



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 12:27-36 Commentary **New American Standard Bible**

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 12:27) “Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? But for this purpose I came to this hour.

Jesus Christ is the Word made flesh who dwelt among us (studied in John 1:14). In Hebrews 4:15, we read, “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin.” Since Jesus is fully God and fully human, as a man He suffered and contemplated future suffering and death in the flesh as we do. Jesus did not face suffering and death as one unconcerned or as one who saw it as “no problem.” No, as fully God and fully man, when Jesus saw Mary weeping over the death of Lazarus, as one who knew He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead, Jesus was “greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved;” then, “Jesus wept” (John 11:33, 35). Jesus came to conquer the devil and death, and He knew He could only do so if He lived without sin through every type of test we face and if He died as a sacrifice for our sins. As the Son of God on earth, Jesus did not feel indifferent to sin, suffering, death, and the needs of others—neither did His Father in heaven.

Nobody understands sin, suffering, death, and what it means to perish better than our Father and Jesus, and that is one of the reasons the Father sent the Son into the world. In John 3:16, we studied, “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”

Jesus was understandably troubled about dying in the flesh and what that would mean to Him as a man in His spiritual battle against the devil and death. Jesus was also troubled when He contemplated the fact that a professed friend would betray Him, and what that meant for them both. In John 13:21, we read, “After saying this Jesus was troubled in spirit, and declared, ‘Very truly, I tell you, one of you will betray me.’” He knew that Satan would enter Judas and the consequences for someone if they become demon possessed. In Matthew 26:24, Jesus said, “The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born.” Jesus grieved knowing the suffering and death that Judas would face for betraying Him.

Jesus was troubled about many things as He faced death, but He does not want those who believe in Him to be troubled about death as they face death, because He has conquered the devil and death for us. To encourage His disciples (and us) before His death, Jesus said in John 14:1, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.” Furthermore, Jesus has sent the Holy Spirit to help us when we do face troubles. In John 14:26-27, Jesus promised, “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” As Jesus faced death, He tried to comfort others. We will have much to learn from these verses in the weeks ahead.

As Jesus faced death, He felt troubled, but Jesus did not let His troubles dominate Him or turn Him from doing what He came to do in obedience to His Father. To make the point, Jesus asked a rhetorical question: He was not praying for the Father to save Him from this hour or from His time to die. Jesus came to die, and He was not going to let His troubles deter Him, as He declared, “it is for this reason that I have come to this hour.”

To encourage, help, and motivate us to keep obeying God as followers of Jesus Christ when we face testing and troubles, we need to remember these words in Hebrews 12:1-3, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such hostility against himself from sinners, so that you may not grow weary or lose heart.”

(John 12:28) “Father, glorify Your name.” Then a voice came out of heaven: “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.”

Because the Father and the Son love one another, and because they love the world and us, Jesus prayed that the Father would glorify His name, not that the Father would save Him from death. Jesus kept His focus on His Father and on doing the Father’s will. As we have seen many times, the Father and the Son glorified one another. The Father glorified His name when He sent Jesus into the world, and the Father promised Jesus that He would glorify His name again when Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, when Jesus was buried in a tomb, when Jesus rose from the dead, when Jesus ascended into heaven, and when Jesus sent (and still sends) the Holy Spirit to live within believers so they can love and glorify God by their words and works too. From eternity past, present, and future, from the beginning of creation and throughout history, the Father and the Son have loved each other and have glorified the names of one another.

(John 12:29) So the crowd of people who stood by and heard it were saying that it had thundered; others were saying, “An angel has spoken to Him.”

No one in the crowd recognized the voice as the voice of God. On the one hand, some just thought they had heard thunder with no religious significance. On the other hand, some heard a distinct voice from heaven instead of thunder, but they attributed the voice to an angel. Believers and unbelievers can hear the same thing, but believers can perceive the things

of God; whereas unbelievers will reduce the things of God to nothing.

(John 12:30) Jesus answered and said, “This voice has not come for My sake, but for your sakes.

The crowd heard Jesus pray. Jesus explained that what they had heard in reply was not thunder, but a voice. They heard Jesus pray to the Father, and they heard the Father answer Jesus’ prayer with a voice they could hear and understand if they had spiritual perception. Jesus did not need to hear the answer to His prayer. He and the Father were perfectly united in purpose and Jesus was perfectly obedient to His Father. He knew that the Father glorified His name and would continue to do so through Jesus as Jesus completed the tasks before Him. The crowd learned that what they were seeing and hearing from Jesus related to the Father honoring His name through Jesus and His continuing to honor His name through Jesus in everything Jesus would do in the future—no matter what appeared to be the case when He was lifted up and died upon a cross, “disregarding its shame.”

(John 12:31) “Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.

When those of “this world” crucified Jesus, they openly revealed the fact that they were murderers like their father. Earlier, in John 8:44, Jesus had told the religious leaders, “You are from your father the devil, and you choose to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.” Jesus was of course speaking of their spiritual father. By Jesus’ death and resurrection, God showed and openly judged that the ways of “this world” are evil and people are not to live in the ways of “this world”—especially those who claim to be followers of Jesus. Jesus also taught that “this world” has an evil spiritual ruler, but Jesus would win the ultimate victory over him when He died and rose again. In John 12:48-49, Jesus also taught that there will be a future judgment, “The one who rejects me and does not receive my word has a judge; on the last day the word that I have spoken will serve as judge, for I have not spoken on my own, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment about what to say and

what to speak.” Furthermore, through Jesus’ death and resurrection, the “ruler of this world,” the devil, “will be driven out.” The devil is driven out when believers accept Jesus as their Lord and Savior, for Jesus frees those who believe in Him from the power of Satan, from the fear of death that Satan wields, and from slavery to sin that leads to death. The devil will be finally driven out when Jesus Christ returns as He promised. As Jesus taught in Matthew 25:41, when the ruler of this world is finally driven out, He will be sent to the “eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” Until then, we fight a vanquished enemy, an enemy defeated by our Almighty God, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

(John 12:32) “And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.”

Jesus would be glorified when He was lifted up from the earth, when He was crucified (which He may have explained to His disciples and the crowd) for in John 12:34, the crowd indicated they understood that Jesus was speaking of His death. Learning the fact that the only begotten Son of God would die as a sacrifice for our sins (as sinful as we are) so God could mercifully forgive us and adopt us into His family will influence or draw people to come to Jesus and believe in Him. When we preach and teach the good news “that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures” the Holy Spirit uses the truth to draw people to believe in Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:3-4). The word “draw” is also used in John 6:44, when Jesus declared and promised, “No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.” Jesus’ use of “all people” meant Jews and Gentiles not every single person. John described “all people” in Revelation 7:9-10, “After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!’” Jesus did not teach that every single human being would be saved, because He taught in Matthew 25:46, that some “will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous

into eternal life.” Jesus never contradicted himself. The Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 2:8-11 that Jesus “humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Every knee will bow before Jesus Christ someday, but only the children of God will bow down before the Father and the Son with love and joy in their hearts to glorify them and give them thanks.

(John 12:33) But He was saying this to indicate the kind of death by which He was to die.

Here John clearly stated that Jesus meant He was going to die by crucifixion and the crowd understood what His meant. Furthermore, in and through His death, His Father would be glorified and so would Jesus.

(John 12:34) The crowd then answered Him, “We have heard out of the Law that the Christ is to remain forever; and how can You say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this Son of Man?”

The crowd rightly understood that the Messiah and the Son of Man are two titles for the same person. However, since this is so, they wanted to know how the Messiah (the Son of Man) could be crucified and die, since they had understood from their teachers of the Old Testament that the Messiah (the Son of Man) would come and reign on the earth as King over all the nations of the earth forever. Since Jesus claimed to be the Son of Man, they wanted Jesus to explain himself as the Son of Man (Messiah), for He was not the Son of Man of their expectations or as they had been taught.

(John 12:35) So Jesus said to them, “For a little while longer the Light is among you. Walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes.

The crowd thought of the Son of Man (the Messiah) only in political terms that made the Jews (with the help of a political Messiah) become the rulers

of the world with all the accompanying benefits. Jesus wanted them to see the Son of Man (the Messiah) in both spiritual and political terms by defining the Son of Man in spiritual terms. First, Jesus defined the Son of Man as the Light (often understood as the Truth). The Truth, the Truth who is Jesus (for Jesus said He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life) would only be with them visibly a little while longer because He would soon die on the cross (see John 14:6). If people believe in and follow the Truth who is Jesus; then, they will make the political difference that God intends to make through the power of Jesus, and they will do so through the Kingdom of God. A nation where most of the people are free from the power of Satan and the fear of death through faith in Jesus Christ will be definitely better in every way than a nation where most of the people are living in darkness as slaves of Satan. Second, Jesus told the crowd that people needed to walk (practice) the truth while they had the Truth visibly demonstrated before them and with them. They needed to commit themselves to the Truth that is Jesus and make a habit of speaking and doing the truth when Jesus was with them, for He would not be with them visibly as the Word made flesh much longer. Jesus spoke of spiritual light and spiritual darkness. If we walk in the spiritual Light that is Jesus, we will be able to see our way through the spiritual darkness of this world where the ruler of this world still has the power to deceive though he has been defeated by Jesus. The world, the flesh, and the devil still have power, but limited power, because those who follow the Light that is Jesus have been freed from slavery to sin and fear of death. As we will soon learn in our study of John's gospel, Judas chose to walk in the darkness even though He ate at the table with the Light and listened to the Truth; therefore, he did not know where he was going until after he betrayed Jesus and went back to the priests and confessed as we read in Matthew 27:4-5: "I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' But they said, 'What is that to us? See to it yourself.' Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself."

(John 12:36) "While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light." These things Jesus spoke, and He went away and hid Himself from them.

Jesus is the Light who told people the truth about God, reality, and the dangers of walking in the darkness of this world. When He told people the truth, He challenged them to believe the truth and believe in Him (the Light). When we hear the truth of and about Jesus, we need to believe the truth of Jesus while we have the opportunity, for we will not always have the opportunity. When we have the opportunity to share the Light and Truth that is Jesus with others, we need to do so with the understanding that we may not have another opportunity and they might not either. Jesus promised that if we believe in Him, the Light, then we may become children of light, children of the truth, children of our heavenly Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus and one another. Until we believe the Truth and believe in the Light, we will remain children of darkness. Until they turn to the Light and believe in Jesus, children of darkness walk in darkness, and they do not know where they are going as sin and Satan tighten their grip on them. After answering their question, Jesus departed and hid from them to teach His disciples before making one last appeal to the people to listen to the Truth and believe in Him for salvation from darkness and death.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. Since Jesus is the Son of God, why do you think His soul was troubled about His coming crucifixion and death?
2. Did Jesus pray to the Father that He would not die? If not, why not? How did Jesus pray to His Father?
3. What or who is the ruler of this world? What is his destiny?
4. What did Jesus mean when He said that He would be lifted up from the earth? What else might He have meant that He did not tell the crowd?
5. As the Son of Man, how did Jesus describe himself to the crowd?

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