

Daily Bible Study Commentary by Pastor Steve

We're excited to have you digging deeper into the Word. The best way to use this study guide is to read the Bible verse(s) first, then Pastor Steve's commentary. God bless you.

John 13:31, 32

vs31, 32: After Judas left the room Jesus announced, "Now the Son of Man was glorified and God was glorified in Him" (literal). This passage is usually translated by shifting the verbs into the present tense: "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him," but the original Greek verbs are definitely in the past tense. Apparently Jesus said this to draw His disciples' attention to the prophetic promises about Himself in the Scriptures. There the prophets described His betrayal and death, but they also described His resurrection and the glories which would follow. His submission to this suffering would allow the Father to glorify Him by raising Him from the dead and giving Him authority over all creation (Php 2:8-11). By calling Himself "the Son of Man" Jesus reminded them that He was the glorious Son of Man described by Daniel (Da 7:9, 10, 13, 14, 27). David (Ps 16, 22), Isaiah (Isa 52:13-53:12) and Zechariah (Zec 12:7-10) also picture a suffering Messiah who will emerge victorious from His sufferings and bring great glory to the Father. So no sooner had His betrayer left the room than Jesus pointed to those promises which say that He and the Father would be glorified by the suffering He was about to experience.

John 13:33

v33: Knowing that He would be arrested within a few hours, Jesus felt a strong parental concern for His disciples. He affectionately addressed them as "little children," and John never forgot that term. He later used it himself when writing to believers (1Jn 2:1, 12, etc.) (A. Plummer, St. John, Cambridge Greek Testament, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1893, p.271). These eleven men would soon be forced to carry on without Him. Though He would be spiritually present wherever they went, His physical presence would cease, so He began to assure them that though He would soon return to heaven, He would not abandon them. God would provide new resources for the new season that lay ahead of them. From that moment on everything He taught was designed to prepare them for His departure.

John 13:33

v33 (continued): Though His disciples might watch for Him, hoping that He would reappear, other than during a few special visitations (Ac 7:55, 56; 1Co 15:8) Jesus would physically remain in heaven, and He would not return to the earth until the time arrived for Him to set up God's kingdom. He reminded them that He had also told the religious leaders ("the Jews") that they would look for Him but not find Him (Jn 7:34; 8:21), but in their case, He said they would be seeking for Him in order to arrest Him. So they wouldn't find Him because He would be in heaven (Jn 7:33-36), and they weren't going to go to heaven unless they believed in Him (Jn 8:20-24). But the situation would be very different for His disciples. They would find Him when they sought for Him. Over the course of that evening He went on to teach them that He would always be spiritually present with them as they continued to live out their days on earth (Jn 14:19-21, 28), and when it came time for each one to die they would join Him in heaven (Jn 14:1-3; 16:16-22). But the appointed time for each to die had not yet arrived, so He said to them, "Where I go you cannot come" (literal).

John 13:34

v34: Very aware of the cross that awaited Him, Jesus then issued what He called "a new commandment." Through Moses, God had already commanded His people to love one another. He had said, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18), but Jesus now ordered His followers to love one another at an even deeper level. They are to "...love one another just as I loved you, that you also love one another" (literal). By commanding believers to love each other with the same selfless love that led Him to the cross, Jesus was telling us that we must be willing to die for each other. That shifts the boundaries of our love to a level far deeper than the commitments found in most human relationships. Only in extreme circumstances like war, violent assaults or natural emergencies will a small percentage of humans be willing to give their lives for one another, so if Christ's disciples were to regularly exhibit this attitude toward one another it would set them apart and draw attention to them.

John 13:35

v35: Their behavior would remind people of the love that was in Jesus when He died on the cross. Jesus said, "In this [way] all [people] will know (learn from their relationship with you) that you are My disciples, if you [all] have love among one another" (literal). In other words, they would provide tangible proof that He is the Savior whom He claims to be and that He is truly building the family of God. Their life together would be the very best proof of the validity of the message they proclaimed. Clearly Jesus expected His followers to continue living as a community of believers after He departed, and He wanted that community marked by the fact that they loved one another with the same depth of selfless love that He had loved them.

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John 13:36, 37

vs36, 37: What caught Peter's ear was not this exhortation to love one another, but rather Jesus' statement that He was going somewhere and that they would not be able to follow Him. His question, "Lord, where are you going?" shows that he had not yet accepted the fact that Jesus was going to die (Mt 16:22), even though Jesus had just finished explaining that He was being betrayed and had compared Himself to the Passover lamb (Mt 26:1, 2; Lk 22:14, 19-22). By this point in time, after all Jesus had said about His death, Peter's confusion can only be the result of a willful refusal to hear a message he didn't want to hear. The answer to Peter's question should have been obvious. Where was Jesus going? He was going to heaven, after dying violently on the cross to pay for our sins. But Jesus didn't answer Peter's question that way. He didn't say, "I'm going to die and go to heaven, Peter!" He simply assured him that though he would not be able to accompany Him now, in the future he would follow Him along the same path and be reunited with Him (Jn 21:18, 19). To which Peter replied, "Lord, why can I not yet follow You? I will lay down my life for You" (literal). No matter what lay ahead, Peter believed that he was prepared to stand beside Jesus and fight to the death. All of which proves how ignorant Peter was of what Jesus was saying, and of how little he realized his own weakness.

John 13:38

v38: As misguided as Peter's boast was, Jesus did not let it go unchallenged. He knew Peter's courage would fail, not when Judas arrived at the garden of Gethsemane with the temple guard (Jn 18:3-11), but later on as the trial progressed at the high priest's residence. There, Peter would deny Jesus three times before the first light of dawn (Jn 18:24-27; Mt 26:69-75). By telling Peter specific details about his failure ahead of time, Jesus was proving to him how deeply He knew him. He wanted Peter to understand that even though He saw his future failures He would not reject him. Instead, He had already prayed for him and seen his future restoration (Lk 22:31-34). And Peter wouldn't be the only disciple who would fail to stand under pressure; they all would (Mk 14:26). By instructing them to meet Him in Galilee after His resurrection, Jesus assured all of them that their weakness would be forgiven (Mk 14:28).