



ALABASTER
GUIDED MEDITATIONS

JOHN

READ | REFLECT | RESPOND | REST



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JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

¹ Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. ² A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. ³ Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance. ⁴ But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, ⁵ "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." ⁶ Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself. ⁷ Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial." ⁸ You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me." ⁹ When all the people heard of Jesus' arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. ¹⁰ Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, ¹¹ for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus.

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

¹² The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors ¹³ took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted, “Praise God! Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the LORD! Hail to the King of Israel!” ¹⁴ Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said: ¹⁵ “Don’t be afraid, people of Jerusalem. Look, your King is coming, riding on a donkey’s colt.” ¹⁶ His disciples didn’t understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him. ¹⁷ Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. ¹⁸ That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign. ¹⁹ Then the Pharisees said to each other, “There’s nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!”

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

²⁰ Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration ²¹ paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, “Sir, we want to meet Jesus.” ²² Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus. ²³ Jesus replied, “Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. ²⁴ I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. ²⁵ Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. ²⁶ Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me. ²⁷ Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But this is the very reason I came! ²⁸ Father, bring glory to your name.” Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, “I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again.” ²⁹ When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him. ³⁰ Then Jesus told them, “The voice was for your benefit, not mine. ³¹ The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. ³² And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” ³³ He said this to indicate how he was going to die. ³⁴ The crowd responded, “We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?” ³⁵ Jesus replied, “My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see

where they are going. ³⁶ Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light.” After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

THE UNBELIEF OF THE PEOPLE

³⁷ But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. ³⁸ This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted: “LORD, who has believed our message? To whom has the LORD revealed his powerful arm?” ³⁹ But the people couldn’t believe, for as Isaiah also said, ⁴⁰ “The LORD has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts—so that their eyes cannot see, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and have me heal them.” ⁴¹ Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he said this, because he saw the future and spoke of the Messiah’s glory. ⁴² Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn’t admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. ⁴³ For they loved human praise more than the praise of God. ⁴⁴ Jesus shouted to the crowds, “If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. ⁴⁵ For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. ⁴⁶ I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. ⁴⁷ I will not judge those who hear me but don’t obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. ⁴⁸ But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. ⁴⁹ I don’t speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. ⁵⁰ And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say.”



JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

JOHN 12:20-26

READ

1. Read John 12:20-26 slowly (aloud, if it's not intrusive to others).
2. Look at the photo on page 63. How might these boardwalk doorways (marking the beginning and ending of a salt marsh) relate to Jesus' prediction of his death?
3. Pause.

REFLECT

1. Read the passage and consider Jesus' dilemma in trying to explain that he would pass through death and come out the other side.
2. No one had ever seen anything like this.
3. Read the passage again and consider the listeners' dilemma as they tried to understand how new life could come out of death.
4. Have you experienced times of dying to self(ishness) and finding new life (vv. 24-25)?
5. Read again slowly and notice what stands out to

you. What words or phrases resonate with you?

6. Ask God why that might be.
7. What, if anything, do you sense God inviting you to consider? To feel? To do?

RESPOND

1. Imagine yourself in the photo, keeping in mind any difficult or challenging doorways you have passed through.
2. Tell God where you would be.
3. Ask for help for anything you need to die to and come back to life to.

REST

1. Exhale.
2. Soak in the freedom that comes from dying to self and not trying to manage the outcomes of your life all on your own.
3. Even if that's not where you are at this time, try imagining that and feeling that freedom.