



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 13:31-38 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 13:31) Therefore when he had gone out, Jesus *said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him;

From this verse forward, rather than try to lead people to faith in Him, Jesus will teach deeper truths to those who already believe in Him and want to faithfully follow Him (though the following teachings will still help all who seek to learn more about Jesus, but do not yet believe in Him). The rest of the Gospel of John should encourage all of us who follow Jesus according to Jesus' teachings. Among other truths in the following lessons, Jesus will introduce

us to the Holy Spirit who will be with us forever, and He will tell us how to live with courage in this world until He comes again.

Before Jesus began His last and perhaps most important teachings especially for His loyal disciples (then and in the future), He waited until Judas Iscariot had departed to betray Him. As early as John 6:70, Jesus had told His disciples what type of person Judas was (without naming him) when He said, “Did I not choose you, the twelve? Yet one of you is a devil.” In John 13:27, we learned that Judas did not go out until “Satan entered him.” Jesus did not “give what is holy to dogs” or “throw His pearls before swine” (see Matthew 7:6). A person described as a devil whom Satan indwelt would have hated Jesus even more if he had heard Jesus pray and teach about love, truth, the way of life, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and where Jesus was going to prepare a place for His true disciples.

* In the Gospel of John, this is the last time Jesus will speak of himself as the *Son of Man*. To learn more about how Jesus used the title *Son of Man*, go to the end of this commentary and read all the times Jesus spoke of himself as the *Son of Man* in the Gospel of John.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus said that the hour (or time) had come for Him “to be glorified.” Jesus again prophesied His coming death saying in John 12:23-24, “The hour has come for the Son of Man *to be glorified*. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it

remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” On the night Judas departed to betray Him, Jesus said He “has been glorified.” “The Son of Man *has been glorified*,” because when Jesus took a piece of bread and gave Judas and Satan permission to betray Him Jesus fulfilled Scripture, obeyed His Father, and began the final sacrifice of His life on the cross. Jesus said the Son of Man *has been glorified*, because He had set in motion His betrayal, arrest, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension to the right hand of His Father in heaven to “bear much fruit” through His followers before His return at His Second Coming. Everything Jesus did and still does through His followers glorifies and honors the Father and Him. Jesus glorified His heavenly Father by His perfect obedience to His Father no matter what the personal cost or sacrifice, because, “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” (John 3:16).

In the world, people glorify or honor themselves and they want other people to glorify or honor them too for their achievements in “this world’s” activities. Because of self-love, many people supremely want to be glorified by others for what they have or what they do. In the Kingdom of God, because of His unselfish love for God and others, Jesus glorified or honored himself and the Father glorified or honored Him for His perfect obedience and willingness to sacrifice His life for the salvation of those who would believe in Him. Love motivated the Father to send the Son, and love motivated the Son to obey the Father even unto

death for the love of those He came to save. In John 15:13, Jesus described the depth of His love for us, for His friends (for His loyal and loving disciples): “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” In Romans 5:8, Paul described the breadth of the love the Father and the Son had for us, even before we had turned from our sins: “But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.” The Father and the Son deserve our love and our efforts to glorify or honor them: they are worthy to be praised. Lest we boast in our achievement, the Father and the Son have saved us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.”

(John 13:32) if God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself, and will glorify Him immediately.

The Father and the Son always acted and spoke in perfect unity of love, thought, and purpose. Jesus glorified God by everything He said, did, and would soon do when He died on the cross and rose again. God glorified Jesus by the way Jesus suffered, died, and rose again with the help of His heavenly Father, and He would do so “at once.” God the Father and God the Son glorified each other when Jesus sacrificially laid down His life to take it up again when He rose from the dead. To glorify His Father, Jesus lived and

taught in perfect submission to His Father's will, and His Father glorified Jesus when He raised Him from the dead and showed that Jesus had represented Him perfectly when He came into the world.

(John 13:33) “Little children, I am with you a little while longer. You will seek Me; and as I said to the Jews, now I also say to you, ‘Where I am going, you cannot come.’

In John 1:12, John described how Jesus gave and still gives people the power to become *children of God*: “to all who received him [Jesus], who believed in his name, he gave power to become *children of God*.” In John 11:52, Jesus spoke about gathering into one the “dispersed *children of God*.” When Jesus next spoke of children, in John 12:36, Jesus spoke of the *children of light*: “While you have the light, believe in the light, so that you may become *children of light*.” As children of God and children of light, Jesus tenderly addressed His loyal disciples as “little children,” for they still had much to learn from Him before He died on the cross. Later, both Paul and John would speak to new and mature Christians as “little children.” In summation, to become a child of God/child of light, a person must receive Jesus and believe in Jesus, for only Jesus can give anyone the power to become a child of God. In John 8:12 and John 9:5, Jesus proclaimed that He is the light of this world and those who follow Him have the light of life. Light also means Truth: Jesus is the Light and the Truth. To become a child of light, we must believe Jesus is

the Light and the Truth, and follow the Light and the Truth, Jesus, who we find perfectly described and revealed in the Bible. In John's first letter to Christians, in 1 John 1:7, John wrote: "If we walk in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin."

The disciples did not know what Jesus meant by "a little longer," but Jesus would suffer betrayal and arrest that very night and be crucified the next day. After Jesus rose from the dead and His followers heard that He had risen, some of them did look for Him, but they did not find Him until He appeared to them (to Mary Magdalene at the tomb and to the disciples in an upper room within locked doors—see John 20:1-31). Jesus was going to the cross to die a sacrificial death for the forgiveness of sins, for the sins of those who receive Him, and neither the Jews nor the disciples could do that for themselves or anyone else. He also meant that He would soon be going to the Father in heaven, and later all who believe in Him would go there too—to the place Jesus prepared for them (see John 14:1-2).

(John 13:34) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."

During His three years of ministry, Jesus showed the world and His disciples how to live according to Leviticus 19:18, "You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge

against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” Jesus never took vengeance on anyone, no matter how awful they spoke to Him or treated Him. Jesus never took vengeance on Judas, Pilate, the chief priests, or those who nailed Him to the cross. Jesus did not bear a grudge against those who followed Him only for the food He could give them, or against those who came to Him just to entrap Him with some questions, or against those who plotted His death. Jesus did what He preached in Matthew 5:44, “But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Jesus loved His neighbors as himself with a perfect love, for Jesus, the Son of God, is perfect. In the Bible, we see Jesus behaving and teaching perfectly. Now, for the first time, Jesus gave His true disciples a new commandment. Since we are imperfect and we love ourselves imperfectly, we do not love others perfectly. When Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment, He made himself and His actions the standard of how His disciples were to love and how they were to know if they were loving as He intended. Notice: Jesus loved everyone, but He especially loved His true disciples in a way that He could not show to His enemies. Jesus’ enemies could not and would not believe in, obey, and worship God as Jesus revealed the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, but Jesus still did what He wisely could to lead them to truth faith in Him. Jesus loved and could love His “little children” differently, because they enjoyed being with Jesus and He enjoyed being with them. His “little

children” worshiped the true God in Spirit and in Truth. As Jesus taught the Samaritan woman in John 4:12, “the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.” Jesus expected His true followers to love their neighbors as the LORD commanded in Leviticus 19:18, and He expected them to love one another as He had demonstrated to them—even washing their feet and taking the part of a slave as Jesus had done for them.

(John 13:35) “By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

If they follow Jesus, Christians will think and act differently from those of this world. People will see by the things Christians say and do that Christians are different. In 1 Peter 2:9, the KJV reads that Christians are “a peculiar people,” while the NRSV calls Christians “God’s own people.” Consider completely what Peter wrote about God’s purpose for Christ’s people: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” Christians proclaim the mighty acts of Jesus, the Light of the world, who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. Jesus called us out of the darkness by loving us and telling us the truth; then, He told us to believe in Him, receive Him, and follow Him. Christians live differently in many ways, but most importantly they obey Jesus’ commands in the Bible, which will involve

other people seeing Christians loving one another according to the Bible's teachings and the difference Christian love makes. Others may never see us as "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own (peculiar) people," but they can see whether we love one another or not. If Christians love one another and love their neighbor as themselves, they will draw some to Jesus Christ and they will learn of His loving sacrificial death on the cross for them. They will believe in Him and He will make them new and different people filled with His love and filled with the Holy Spirit. They will join a fellowship of people who love one another. They will love their neighbors as Christ loves them. They will join "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people."

(John 13:36) Simon Peter *said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered, "Where I go, you cannot follow Me now; but you will follow later."

For the time being, Peter seemed to ignore Jesus' teaching about love, but Jesus will talk to Peter once again about love and how he must love after He rises from the dead (see John 21:15-19). Peter fears abandonment after he learns that Jesus will leave him, and he particularly fears what the religious authorities might do to Jesus when He talks about His betrayal. Jesus told Peter that where He was going (Jesus was going to the cross and back to His Father in heaven) he could not follow "now." Earlier, when Jesus spoke to the Jews or religious leaders and taught

them almost the same truth, He left out the word “now,” for they would never go where He was going because they were going to die in their sins. In John 8:21, Jesus told them, “I am going away, and you will search for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going, you cannot come.” Peter would not die in his sins, for Jesus gave His life on the cross for Peter, Peter believed in Jesus and wanted to follow Him, and Jesus promised Peter, “you will follow afterward.”

(John 13:37) Peter *said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You right now? I will lay down my life for You.”

Perhaps still thinking about one of his fellow disciples betraying Jesus, Peter made it clear to Jesus and the others that he would never betray Jesus. Instead, Peter promised, “I will lay down my life for you.” Jesus knew Peter loved Him and that is why Peter said he would die for Him. Out of love for Jesus, Peter did not want Jesus to humble himself and wash his feet. Now, out of love for Jesus, Peter declared that he would protect Jesus even if he had to lay down his life to defend Him. As much as Peter might want to keep Jesus safe, Jesus told Peter that he could not do what he hoped to do. Jesus had to die on the cross according to the Scriptures. Jesus did not reprimand Peter for saying what he said. Jesus knew that love for Him moved Peter to want to give his life for Him. Later, in the garden, Peter did risk his life to protect Jesus when Peter, “who had a sword, drew it, struck the high

priest's slave, and cut off his right ear" (John 18:10). Nothing and no one could stop Jesus from laying down His life to save people from their sins and grant eternal life to all who would repent of their sins and believe in Him.

(John 13:38) Jesus *answered, "Will you lay down your life for Me? Truly, truly, I say to you, a rooster will not crow until you deny Me three times."

Jesus loved Peter and He wanted Peter to know that He knew Peter's love for Him moved Peter to want to die for Him. With loving words, Jesus warned Peter that he could not do what he wanted to do. Instead, Peter would deny Him and deny that He even knew Jesus. Jesus knew Peter's heart and human weaknesses. When Jesus said, "Very, truly," He indicated that what He was about to say to Peter was certain to happen, and nothing could change the future for that evening when Jesus would be betrayed and arrested. No matter what Peter thought and felt, Peter would deny Him and do so three times—not just once. Feelings of fear would fill Peter's heart and mind. Jesus had not yet filled Peter with the Holy Spirit; Jesus had to die and rise again before He could do that. Fear would move Peter to deny Jesus three times according to the timing that Jesus foretold "before the cock crows." As Creator and Lord over all creation, Jesus could control when a cock crowed and He would do so under the stress of a trial, persecution, and facing death on a cross. Then, in John 14: 1, Jesus immediately comforted His disciples

by saying, “Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me.”

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. If someone glorifies a sport’s star or celebrity, what does that mean and how do they do so?
2. What does it mean to glorify the Father and the Son, and how do Christians do so?
3. What was the new commandment that Jesus gave His disciples? In what ways would you consider it “new”?
4. What is one way people will know if a group of people are followers of Jesus Christ?
5. What did Peter tell Jesus and what did Jesus tell Peter?

NOTE ON THE “SON OF MAN”

* Jesus said to Nathaniel, “you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the *Son of Man*” (John 1:51). Jesus said to Nicodemus, “No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the *Son of Man*. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the *Son of Man* be lifted up” (John 3:13-14). Jesus said to some Jewish religious leaders, “and He [the Father] has given Him [Jesus] authority to execute judgment, because He is the *Son of Man*” (John 5:27). Jesus said to a crowd, “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” (John 6:27). Jesus said to disputing Jews, “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the *Son of Man* and drink his blood, you have no life in you” (John 6:53). Jesus said to many disciples, “Then what if you were to see the *Son of Man* ascending to where he was before?” (John 6:62). While teaching in the temple, Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the *Son of Man*, then you will realize that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own, but I speak these things as the Father instructed me” (John 8:28). Jesus said to the man born blind that He healed, “Do you believe in the *Son of Man*? . . . Jesus said to him, ‘You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he’” (John 9:35, 37). On Palm Sunday, Jesus said to Philip and Andrew, “The hour has come for the *Son of Man* to be glorified” (John 12:23). The crowd asked Jesus, “We have heard from the law that the Messiah remains forever. How can you say that the *Son of Man* must be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man?” (John 12:34). Jesus said to the eleven disciples, “Now the *Son of Man* has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him” (John 13:31). A complete separate study of the ways Jesus used the *Son of Man* title would be excellent and valuable for group study or personal meditation (see the *International Bible Study Commentary* on each verse above that includes the *Son of Man* in the Gospel of John).

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