



## International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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### John 6:47-59 Commentary King James 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 6:47) Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.**

With the words, "Very truly," "Verily verily," or in the Greek "Amen, amen," Jesus once again put emphasis on taking the truth of His words very seriously for they represent reality, objective truth, and what God requires of people. Notice: the content of "whoever believes" is "I am the bread of life" and includes ALL of Jesus' teaching. Jesus requires people not only to believe in Him, but to also believe ALL He taught and to act accordingly. In the last verse of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus requires His followers "to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). Jesus gives eternal life those who believe Him, and those who believe Him will seek to observe all things whatsoever Jesus has commanded.

**(John 6:48) I am that bread of life.**

With the words, "I am," Jesus once again emphasized that the divine name for God, that God gave to Moses at the burning bush, applied to Him (see Exodus 3:14). Jesus is the "I am," the Word made flesh, that the Father sent

into the world to speak the words of God directly to the world. As the Son of God, Jesus said He was (and is) the Bread of Life that must be eaten if someone was to have eternal life. To eat the Bread of Life is not to “Once upon a time, I took a bite of Jesus to live forever;” rather, just as we eat physical food daily to continue living physically, so we eat of Jesus daily, take Jesus and His words into our lives, minds, and hearts daily, so we can continue to live spiritually forever in relationship with Jesus and our heavenly Father. To have and enjoy eternal life involves more than saying we believe some facts about Jesus are true. Rather, if Jesus has given us eternal life, we eat spiritually of Jesus daily; we know we prayerfully seek to observe whatsoever Jesus commanded with the help of the Holy Spirit—these are some of the signs that Jesus has given us eternal life.

**(John 6:49) Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.**

The Jews expected the Messiah to feed them daily as Moses had fed the Hebrews in the wilderness. Jesus gave a sign that He could do that when He fed a large crowd using only a few loaves of bread and fishes—for He was the Messiah that God promised to send. But Jesus did not come to feed people physical food and then have them die. Jesus wanted people to look beyond their earthly expectations to what He came to give physically and spiritually. Jesus came to give people eternal life, a life of peace and joy in relationship with God and God’s children that would begin here and now and last forever. Before Jesus Christ comes again, our human bodies will live and die, but those who believe Jesus will live as recipients of eternal life, and on the last day Jesus will raise them with glorified human bodies.

**(John 6:50) This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.**

No doubt, Jesus pointed to himself when He said, “This is the bread that comes down from heaven.” Jesus himself, not just His teachings but including His teachings, is the bread of life that believers may eat and not die. At death, the human body separates from the believer, but the believer lives on with Jesus until the last day, the day of resurrection, when Jesus gives each believer a new glorified human body that will never die again. If

His hearers believed Jesus, each day they would make the effort do what He said and they would eat (take into themselves, into their hearts and minds) ALL that Jesus taught, for He is the Word made flesh. They would want a living, eternal, relationship with Jesus that included learning and doing the will of God, not a list of commands to obey apart from knowing Jesus personally, but a lasting relationship where they would do the works of God with Jesus as the Holy Spirit inspired, led and helped them.

**(John 6:51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**

The manna in the wilderness gave physical life to the Hebrews; still, all except Joshua and Caleb died in the wilderness during forty years of wandering. Manna was not alive, but it gave physical life when eaten. As living bread, Jesus was alive and lives forever, and He came from heaven to earth though His listeners did not know how—it was not for them to know or for Jesus to explain at that time. Day-by-day Jesus' followers were to take Jesus and His words into their lives and thereby live forever and never die. Jesus came to give His life for the world and not just for the Jews; so, Jews and Gentiles who follow Jesus in the Church now make up His body on earth. When Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, He suffered and died in the flesh as a real human being, and then He rose from the dead in a real human body that could be touched.

**(John 6:52) The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?**

When Jesus said the bread from heaven was His flesh to eat, some of the Jews disputed among themselves when they took Him literally, but Jesus was not talking about cannibalism. In a similar incident, we remember how Nicodemus took Jesus literally and asked Jesus in John 3:4, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?” If Jesus had been literal, He would have advocated the breaking of the Law of God, which Jesus never advocated. In Leviticus 17:11-12, we read, “For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I

have given it to you for making atonement for your lives on the altar; for, as life, it is the blood that makes atonement. Therefore I have said to the people of Israel: No person among you shall eat blood, nor shall any alien who resides among you eat blood.” But Jesus would give His life, give His flesh, shed His blood and die in the flesh as an atonement for our sins as Paul described in Romans 3:23-25, “since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed.” But it was not yet time for Jesus to begin talking specifically in detail about His coming death.

**(John 6:53) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.**

We have the advantage of having the entire Bible to read to glean the meaning of Jesus’ words and how they might apply to His death and resurrection and our lives. We know about the Lord’s Supper that Jesus had not yet instituted. At this point in Jesus’ ministry, those hearing Him did not have the advantages that we have. So, what could Jesus have intended them to learn from Him with these words? At the very least, Jesus probably intended them to understand their responsibility, if they were to be one of His followers, to take Him wholly and completely and personally into their lives. Unlike other rabbis, who taught this and that and whose followers could believe or reject whatever suited them depending on what other rabbis taught, Jesus expected His followers to take everything He said as true, as representing reality, as truths they must believe if they were to follow Him because the truths He taught came directly from God. Jesus expected them to believe whatever He said about himself whether they understood Him or not; for given time and the Holy Spirit, they would eventually remember and understand what He taught and who He was and is. Jesus wanted them to take Him to themselves as they would take God, and no other rabbi or teacher taught with that authority. Jesus wanted them to keep in mind what He said in these verses so they would apply His

words to His coming death and resurrection and not be offended by His death as the Messiah as many Jews would be when they learned about a crucified Messiah. Later, the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:22-24, “For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

**(John 6:54) Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.**

More than only believing the true facts about Jesus’ nature as fully God and fully man, “the Word made flesh,” and more than believing Jesus’ teaching as the Word of God, those Jesus will raise on the last day need to believe and receive Jesus and accept Jesus’ death on the cross as God’s loving means of being both perfectly just and perfectly merciful when forgiving us for our sins and granting us eternal life. Those who believe, believe in, and accept ALL of Jesus will be raised up on the last day to the resurrection of life (see John 5:28-29). Jesus expects His followers to take and believe all of Him, not just part of Him.

**(John 6:55) For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.**

In John 3:16, we learned that God expressed His love for the world when Jesus died on the cross. As the only possible sacrifice for our sins, Jesus upheld the justice of God and made possible God’s merciful forgiveness of our sins. In this sense, Jesus’ death on the cross is true spiritual food and drink, and because of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead we can have fellowship with God in Jesus Christ moment-by-moment daily. As true food and true drink, remembering His broken body and shed blood given for them will give believers assurance of forgiveness. Believers need to receive Jesus and His death on the cross in their behalf and as the God-ordained means by which God can ultimately grant eternal joy, peace, love, and life to those who believe in Jesus.

**(John 6:56) He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.**

To “abide” or “remain” means maintaining a close and personal relationship with Jesus that involves continually taking the Word of God into ourselves and continually taking the Word of God into account when considering and evaluating all our words and actions. If we allow Jesus to abide in us, Jesus will become a part of everything we say and do. The Word of God became flesh and then ascended into heaven leaving us the Bible as we have it today inspired by the Holy Spirit, and the Bible is the truth the Holy Spirit uses to help us remain in Jesus and Jesus in us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. There can be a true and conscious sense of remaining in Jesus according to His words and Jesus remaining in us that indicates an ongoing day-by-day relationship with Jesus that is far more than simply trying to live according to Jesus’ value system and teachings.

**(John 6:57) As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.**

By continuing to speak in different ways of eating His flesh and drinking His blood and living because of Him and abiding in Him, Jesus pointed to His coming death that His disciples would understand later and to His resurrection from the dead, without which they could not abide in Him or be raised from the dead by Him. In previous chapters, Jesus said He did what He saw the Father doing and He came to do the will of God. He and the Father always spoke and acted together. Unlike the idols of their Gentile neighbors, Jesus said His Father was living and He was alive because of His Father, and He will give eternal life to those who take Him into their daily lives and have a personal relationship with Him.

**(John 6:58) This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.**

The Hebrews in the wilderness had to eat God-given manna daily to live. If they had not eaten the food and drank the water that the Father provided them, they would have quickly died. As disciples of Jesus, believers keep

taking Jesus' words, Jesus' commands, Jesus' example, Jesus' leadership as expressed in the Bible into their minds as they prayerfully study the Bible, and the Holy Spirit enables them to have a personal relationship with Jesus in their hearts that begins in this life and will continue forever.

**(John 6:59) These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.**

John did not tell us when Jesus' discourse in the synagogue began. We might think of Jesus' serious synagogue teaching beginning with verse 47, and His previous teaching being to the crowd that found Him after He crossed the Sea of Galilee. As Jesus put all the focus on himself and eating His flesh and drinking His blood, He knew that He would lose many followers, but those who stayed with Him would learn and experience what He meant by this teaching that offended many. From the disciples' example and experience, we learn the value of staying with Jesus and continuing to pray and study the Bible even when we do not understand Jesus and the Bible as we might like at the time.

### **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further**

1. Jesus said He was the bread of life. How often do you suppose believers are to eat the bread of life?
2. Where did the bread of life come from and what is its purpose?
3. What do you think Jesus meant when He said His followers needed to eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood?
4. What will happen to Jesus' followers on the last day?
5. What does it mean to abide in Jesus?

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