



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 6:25-34 Commentary New Revised Standard Version

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further follow the verse-by-verse [International Bible Study Commentary](#). **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** will help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the *International Bible Study Commentary* website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study. You can discuss each week's commentary and lesson at the [International Bible Study Forum](#).

(John 6:25) When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?”

When they found Jesus, they addressed Him as Rabbi, which means Teacher. They did not address Jesus as the Messiah, and by the next day it seems they no longer had an interest in making Him their king. John showed that the crowd knew Jesus had no boat available to Him on the shore the night before. He had not left with His disciples to go to Capernaum by boat. He had sent His disciples on ahead of Him. He could never have gotten to Capernaum by walking around the sea on the seashore. Other than by a miracle, they had no explanation for His appearing in Capernaum. They knew that it was highly improbable that He could have gotten there when He did other than by a miracle. Finding Jesus prompted their question.

(John 6:26) Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves.

For various reasons, Jesus did not answer them directly by saying, “I walked on water, and met My disciples in the boat.” They probably would not have believed Him, and Jesus would never have bragged like that. If He had told them the truth, they might have wanted Him to prove that He could walk on water by walking on the water in their presence. Jesus did not need to answer their question and Jesus would not tell a lie; so, He ignored it (a possible example for us at times) and told them only what they needed to hear. The crowd did not recognize His deeds as signs that He was the Messiah, the Son of God. They should have recognized His feeding the 5,000 and His healing their diseases as signs He was sent by God, but they did not. Rather, Jesus said they sought Him because they wanted free food. By beginning He reply with “Very, truly,” He indicated to them that He knew exactly what they were thinking and the reason for their thinking.

(John 6:27) Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”

Too many people want something for nothing. Others work with a single-minded focus on acquiring more and more material possessions, money, and power. Jesus warned against a materialistic single-minded ambition. “The food that endures for eternal life” is spiritual and Jesus came to give people spiritual food. Jesus will eventually tell people that the spiritual food they need is He himself. If we believe Jesus and believe in Jesus, Jesus will give us an eternal, joyful, peaceful, glorious relationship with Him, with God the Father, and with all children of God now and forevermore. Jesus’ signs proved that God the Father had set His “seal of endorsement” on Him and approved His works. The Jews should have known from their study of the Scriptures and the miracles of the prophets in the Old Testament that Jesus had indeed been sent by God and they should believe His teachings.

(John 6:28) Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?”

Because they believed Jesus was rabbi, they questioned Him as though He were a traditional rabbi. They kept their focus on themselves in relation to God, as perhaps all of us did until we truly came to believe in Jesus. They

asked, “What must we do” (perhaps they thought God would give them the things they wanted if they pleased God by doing God’s works and obeying all God’s laws). The Pharisees gave them laws to obey and works to do to please God, so they probably expected Jesus to give them His list too. They were looking for a set of rules by which to live or good works they could do that would make them right or keep them right with God so they could deserve His blessings. Jesus wanted them to turn their self-centered focus away from themselves and away from what works they should do to merit God’s favor. Instead, they needed to turn their focus on Jesus as the Son of God, the Gift of God, and the Messiah that God the Father had promised to send them. They needed to receive Him into their lives in order to receive the cleansing from sin and the forgiveness of sin that He came to give believers in Him. He wanted them to receive the gift of eternal life through faith in Him. Eventually, those who believe in Jesus will rejoice in the gracious opportunities He gives them and the gracious works that He will do through them, enabling them to do the real works of God in His strength and wisdom. Jesus wanted them to understand that receiving eternal life through faith in Him meant far more than their doing a few works in order to merit a few self-centered blessings from God—which no one can merit.

(John 6:29) Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.”

First and foremost, God the Father sent Jesus, and Jesus carefully told them that they needed to believe in Him in order to do the work of God. Notice “the work of God” is singular, not plural. Jesus spoke with humility, but He wanted them to seek the truth and discover the truth—the truth that the way of eternal life was to turn from selfishly focusing on themselves and turning their focus on Him, because He is the Son of God and the Messiah that God the Father sent to them. If they believed Him, they would come to believe in Him, follow Him, and do all He led them to do. Believers do not look at serving Jesus according to the Scriptures in the power of the Holy Spirit as performing “works” to merit salvation and earthly blessings.

(John 6:30) So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing?”

Jesus told them to “believe in” Him, the One God the Father had sent. The crowd would not recognize Jesus’ feeding more than 5,000 of them as the sign that God the Father sent Him, directed Him, and empowered His ministry as the Son of Man (a humble title, but also a title and claim with Messianic meaning that Jesus used for himself). They wanted Jesus to work miracles and then directly claim that His miracles proved they could believe what He taught about himself. But they really did not want to learn and follow what Jesus taught. They wanted to eat free food and be delivered from Roman oppression. They wanted Jesus to perform miracles on demand, like a magician, and do what Moses did or better than Moses did. When God sent Moses to Egypt to free His people from slavery, Moses worked miracles to prove to the Hebrews and to Pharaoh that God had sent Him; still, the people complained against Moses during his working of miracles in Egypt and in the wilderness. As the Messiah, these people expected Jesus to do greater miracles than Moses. Jesus was greater than Moses and He would be and do greater things than Moses, but Jesus never did miracles on demand. Jesus always expressed God’s love and care through the miracles He worked, which the crowds should have recognized as signs. Jesus came to teach the truth and be the Truth, but they had no interest in learning the truth or doing the truth (see Luke 20:21; John 14:6).

(John 6:31) Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

The crowd wanted free food daily that they did not need to earn or save for the next day. They knew Moses had led their ancestors out of Egypt. Moses had enriched their ancestors from the possessions the Egyptians gave them before they left Egypt. Moses gave them manna and quail six days a week. They only needed to save enough food on Friday for their Sabbath meals; so, they did not collect food on Saturday, but kept the Sabbath holy. They wanted Jesus to do more than Moses had done. They wanted free food every day from Jesus that they did not need to go out and collect as their ancestors had done. They wanted a materialistic Messiah to be their king and free them from the Romans who enslaved them physically, as Moses had freed the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. But Jesus had come to free them (and us) spiritually from their (and our) slavery to sin and Satan.

Then, they (and we) could serve God out of loving and joyful hearts. They (and we) could do specific tasks God had for them (and us) that would vary from person to person according to God's gifts. They (and we) could bless many because they (and we) love God and our neighbors. In these and other ways, God the Father through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit has given eternal life to His children and blessed millions of people.

(John 6:32) Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven."

Jesus corrected their misunderstanding. Moses had not given their ancestors what they thought; rather, God the Father had given them all these blessings through Moses, a servant of God. Jesus, the Son of God, wanted them to keep their focus on God the Father, because He sent Jesus from heaven and Jesus is the true bread Who gives eternal life. The manna that God the Father gave them through Moses, His servant, would never last longer than two days (over the Sabbath) and the manna gave them physical life and sustenance only. Jesus is the true spiritual bread that a person can take into themselves spiritually through faith in Jesus; then, they can live forever with God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit in loving, joyful relationships with God and others forever. Believing the good news of Jesus Christ will turn us from self-centeredness to God-centeredness.

(John 6:33) For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

Jesus insisted that as the Messiah He had not come just for the Jews or just to fulfill Jewish material and political aspirations. Jesus came down from heaven (from a higher realm spiritually than our earthly kingdoms) into the world. Jesus offers and gives life to the world. Anyone who comes to Him and believes in Him can have life, eternal life now and forever. The life that Jesus gives involves moral and spiritual transformation and growth; just as physical bread sustains physical life and promotes physical health. Following a political Jewish messiah or king will and would never give anyone what Jesus came into the world to give to all who believe in Him.

(John 6:34) They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.”

Continuing to misunderstand Jesus, the crowd wanted blessings, food, “things” from Jesus. The crowd focused on the material and physical (which Jesus also gives as the Word of God that created and creates all things). The crowd wanted Jesus to feed them, and so much the better if Jesus met all their needs now and also gave them a life that would never end. Jesus will go on to explain the meaning of “Bread of God” and how to receive the “Bread of God” always by believing His teachings and receiving Him as the Bread that came down from heaven.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What are some things Jesus did (or refused to do) when showing and telling the truth about himself which showed He was not arrogant, egotistical, or self-centered?
2. Why did Jesus allow His disciples to see Him walk on water, but did not walk on water in front of a crowd for them to see Him walk on water?
3. How did Jesus give God the Father the glory and honor for feeding the crowd?
4. What did Jesus say that the crowd was seeking when they came to Him? What are some people seeking when they come to Jesus today?
5. Who does Jesus tell the crowd to believe in? Who does Jesus want people to believe in today? What are some of the results of believing in this person?

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