



International Bible Study Commentary

Verse-by-Verse Bible Lessons Thru the Bible

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John 17:9-19 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 17:9) I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

In His prayer, Jesus prayed for His devout followers, for followers who had committed themselves to living as His disciples, for those committed to obeying with God's help all that He commanded them (see Matthew 18:18-20). He prayed for His followers to become His disciples—obedient students of His Word and Way. Jesus' prayer included those who would become His disciples because former disciples had taught them about Jesus, so they had

received Him as their Lord and Savior. Jesus prayed for all those who read and study the Gospel of John and other portions of the Bible. Jesus knew what the future held and holds for each of His disciples. Jesus prayed for them because they were more than *His* disciples. His disciples also belonged to God the Father and God the Father had given them to Jesus while they also remained the Father's precious possessions. Jesus prayed for what He knew the Father wanted for the disciples that He would leave behind after He ascended into heaven. He also prayed for those who would become His disciples throughout the coming centuries. His prayer did not focus on the world. Jesus prayed that the way His disciples lived and taught would have a saving effect on the lives of people in the world. In John 17:23, Jesus prayed "that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

(John 17:10) And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.

Because both the Father and the Son are the one true God, disciples of Jesus belong to both. What Jesus' obedient followers do glorify or honor Jesus and the Father. Jesus' disciples love Jesus and express that fact by their obedience as His friend. Their love for Jesus explains their actions and words. When Peter and John faced the Sanhedrin that investigated them for preaching about Jesus, in Act 4:13, Luke wrote about the impression they made because of Jesus, "Now when they saw the boldness

of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and ordinary men, they were amazed and recognized them as companions of Jesus.” Even when they faced persecution for doing so, Peter and John glorified Jesus by bravely teaching the truth about Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit. Disciples of Jesus have done the same for almost 2,000 years. When you sing the hymn, *Now I Belong to Jesus*, written by Norman John Clayton, remember that as a disciple of Jesus Christ you belong to God the Father and to Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit indwells you too. Because you are their precious possession, nothing “will be able to separate us (you) from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:19—see the words to *Now I Belong to Jesus* below).

(John 17:11) And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.

Because His time had come and these words were His final teachings and prayer with His disciples, Jesus prayed from the future perspective that He had already been arrested, killed, raised, and ascended to the Father. Spiritually speaking, Jesus did not live or abide in the world as a person of the world. Jesus maintained a godly perspective rather than a worldly perspective. Jesus lived on earth as the reigning King in the Kingdom of God, but He would soon die, rise again, ascend into heaven, and reign over all

creation while seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven. Jesus prayed and still prays for His disciples to have spiritual protection and safety from the devil and his demons, because many of His obedient followers would die physically for their loving and faithful obedience to Him. Jesus prayed that His disciples would be one in heart, mind, and purpose based on the Word of God, the Truth revealed in the Bible. He prayed His disciples would agree, even as the Father and He were one in perfect love and agreement in what they taught and did. From Matthew 1:21, we know the name that the Father gave Jesus when the angel told Joseph, “She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus (Savior), for he will save his people from their sins.” Jesus saves repentant sinners who trust in Him, and He empowers them to live apart from worldliness. Jesus prayed to His Father and asked that His disciples might “be one, as we are one.” At the very least, the Father and the Son are one in perfect loving agreement in all things according to the Bible’s teachings in the power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus prayed for that type of loving and truthful agreement among His disciples based on the Bible’s teachings and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

(John 17:12) While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

The one destined to be lost among the disciples was the one who betrayed Jesus to fulfill Scripture. In Psalms 41:9, we read the Scripture that Jesus quoted, and Judas fulfilled: “Even my bosom friend in whom I trusted, who ate of my bread, has lifted the heel against me.” Thus, we previously studied John 13:18, where Jesus told His disciples, “I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But it is to fulfill the scripture, ‘The one who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me.’” Because Jesus is God, the Son of God, He could and did protect all His committed disciples from demons, from those who acted like the devil, and from those of this world. Among other examples, Jesus’ prayer protected Simon Peter from losing his faith in Jesus even though he denied Jesus three times (see Luke 22:31-34). Because Judas decided to betray Jesus, Satan entered Judas and helped him betray Jesus (see Luke 22:1-6 and John 13:27). As we will soon learn in John 17:15, Jesus did not pray for His disciples to be taken out of the world, but that they would be protected from the evil one in the world. Jesus did not teach that His disciples would be protected from persecution and death, for He had already told them in John 16:2, “They will put you out of the synagogues. Indeed, an hour is coming when those who kill you will think that by doing so they are offering worship to God.” Today, Jesus’ disciples face similar threats and suffering, and they receive the same protection from Jesus’ prayers and presence in their lives.

(John 17:13) And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have

my joy fulfilled in themselves.

Jesus intended that His prayer would also give confidence and joy to His disciples as they heard Him pray. They knew that His Father always answered His prayers and fulfilled all His requests. Jesus wanted the truth to give them complete joy when they heard Him pray and remembered how He prayed for them to receive joy and protection from the Father. He was going to the Father, but He prayed that His joy, the joy that came from His presence with them through the Holy Spirit, would be complete in them. Remember what Jesus promised His disciples and His future disciples in John 16:22-24, “So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you. On that day you will ask nothing of me. Very truly, I tell you, if you ask anything of the Father in my name, he will give it to you. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.” We know Jesus imparts His joy completely through His gift of the Holy Spirit, as Paul wrote in Galatians 5:22-23, “By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, *joy*, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.”

(John 17:14) I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

The world has hated and still hates Jesus' disciples. Do not be surprised when those of this world hate you and want to hurt you because you love Jesus. Jesus distinguished between the Kingdom of God where He ruled as King and "the world" or "this world" that is the domain of devils. Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth; so, depending on the context in the Bible, "the world" sometimes means the system or government that opposes Jesus and His followers. Jesus and His followers do not belong to the world as adherents of the world system and its impurities. They live in the Kingdom of God; therefore, the devil and those who belong to him in this world system hate Jesus and His disciples. Jesus' obedient followers have the Word of God (the Word made flesh), the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the teachings of the Holy Scriptures to defeat the devil and demons spiritually.

(John 17:15) I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.

To share the good news of Jesus Christ and to save some from the world, the flesh, the devil, sin, and slavery to sin, the followers of Jesus must remain in the world without becoming adherents of or members of the world system that hates God and His commandments. Jesus prayed for and continues to intercede from heaven for His disciples to be protected from the evil one. "Evil ones" can include the

devil (the “devil” is “evil” with a “d” preceding “evil,” for it is not simply an impersonal evil power or dark force), demons, and those under the power of Satan to do the devil’s will. Jesus’ prayer in the Gospel of John and His continual praying at the right hand of God has protected millions of Christians for almost 2000 years (and will continue to protect them until the Lord Jesus returns as He promised). Though many Christians have suffered and died as martyrs, Jesus has protected them spiritually, blessed their work on earth, filled them with His joy, and granted them eternal life.

(John 17:16) They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

Neither Jesus nor His followers belong to the world. His followers have left the world system and now belong to Jesus and He belongs to them. They live in the Kingdom of God and their membership or citizenship or stewardship is now in God’s Kingdom, where they pray for God’s will to be done on earth as it is in heaven. Jesus, the King of the universe, has committed himself to protecting all His subjects and He will always succeed in doing so spiritually to grant them eternal life as He promised. Someday, Jesus will raise them from the dead and give them resurrected glorified human bodies similar to His own.

(John 17:17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

To “sanctify” means “to set apart for holy use or God’s use.” When believers hear and receive the truth of God in Jesus Christ, Jesus sets them apart for holy use by God. Jesus forgives them and cleans them from all sin. As righteous believers in Christ Jesus, Jesus has made His disciples fit for God’s service. Jesus, God’s Word made flesh, is Truth. Following the truth revealed in the Bible and in the life, works, and commands of Jesus leads to loving holy service of God and others. A life set apart for the service of God in Jesus Christ requires active obedience to Jesus, obedience to the Truth that is Jesus, and involves far more than a simple intellectual acknowledgement that the teachings of the Bible are true. Believing the Bible is true is only the beginning of saving faith in Jesus and sanctification through the power of the Holy Spirit. With the help of the Holy Spirit, true disciples of Jesus pray and seek Jesus’ guidance and power to live according to the Truth they say they believe. The Word of God written, the Bible, is the Truth of God revealed for us to read and study. Disciples pray that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, will help them understand and apply the Bible’s teachings to their lives. When we begin our reading of the Bible as early in the day as possible and pray that the Holy Spirit will help us absorb the Truth so we can live holy for God, we will grow in grace and sanctification: we will be empowered and led to serve the Father and the Son more faithfully, lovingly, and purely.

(John 17:18) As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (see John 14:6). Jesus is the Word of God (see John 1:1-5). The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us (see John 1:14). God the Father sent Jesus into the world to save all who would believe in Him and to give them eternal life (see John 3:16). For centuries, Jesus has sent all His disciples into the world to teach about Him so some will believe in Him and receive eternal life in the Kingdom of God. The disciples of Jesus carry on the work the Father gave Jesus because Jesus has commanded them to do so and He has prayed for them to carry on the work of the Father and the Son that many might believe that the Father sent Him into the world.

(John 17:19) And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

Jesus set himself apart from the world and spoke the truth to the world that those who believed in Him and His message would be set apart and set themselves apart from the world based on the truth He showed and taught. He went into the world and set himself apart from the world for holy use by God the Father that many might be saved from perishing. As He taught the truth in holiness of behavior and speech, Jesus cleansed and set apart for God's holy use in truth those who believed His message and chose to follow Him. Jesus did not lie or manipulate people to follow Him as those in this world system too often do. Jesus gave His life by teaching, working,

suffering, dying, and rising from the dead; by doing so, Jesus proved His love for the world and His special love for His disciples. Jesus' disciples sanctify themselves by consecrating themselves to loving and obeying Jesus, and the Holy Spirit enables them to maintain their commitment.

Now I Belong to Jesus

By Norman John Clayton

Jesus, my Lord will love me forever,
From Him no pow'r of evil can sever,
He gave His life to ransom my soul;
Now I belong to Him;

Chorus

Now I belong to Jesus,
Jesus belongs to me,
Not for the years of time alone,
But for eternity.

Once I was lost in sin's degradation,
Jesus came down to bring me salvation,
Lifted me up from sorrow and shame,
Now I belong to Him;

Chorus

Joy floods my soul for Jesus has saved me,
Freed me from sin that long had enslaved me
His precious blood, He came to redeem,
Now I belong to Him;

Chorus

Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

- 1 In His prayer, why do you think Jesus did not pray directly on behalf of the world?
2. What do you think was the “name” the Holy Father gave Jesus? And what did Jesus want the Holy Father to do in His name?
3. What did Jesus do on behalf of His disciples, with one exception? Who was and why was there one exception?
4. What did Jesus want made complete in His disciples?
5. What did Jesus mean by sanctify? Who was sanctified and what is necessary for someone to be sanctified?

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