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Pastor Charles Rains

Title **Jesus Presents Himself as King who first Gives His Life**

Each chapter you are perhaps surprised that as you go past the 11th chapter where Jesus goes to Bethany and raises his friend Lazarus from the dead, and go into chapter 12, you are somewhat surprised to find that actually you are within a week of his crucifixion. So in fact the setting is given to you all the way back there in chapter 11, and because John only has 21 chapters, you could really say 10 of the chapters cover the rest of Christ's life up to the last week. But chapter 11 through 21 cover only a period of time of one week. Do you understand from that the tremendous focus, the tremendous emphasis being placed on the events of that last week?

Now of course we appreciate God's giving us Matthew, Mark, and Luke to see so much of what Jesus did in his ministry. We appreciate Matthew and Luke giving us the genealogy even of the Lord and the details of his birth, each from their own perspective of course. Matthew emphasizing his kingship, Luke emphasizing his humanity. We get to meet Mary, Joseph. We get to meet the characters of his early days, Simeon, Anna in the temple when he's presented there as a baby. We see things that we don't get in John. But in John, our minds and our hearts are forced to focus on why he came. Why he came.

Yes, he did live about 33 years. He lived without sin. And yet there's so little of his life that's really told to us, even practically nothing about his childhood except for that scene in Jerusalem at about age 12. Until he comes to about age 30 according to the Gospel of Luke when he enters his ministry. Those years, no doubt, if God had chosen to give us the details of those years, as John says in his Gospel, he supposed the world could not contain the books that could be written. And I think he was referring mainly not to the first 30 years but to the last three.

Yet here we have John trying to say as the elder apostle, John from what we have from the early church fathers, John is the one that lived into his 90s, maybe 95 years of age in his life and ministry and writing. And much of his writing came very close to the end of his life. He had the time to think for God to give him the emphasis that he has here. And to give us this great, great concentration on the last week of Christ's life.

Two Great Themes

Now there were two themes that we have in the Bible about Christ's coming. Oh, the fact that he would have to come as a man, yes, but that was not the main theme. That he would live sinless life, that's indeed absolutely vital but God doesn't give us much detail about those 30 years. Two main themes though do come to us from the Old Testament.

One theme is that God wanted to bring Israel a king, a triumphant king to rule over them. To come through the line of David, to be born in Bethlehem, to rule over Israel. But the prophecies go far beyond Israel. The prophecies say that he not only will rule over Israel, he'll rule over the world. He has the name and title King of Kings. All kings of the earth will be subject to him. That's what the Old Testament prophecy said. The Greek word for Messiah, one anointed to reign as king, is Christ, Christos. Christ, that's what we find in the New Testament, that means Messiah. The king was to come, he was to reign, Israel was to be glorious.

Isaiah went on that during the king's reign, all the animals would be at peace. All the poisonous snakes would not be poisonous. All the carnivorous animals, the bear and the lion, they wouldn't be carnivorous. They would be meek, gentle, like pets. To even little children. They would be at peace with one another. The plant world would be tremendously profitable or productive. That it would be so that the plants would bear a hundredfold over what we would be expecting from them. Everything would be fruitful. All the weather conditions over the world would be perfect for enjoyable living, for plant growth, for animal living. Even animals like the lion would eat grass. The grass would have to be so nutritious, so able to meet the needs of their bodies, that even their sharp carnivorous teeth meant for chewing of meat to give them concentrated proteins, they would get all of that from the little bit of grass that they could chew up with those teeth. What a marvelous picture. The king would come.

The other great theme was that a Savior would come. A king and a savior.

Which did Israel think they needed most? Well, they thought they were doing pretty well with keeping the law. They were doing the best they could. They were obeying all the commandments. They thought they weren't so concerned about the savior. That was, they thought, being taken care of in their worship. What they wanted was a king. A king to throw off the shackles of Rome that had come down upon them very hard. Actually, they'd been under shackles of rule, of authoritarian rule, for centuries. They had been taxed to death. They had been so depleted in terms of having their youth taken away from them as slaves. So abused. They hated the rule over them. They just dreamed of the day when their king would come. But he didn't come the way they thought they would.

John 12:1-19

I'd like to give you the setting from chapter 12 of John. I like John doing this for us. He sets the time for us. He says, "Then six days before the Passover." That tells you, listen, you're within a week. Six days before the Passover. I want you to remember, Jesus died on the preparation day for the Passover. He died the day before Passover. So if this is six days before the

Passover, this is only five days before the crucifixion. Keep that in your mind as you look at this. Five days before the crucifixion.

Jesus came to Bethany where Lazarus was, who had been dead, whom he had raised from the dead. Think of him there at Bethany. It does help to know a little bit of geography at this point. If you don't know much about geography in Israel, I want you to know this. I want you to know where Bethany is. With respect to Jerusalem. The most direct route, you'd call it as the crow flies, to go from Jerusalem to Bethany would be to go out the eastern gate, which hasn't been open for centuries and centuries, of course. Go out the eastern gate, go across the little, go down a little slope, little ways, couple hundred feet. Go down and cross over a little brook there called the Kidron. It's a little dry brook bed, really. It doesn't have water in it unless there's runoff water. There's no spring at the top of the Kidron, so it doesn't have water in it. It's just a way for water to run down between the hill that Jerusalem is on and the hill next to it. Cross over that and step on to the hill across from there and that happens to be the Mount of Olives. If you go directly up the Mount of Olives, the slope of the Mount of Olives, I'm telling you, you don't want to crisscross or whatever. Just go straight up and you can do it. It's not so steep that you can't just walk straight up the Mount of Olives. Go over the top, okay, go over the top, a little bit to the left, you're at Bethany. It's all you have to know.

If Jesus was coming to Bethany where Lazarus was, and that's where Lazarus lived, if he was going to get to Jerusalem, guess how he was going to get there? He's going to come out of Bethany, go over a little bit, come over the top of the Mount of Olives and go down the Mount of Olives into the Eastern Gate. If you knew Jesus was at Bethany and Jesus was coming to Jerusalem, you would know exactly the route that he was going to take. No question. The path up the Mount of Olives that went over to Bethany and Bethphage up there was commonly used. It was well worn. You were not going through weeds. It was a little pathway, not only for people but for animals, donkeys, camels. It was wide enough probably for people to pass one another. Well used little road. It was the way to get to Jerusalem from Bethany. Keep that in mind. Little geography.

Then they made him a supper. There they made him a supper. That was at Bethany. And Martha served. In other words, Martha was serving the food to the guests at the supper. Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those who sat at the table with him. We say it that way. You might get in mind some table three or four feet off the ground, which is not at all what table means here is at the place where they ate. They sat on the floor. And everybody sat with their legs kind of turned to the left. If everybody did it that way, then you could get more people close to one another around the place of eating. And there would be a cloth spread, no doubt. There might even be some kind of a platform. It's been suggested at times that might have been there, but certainly there was a cloth and food would be put on it and people would be around it. And you might have

two or three of these arrangements within a room if you had a large number of people. And it seems that there were a large number of people at this meal. So they made him a feast. And Lazarus was one of those there.

And then it says, "Then Mary," verse three, "took a pound of very costly oil of spongy and anointed the feet of Jesus." Mary is the sister to Martha and Lazarus. Don't confuse this with other stories earlier in the other Gospels about the anointing of the feet of Jesus by a prostitute. That was at a meal in a man named Simon's house. Okay, it's an entirely different picture, different time. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, is not a prostitute. Actually, she's a godly woman. And what she's doing here is a wonderful expression of her love. It says, "She took a pound of very costly oil of spongy and anointed the feet of Jesus." A pound in that, as oil, you have to think of it somewhat in the sense of being liquid, that would be about a pint. This oil that she had would be about a whole pint of oil. Very costly. Well, we'll find out in just a second about how costly.

"And wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil."¹

This oil was super concentrated and was prepared as really as a fragrance for the body. So, you've no doubt gone by some perfume counter like I have, and the girls at the perfume counter sometimes take great delight in turning and spray at you, you know, "Would you like to smell this?" You're lucky to get by some of those counters without smelling very strange by the time you get past them. Some of these concoctions of not just cologne, but of what they call perfume, very concentrated, in tiny little bottles could cost a great deal of money.

You could have an ounce of perfume and it could be \$50, you know. Not that I've bought any of that lately. Susan has her own certain fragrances she wants, and in a way it's been a good thing that she hasn't liked the ones that cost \$50 an ounce. But anyway, you know, if you take \$50 an ounce perfume and just pour it out all over the place or spray it all over a room, one ounce, it would, well, I tell you frankly, it probably would give me a headache. Because I have seen, I've been around people who, it seems to me, might have put half an ounce on themselves that morning and just to go by them almost makes my head throb. So I think what they're really going after is a heart throb. But nonetheless, they usually get a headache for me.

This perfume is intense, and if you pour out a pint of it, what do you think you're going to have? The house is going to be filled with the fragrance. This

¹ John 12:3 Have your Bible open and follow along. This was a message where people could follow text on a screen or in their bible. Pastor Rains went three times to the holy land. He took a group of adults on one trip where he co-taught with Dr. Jim Munson an expert on the Bible and geography. In the studies Pastor shared his expertise in Bible prophecy as it related to the sites we visited in the three week course at the then American Institute of Holy land studies. 1976

idea of fragrance comes up in the Old Testament several times. At the tabernacle, there was an altar of incense placed back in the holy place, the first room is placed back by the veil that separated the holy place from the Holy of Holies. But it was meant, according to the book of Hebrews, it was really meant to be part of the Holy of Holies. It was meant to be really right in front of the throne, which was what the Ark of the Covenant represented, and a mercy seat there. So what it meant to speak of was prayer going up before the throne. And the sweet-smelling incense was to speak of how God thought of prayer as a sweet and beautiful thing. Even some of the sacrifices, three of them, of the five, were called sweet-savor sacrifices, because they spoke of fellowship. They didn't answer for sin. They spoke of fellowship with God. So this idea of fragrance really is worship, prayer, love. She's offering this up.

One of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, who would betray him, I mean, that's about a succinct way to identify Simon's son, Judas Iscariot, as you possibly can. He said this, "Why was this fragrant oil not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor?"² Now, a denarius was about what a day laborer, a man working hard, digging ditches or breaking rocks, one denarii was what he would expect to receive for a full day's labor. 300 denarii, that's almost a year's labor, hard labor, to buy that pint of oil. A year. And that was from Judas.

John comments this, he said, "Not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief and had the money box, he used to take what was put in it." In other words, he wanted that 300 denarii and that money box or money bag in some other place, he wanted to get his hands on it, he wanted it for himself. He was a thief. It shows you how far from spiritually sensitive this man is. Some try to make the case that surely Judas Iscariot will be in heaven. I can't find anything in the scripture that tells me that. Everything about him tells me that he had no relationship with the Lord Jesus. Everything about him speaks of himself, of his fallen nature, even to betray the Lord Jesus himself for money. 30 pieces of silver. Money was this man's God. This, he said, "Not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief."

But Jesus said, "Let her alone. She's kept this for me for the day of my burial. For the poor you have with you always, but me you do not have always." This is not an issue of money. It comes down to what really is important in life is how much you love the Lord and how much you would give to him to worship him and show your love. I remember the story about some people up in Canada, a man and wife, who owned a farm up there. They told the Lord they wanted to serve him and use everything they had for his glory. They began to take from their annual profits, from their crops, 10%, and then they went to 20%, and then they went to 30%, and give it to the mission work at their church. Every year they would pray, "Oh Lord, if you multiply our income, we will give you even more." The Lord did, and they began to give 40%, and 50%, and 60%, and

² John 12:5

70%, and 80%, and 90% of all the profit that they got from their crops. They lived on 10%. They didn't live well. They felt they lived adequately. And that one couple was supporting many, many missionary families. I don't know the number, but it was many missionary families, all from their sacrifice.

I actually know some churches that don't even have missions in their budget. I'm serious. And they have budgets of some, upwards of maybe a half a million dollars a year, and don't have missions in their budget. Have no burden for the lost. "The poor you have with you always, but me you do not have always."³ We might sacrifice, we might give, we might give sacrificially, but we do it out of love, and we do it to the Lord. You're not going to solve the world's problems of poverty with your giving, but you can give out of love, but you give to the Lord.

Now a great many of the Jews knew that he was there, and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might also see Lazarus, whom he'd raised from the dead. These were the gawkers. These were the ones that wanted entertainment. They're not there for spiritual reasons, they're not there out of spiritual hunger. They want to see something exciting. Let's go see the guy that raised somebody from the dead. Yeah? The power of that message was getting around. Verse 10, "But the chief priest plotted to put Lazarus to death also." The power of that message, of that resurrection of Lazarus, well, I better not say resurrection, it's really resuscitation, that raising of Lazarus from the dead, that was a powerful witness that Jesus had power to raise from the dead and to put Lazarus to death. The chief priest couldn't overcome that, because on account of him, many of the Jews went away and believed in Jesus. They might have come out of gawking, they might have come for entertainment, but being there, hearing him, they opened their hearts, many of them. Not all of them, not all of them, the scripture doesn't say that, but many of them put their faith in him.

The next day, okay, five days before Passover, right? Because in 12:1 it was six days before Passover. Next day, five days before Passover, he died on the day before Passover, this is four days before his death. Four days before his death. A great multitude that had come in to the feast, that means the feast for Passover, which is only now four days away, so they've been filling in, coming into Jerusalem, filling up the places to rent for sleeping. They come into the town, come into the area, they came in for the feast. They heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem.

Now they knew geography. They knew he was coming to Jerusalem from Bethany. And there was only one way to get there, up that mountain, on that little road. They took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him and cried, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel!" They were out there to welcome their king. Four days before his crucifixion. To welcome their king. That's where their minds were set. Then

³ John 12:8

Jesus, when he'd found a young donkey, sat on it, "As it is written, 'Fear not, daughter of Zion, behold, your king is coming, on a donkey's colt.'"⁴ You have to understand, I've said this to you before, that in the Middle East, at that time, kings rode to their coronations on donkeys. A donkey is a work animal. It's a servant animal. It was their way of symbolically saying to the people as they went to their coronation, "I come as your servant." Now, they didn't do that for the most part, but that's what they were trying to say. They were trying to comfort the people, saying, "I come as a king, but I come as your servant."

Jesus truly came as a servant. And how much he would do to really serve the eternal good of those people would soon be shown in four days. He was to do what was necessary before God to make an atonement for their sin. "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 two things"⁵

What was written and what they saw with their eyes that had been done to him. Written where? In the scriptures. You can look into the Old Testament, you'll see these things prophesied. That's why these quotes, even that he was going to come to them riding on a donkey, that they would say these things, "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, the King of Israel, Hosanna." So much in the Old Testament that told them about their Messiah, but also that told them about his crucifixion.

This morning in Sunday school, Mark was going over Isaiah 53. Such powerful detail in Isaiah 53 about the crucifixion. Read Psalm 22, read Isaiah 53, read Zechariah 14. When you read those sections, it's amazing. You know the New Testament, that such detail is given to you in the Old Testament. But the disciples didn't really understand it until later, until Jesus was glorified. You say, "What was that?" Not simply that he offered up his life on Calvary, but that he was displayed in his glory in the resurrection. Put these things together. The work was done on Calvary, the display of the victory and the perfectness of the sacrifice was made known on resurrection morning. And he stayed there 40 days to review these things with them and encourage them. The disciples put it all together.

That's why I say to you people, you don't have to expect that you should know everything in the scriptures right away. And there's profit in you going along, hearing, being taught, studying, putting it together over time, growing in your understanding. Not just your knowledge. You may have a lot of knowledge about the facts, but to increase your understanding, to see how these things fit together, to see what they imply, to see what they symbolize, see what they

⁴ Jn. 12:15

⁵ John 12:16 I use a transcribe app for these messages. Many times the AI recognizes quotes but not always. Sometimes like here I add the quotes. I know I miss some. The words are accurate but not perfect. I think it is worth the effort. I hope you find it helpful.

speak of. That's your understanding. In other words, to understand the heart and mind of God, to understand the will of God, to understand what God was doing and why he was doing it, not just the facts. He wants you to see that. He wants you to know his mind. He's revealing himself.

"Therefore the people who were with him, when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead, bore witness."⁶ I tell you, they went around telling everybody about it. Being a witness is important. "For this reason the people also met him, because they heard that he had done this thing." This sign. When people get the message, when they hear, some of them will respond. In this case, a lot of them did.

The reason that there were so many people on that road coming down the Mount of Olives was that the people who had seen Lazarus raised from the dead talked about it. And they made people want to see Jesus. And now they put one and one together. He's coming to Jerusalem. He's coming down that road. Let's go see him. And they went out. They wanted to see him. And they wanted to hail him as king. That's why they broke the branches off the palm trees.

By the way, if you go to Jerusalem, right outside the Jaffa Gate, you'll see palm trees. You know, it's a beautiful sight. You think, "By the way, there are palm trees over here." "The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, 'You see that you're accomplishing nothing.'"⁷ And that's really, they're talking to themselves, not talking to Jesus here. They're not achieving anything. They can't stop this massive movement toward Jesus. Look, the world has gone after him. They're so jealous. They're so bitter about the fact that they're losing their hold on people. They're losing the numbers. They're losing authority over lives. And that's what they loved. And Jesus is being hailed as king. They were consumed then with the thought, not only of killing Lazarus, but of killing Jesus himself.

This was only four days before they accomplished it. And this spurred, this great outcry coming down the Mount of Olives, made those Pharisees commit themselves to kill him. And that boiled over within them. It was only three days after that that they were talking with Judas and giving him coins and plotting to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. Just hours. And now we're on the slippery slope going down to the crucifixion. And Jesus goes willingly. He will return as king. He was rejected in his first offer of himself. Within days after he offered himself, they were crying, "Crucify him."

He will return. And Revelation 19 says he has on his vesture a name written, "King of kings and Lord of lords."⁸ And he shall rule the nations. He shall rule. But first he had to die. First he had to accomplish the most wonderful work that he might give to us, the most wonderful gift of salvation. It cost him

⁶ John 12:17

⁷ John 12:19

⁸ Rev. 19:16

everything. It cost us nothing. But to open our hearts and love him and receive him, his forgiveness, let him be the Lord.

Someday, according to Revelation 1:5-8 someday soon we're going to reign with him as kings and priests. You too will be a king. That just means somebody put somewhere in the earth with a responsibility to oversee that district and the rule of the Lord in that district as the one in authority under him, king of kings and priests. To offer up worship, praise, prayers to God. Coming soon.

Father, thank you for your gift of your Son. Thank you for all that you have given us in your scriptures. Thank you for the victory of the cross. The horror of it is awful because it tells us of man's hatred and man's desire to destroy anything, even the Son of God, that should take from them the full control of other lives. It tells us of the desire of Satan to be the ruler in one's heart. And also, Lord, this crucifixion tells us of your love poured out for us, given freely, that any who would receive Jesus might know you and live with you forever. Help this week be a dear, dear week for us, Lord, in reaching out to children in the schools and in our time on Friday to remember your death and victory and then the joy of the resurrection morning. In your precious name, amen.