



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 14:8-14 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 14:8) Philip *said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”

When Philip wanted Jesus to show them the Father to satisfy them, he may have thought like so many who want to see God with their physical eyes to have additional convincing evidence to believe in God or to believe what the Bible says is true. They think they do not have enough evidence to believe God exists. But Paul wrote in Romans 1:19-20, that those who refuse to believe God exists without more evidence (or without seeing God) have no excuse for their unbelief: “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse.” We can conclude the Creator exists from looking at creation, and from looking at creation, we learn about God's eternal power and divine nature that the Bible and Jesus more fully reveal.

Despite all the caring and compassionate signs Philip saw Jesus give and all the authoritative and truthful words Jesus spoke when he saw Jesus, Philip

may still have only seen a carpenter, the son of a carpenter with calloused hands dressed in common clothing—not the One who is King of kings. Perhaps Philip wanted to see what Isaiah reported he saw in Isaiah 6:1, “In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple.” But how might we feel if we really saw God with our human eyes and our sinful souls? We might feel like Isaiah (or worse) who then reported in Isaiah 6:5, “And I said: ‘Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!’”

When Jesus came into the world, He did not come to scare people into believing God exists or frighten them into believing in Him. Remember how Jesus came to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday as John described in John 12:12-15, “The next day the great crowd that had come to the festival heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, shouting, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!’ *Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it; as it is written: ‘Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion. Look, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt!’*” When Jesus came into the world for the first time, He came to save the world not to scare the world, but when Jesus comes again into the world and everyone sees Him as He is, then many unbelievers will be scared to death while believers rejoice. Then, “at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11).

Jesus could have entered Jerusalem that Palm Sunday as John described Jesus when he had his vision of Jesus in heaven. In Revelation 1:13-18, we read: “And in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he placed his right hand on me, saying, ‘Do not be

afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living one. I was dead, and see, I am alive forever and ever; and I have the keys of Death and of Hades.”

Jesus does not want those who believe in Him and trust in Him to be afraid of Him. During decades of faithful apostleship, Jesus had prepared John spiritually for that extraordinary vision of Him, but when John saw Jesus, he still “fell at his feet as though dead.” Philip did not know what he was asking at the time (and many do not know now) when they ask to see God.

For the sake of His disciples and all who would believe in Jesus, Jesus had said in John 12:45, “And whoever sees me sees him who sent me.” Philip was keeping his eyes on the physical instead of the spiritual, the same as many still do. He wanted to see God the Father with his physical eyes right then and there. He thought that if Jesus would pull back the veil between heaven and earth for a moment, so they could see God the Father with their physical eyes, then they would be satisfied. If Jesus had done what Philip wanted, in their physical, sinful state they would have been terrified. Jesus wanted them to know that they had seen God spiritually because they had seen Him, and Jesus wanted everyone to know that God had sent Him into the world because He loved the world and wanted to save the world (see John 3:16). Jesus spoke of them seeing in Him the moral and spiritual character of God and the creative and redeeming power of God in all He said and did. Jesus did not say that the Father looked like Him physically, but older. In Jesus’ words and works “what can be known about God was plain to them.” The Father’s “eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are,” could be “understood and seen through the things” Jesus said and did. Those who come to believe in Jesus believe these truths.

(John 14:9) Jesus *said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

The Father is God. Jesus, the Son of God, is God. In John 14:15, Jesus will begin to teach about the Holy Spirit and say that He would send the Holy Spirit to indwell those who believed in Him (He still sends the Holy Spirit to dwell within those who believe in Him). The Holy Spirit is God. The Bible reveals one God in three Persons, not three gods. These three Persons love one another and speak and work together in complete, perfect unity. In

John 4:24, Jesus said, “God is spirit.” With our human limitations, we can describe the common spiritual reality of the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit as divine. How this can be and how this happens is beyond human understanding: God is God and we are only people God created in His image—we believe these facts of Scripture whether we completely understand these facts or not. Disciples of Jesus see God when they see Jesus—as the Bible describes Jesus. With humility, Jesus says the truth about himself when He says that those who have seen Him have seen the Father. Jesus does not say in a way that would seem to be bragging, “I am God! Look at me!” If you have seen the loving heart of Jesus, you have seen the loving heart of God the Father and the loving heart of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus, we see the divine character of God and the perfect work of God the Father and the Holy Spirit as Jesus perfectly poured forth the fruit of the Holy Spirit, which only God can do perfectly in this world: “the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (Galatians 5:22-23).

(John 14:10) “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

In this and the following verses, Jesus elaborated on what He showed and told His disciples (and us) in John 14:6, and elsewhere, when He said, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. *No one comes to the Father except through me.*” The Father and the Son are inseparable in every way! Jesus showed and told them even more what He meant after He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Beyond our finite human understanding, God the Father and God the Son are “in” each other because they are one God and two Persons. It is impossible to go to one Person without going to and through the other Person. Jesus only spoke and taught what the Father and He agreed for Him to reveal and teach about themselves and reality. They did not live and work independently from each other. When you are with the Father, you are with the Son. You cannot be with God the Father and not at the same time be with God the Son. If you think you can, you are with neither of them. To truly believe in the true God, you cannot believe in one Person without believing in the other Person. Jesus was not an

instrument of God, like a hammer in the hand of a carpenter. Even when Jesus walked on earth, Jesus and the Father were always together in thought, word, and deed. Before Jesus came to earth, they chose to work together in everything. Jesus chose to do His Father's will, say His Father's words, and do His Father's works, and the Father endorsed everything Jesus said and did, and did so mightily when He raised Jesus from the dead. As the Son of God, Jesus did all His Father's tasks perfectly. As believers in Jesus, because we love the Father and the Son, we choose to do and say what Jesus commands us to do and say, but we only do so as the indwelling Holy Spirit enables us. Furthermore, we need to always remember that Jesus will never command us to say or do anything contrary to what He has revealed in the Bible. We do not want to be mere instruments like a hammer in the hand of a carpenter. We want to work for and with the Father as Jesus did because we love the Father and the Son.

(John 14:11) “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves.

Jesus wanted them (and us) to believe the facts He revealed about God the Father and himself, which they probably could not understand when He first told them. Later, the Holy Spirit helped them (and will help us) understand what believers need to understand as His faithful witnesses. To come to understand fully and believe more about the nature and character of God, Jesus knew that they needed first to believe in Him because of the loving works He did (John often calls these works “signs”). Later, they would understand and believe that the Father and the Son were in each other because Jesus was God, the Son of God, and because the Father endorsed what Jesus said and did when Jesus rose from the dead.

(John 14:12) “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father.

If we genuinely believe in Jesus, we will try to do the loving works that the Father and the Son want us to do. We will be one in heart, one in understanding, and one in purpose with God (though not as completely as we will be someday, nor as completely as Jesus was in the Father, for even

as a new creation we will remain human beings). We will want to do the loving works of God in the spirit of Jesus and we will look to the Holy Spirit to help us. The indwelling Holy Spirit will help us do the works the Father and Son want us to do in the loving way they want us to do them. Consider some examples of “greater works than these” (and you can think of others) that Jesus promised His disciples (and all who follow Him as Lord and Savior) that they would do. Jesus never taught outside of a small geographic area. The apostles, such as Peter and Paul, taught about Jesus and His teachings in a larger geographical area. Today, some have traveled around the world to teach about Jesus, and the Holy Spirit has enabled these “greater works.” When walking on earth, Jesus never had the number of deeply committed followers that He would have later as He worked in the disciples through the power of the Holy Spirit. After Peter preached on the Day of Pentecost, “about three thousand persons were added” were added to the Church (Acts 2:41). Today, people can worship God and study the Bible with others around the world through developing technologies.

(John 14:13) “Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.”

Do you want the Father to be glorified in the Son? If you answer “Yes,” do you also want the Father and the Son to be glorified and honored and praised by many believers and new believers as the result of what you say and do? Your answer will influence how you pray. Jesus did not make this promise to recruit disciples or to persuade people to believe in Him or to make people want to follow Him or to make people rich. He gave this promise to His mature disciples who had proved that they loved Jesus and His Father, but who still had a lot to learn. They understood Jesus and His heart and His purposes up to the level of their understanding prior to His death and resurrection. They would spiritually mature to the point of only asking for things according to His will and for the purpose of glorifying the Father and the Son. As believers in Jesus, we need to be of this same mind and intention when we pray in Jesus’ name.

(John 14:14) “If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it.”

Jesus gave (and still gives) this promise to those who believe in Him. But no one should interpret His promise separately from what Jesus said in John 14:13. In His promise, Jesus encourages and gives believers permission to pray to Him. When believers pray to Jesus “in His Name,” they pray to Jesus while considering His power and His moral and spiritual character as He has revealed himself in the Bible. And the Holy Spirit helps believers in Jesus pray according to the will of God as He has helped believers in the past. Believers do not use Jesus’ Name as a magic word to get results. In Acts 19:11-20, see an example of nonbelievers in Jesus trying to use Jesus’ Name without knowing Jesus and the results. Remember: Jesus gave His promise to disciples who had been with Him about three years; He did not say this to the crowds to recruit followers. To ask in Jesus’ Name means to ask for something that Jesus would agree to give because it would be consistent with the kind of person Jesus is and the kind of works that He and the Father would want done. When believers meet these conditions, Jesus can do what we ask because what we ask will be according to His will and will bring glory to the Father and the Son.

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What did Philip say would satisfy him?
2. What did Jesus expect Philip should know and why?
3. What kind of words did Jesus speak and what kind of works did Jesus do?
4. Why should we believe in Jesus? What kind of works can believers do?
5. How does Jesus teaching on prayer in these verses encourage you?

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