live at high-speed with no clue to whether we're upside down or right-side up." You have the data, but are you reading it right?

It's c. AD 30, a week from Jesus' date with death. He had about 5,000 "believers" then, but only about 500 were seeking to *live* His way. And He had only eleven faithful disciples – men who'd soon face persecution, imprisonment and martyrdom. From this handful sprang the New Testament and millions of Christ-followers over these intervening two millennia. **Let's read John 12:1-50.**

Getting Up For Dinner

Jesus returns to Bethany, just outside Jerusalem, home to His friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus whose return from death has given him front page notoriety, much to the dismay of the chief priests.

Martha's in the kitchen; Mary's with Jesus. She's swept up in gratitude for what He's done for her and her siblings and breaks out some costly perfume and washes His hair and feet in an act of worship.

This irks Jesus' turncoat disciple, Judas Iscariot. How would we have treated this conniving traitor! Yet the Master loves you and me so much, and is so obedient to His Father, that He *allows* Judas to betray Him.

DISCUSS:

Crowdfund-a-mentalists

After surprising his dad, the King of Macedon, by breaking the meanest horse in the kingdom, young Prince Alexander heard his proud pop say, "Now go and become the king of the world!" And Alex the Great did, scarfing up all of the then known world. He died at 33, as did our Lord.

Both were hailed as king of kings. Alexander the Great was a human who declared himself to be a god. Jesus is God and took on human form. Despairing of no more worlds to conquer, Alex drank himself to death, and his realm collapsed. Conversely, Jesus wept over His nation's sins, died on a criminal's cross and birthed a spiritual kingdom that will *never* end.

John tells us in Revelation (19:11-16) that sooner than we think, Jesus will return to earth to end the bloodiest war ever known, to send satan to hell's flaming pit forever, and to usher in unending peace and goodness.

In the first century all Jewish men had to be in Jerusalem thrice yearly, including Passover, spiking the city's spring population to 3,000,000. Seeking to crown Jesus king to oust Rome's occupation forces, the locals and turistas give Him a hero's welcome. Jesus' disciples still don't fully "get it," even though five centuries earlier the Jewish prophet Zechariah delivered a word from God predicting exactly how Jesus would be greeted by the mercurial multitudes.

Let's read Zechariah 9:9-10.

DISCUSS:

“Light or Dark?” (Not Toast)

When we crawl off the throne of our lives, and give that authority to Jesus, He lets us participate in His life forever, free from sin's guilt and death's grip on us. (John 11:25-26, 17:3)

Let's read John 3:16. Here's another way to translate that verse: "God's care for humanity was so great that He sent His unique Son among us, so that those who count on Him might not lead a futile and failing existence, but have the undying life of God Himself." We cannot earn this; we can only get it by believing that Jesus canceled the debt we owed because of our sin. **Let's read how John puts it in John 3:36.**

As Jesus faces the onerous task of carrying our sins to the cross, how would God "glorify" Him?

- (1) By exposing the world's evil when it executed the Son of God
- (2) By defeating on the cross satan's grip on our lives
- (3) By making heaven accessible to all, but only by faith in Christ. God will bring *ultimate* glory to His Son because all roads eventually lead to Jesus. Each of us will face Him either as our Savior or our Judge. The choice should not be difficult.

DISCUSS:

So Near Yet So Far

DISCUSS: Despite His sinless life, His indisputable miracles and His life-changing teaching, why didn't everyone who came in contact with Jesus during those three years accept Him as their Messiah?

Ray Stedman defines three "steps to unbelief:"

- (1) They chose the God they *wanted*, not the God who *is*.
- (2) They ignored their present opportunity, face-to-face with the living Son of God!
- (3) They denied their need for light. I stood twelve inches from Elvis Presley when he and I were teens in Memphis. I regret that I never took the initiative to meet him. My prayer is that our families and friends will not wait too long to accept Christ as Savior.

700 years earlier, Isaiah prophesied that the Jews would reject Jesus. Many leaders believed in Him but kept mum about it.

In His last public address Jesus reaffirms His deity, saying He came this time to shine the light of His truth into a dark world, to *save* it, not *judge* it, to offer every person eternal life.

He's not looking for our mental assent. No, He wants you and me to have the courage to commit our lives to Him. He wants to permanently steer us away from spending eternity in a place the Bible calls hell. He wants us to live forever with Him, starting *now* and with Him always!

In I Thessalonians we saw that Jesus could return to earth at any moment, triggering a 7-year period known as The Great Tribulation. What a phony friend I'd be if I didn't urge you to skirt the wrath that the Bible says is coming! Put your confidence in Jesus. Trade your sins for His righteousness. Settle this matter now; secure your future. Salvation is God's gracious gift, received by whispering a prayer like this:

"I believe You are God's Son. I believe You love me and died for me, and I want to live my life for You. Thank You for forgiving my sins and for giving me an authentic relationship with You. Lord, by faith I give my life to you. Thank You for being my Savior, not my Judge. Amen."

His Deal

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