

He Loved Me...

He Loves Me Lots

The Gospel of John

Text

John 8:12-27

Topic

Jesus tells the Pharisees
opposing Him that He is going away

Title

"Savior's Away, My Foes, Savior's Away"

Countdowns are expected in action and adventure films. Most often, it's a timer on a bomb.

The absolute, hands down, most intense, edge-of-your-seat, I-know-he-won't-die-but-I'm-still-anxious, defusing was in 1964's *Goldfinger*. The bomb was in Fort Knox (where there once was gold).

Bond, James Bond, breaks the lock, opens the lid, exposing a complex device with discs whirling and bundled wires running everywhere.

The digital timer shows 032 seconds. Bond touches this and that, fumbling, making it clear that he has no idea what to do. The never-let-them-see-you-sweat secret agent man is sweating. It's a great piece of acting by Sean Connery, who seems genuinely shaken...not stirred.

As the seconds count down, he grabs a bundle of wires in both hands. Just as he is going to separate them, hoping for the best, an agent arrives and stops

him. The agent then reaches over and flips an On/Off switch. The best part: *The timer stops at 007.*

Time was running out for the Jews to receive the Lord.

In verse twenty-one we read, "Then Jesus said to them again, 'I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come.' "

Jesus would have a similar discussion with His disciples, but with a different outcome.

On the night of His crucifixion, Jesus told them that He would shortly be returning to His Father in Heaven. To them, Jesus said, "I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also" (John 14:3).

When Jesus ascended into Heaven, Israel missed her opportunity to crown Jesus King of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. Not permanently; it was a postponement. We know that Jesus will return in a glorious Second Coming, and when He does, "all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:26).

We live in the postponement. Believers say "Time's up" because we know that the Lord could return *at any moment* to resurrect and rapture His church from Earth to Heaven. Every heartbeat He waits is just one away from the rapture.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Time's Up For The Church,** and **#2 The Time Is Now For The 'UnChurched.'**

#1 - Time's Up For The Church (v12-21)

We are in the Church Age.

1. It will be followed by the seven-year Great Tribulation.
2. At the end of the Great Tribulation, Jesus Christ will return to rule the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth for one thousand years.

3. When that millennial reign ends, the final resurrection of the human race will occur.
4. An eternity in Heaven awaits believers. An eternity of conscious torment in the Lake of Fire awaits nonbelievers.

The Church Age ends when Jesus returns to resurrect the dead in Christ, and rapture living believers. This coming is presented in the Bible as *imminent*. That is why we live as though 'Time's up.'

Jesus was talking to Jews about the Kingdom promised to them. He was not addressing the church. The church was a mystery revealed later.

Promises specifically made to and about Israel are not for the church, nor are they applicable to other nations.

We can always discern and discover in the text things that apply to believers of every age. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The Gospel message is always the same, with salvation being by grace through faith. But we cannot claim what is not ours. BTW: Our blessings are better anyway!

We last left Jesus in the Temple teaching.

Joh 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

I appreciate Boromir's assessment of Mordor. "One does not simply walk into Mordor. Its Black Gates are guarded by more than just Orcs. There is evil there that does not sleep, and the Great Eye is ever watchful. It is a barren wasteland, riddled with fire and ash and dust, the very air you breathe is a poisonous fume."

Is that how you see the world? The reality is much worse. We are born spiritually dead into pitch spiritual darkness.

Jesus came into the darkness and is the "light" source. When you believe Jesus, His "life" that was given *for* you is given *to* you. You receive spiritual

sight to successfully navigate darkness.

Joh 8:13 The Pharisees therefore said to Him, "You bear witness of Yourself; Your witness is not true."

Jesus' miracles bore witness He was Messiah. Like lawyers in a legal action, they were excluding His works from evidence.

There is SO much evidence that the Bible is true. Critics want to suppress it. The creation vs. evolution debate, for instance. Evolutionists have done a great job in making people think creationism is based on unscientific leaps of faith. Creationism is the only explanation that fits the scientific findings.

Joh 8:14 Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going; but you do not know where I come from and where I am going.

The testimony of Jesus would hold greater prominence than that of a mere man because He had been for eternity in Heaven. Jesus isn't another wise man who established a religion. Guys like Joseph Smith "bore witness of themselves." Jesus was and is God. We have a Savior Who transforms us, not a usurper who wants to reform us.

Joh 8:15 You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.

Joh 8:16 And yet if I do judge, My judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I *am* with the Father who sent Me.

Jesus *does* judge, but not as they did, in the flesh by human wisdom.

The Pharisees lived "according to the flesh," entirely by outward rules, rites, diets, and days. Their evaluation was always firmly grounded in fleshly, i.e., human, wisdom. C.S. Lewis said, "*You cannot make men good by law.*"

The Pharisees started spiritual. They deteriorated to the sad condition we see in the New Testament.

Christians in the Church Age begin in the Spirit but can deteriorate to attempt walking with Jesus in the flesh, i.e., in their strength. John Wesley writes, "If, after having renounced all, we do not watch incessantly, and beseech God to accompany our vigilance with His, we shall be again entangled and overcome."

"I *am* with the Father" should read, "I *with* the Father," emphasizing working together. Jesus claimed that He did only what His Father told Him to do, and said only what His Father told Him to say. The two of them constitute a single omniscient and omnipotent testimony.

Joh 8:17 It is also written in your law that the testimony of two men is true.

Joh 8:18 I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me."

It was God's Law and there was nothing wrong with it. They had made it theirs by adding and subtracting from it.

The Pharisees became 'law-bound.' Jesus one day said, "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices - mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law - justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former (Matthew 23:23).

Joh 8:19 Then they said to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me nor My Father. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also."

Jesus meant His Heavenly Father. Their thoughts could not rise above the flesh. They thought of His earthly father. Their question was peppered with derision. Later in the chapter, we will see them more openly accuse Jesus of being the illegitimate son of Joseph.

The smartest, most articulate, naturally talented religious men, the Pharisees, practicing the one, true religious system on Earth, written by the finger of God, given to the most humble man who ever lived...**Did not know God.**

For all of their study, and self-righteous discipline, they did not realize that their Scriptures were about Jesus.

Don't forget Jesus while reading your Bible. It is easier to do than you might think. We discover His promises and principles and precedents. So much so that we are always rushing to the next book with its program to be more spiritual. Hopefully, I won't hurt anyone's feelings by saying this, but you do not need to pray *The Prayer of Jabez* to break through to the 'blessed life.' **Pray your prayers.**

Joh 8:20 These words Jesus spoke in the treasury, as He taught in the Temple; and no one laid hands on Him, for His hour had not yet come.

Jesus liked to teach in the treasury. It was there He called attention to the poor widow who put in two mites (Mark 12:43-44). Maybe it had good acoustics. One of the Bible dictionaries notes, "The inner area of the Temple contained three courts. The easternmost court was the Court of the Women, and it contained the Temple treasury where people donated their money." Jesus taught in a place where women could hear.

The Father protected Jesus from arrest until His hour to be crucified came. This plan of God to redeem and restore creation cannot fail. His future will come to pass.

Joh 8:21 Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

Jesus would return to Heaven, leaving the Jews awaiting their Kingdom.

Is it cruel that they will "seek" Jesus but not find Him? Jesus wasn't describing a sincere seeking. Once they eliminated Jesus, they would "seek" a Messiah that better fit their desires.

The Jews were like Javert in *Les Misérables*, merciless in their application of the Law. Jesus has shown us that grace and mercy are not only consistent with the Law, they are governors of the Law to see that it produces the result God intends - Salvation.

The episode in the previous verses of chapter eight about the woman caught in adultery can be a humbling example for us. Yes, of course, she deserved to be stoned, as the Law commanded. Without violating the Law, Jesus extended grace to her. She was saved and sent to "Go and sin no more."

Christians tend to default to the Law. It's safe. But is it grace? Law and grace are *not* incompatible. We divide them, whereas God unites them.

#2 - The Time Is Now For The 'UnChurched' (v22-27)

The unchurched nonbelievers. They are not spiritual members of the body of Jesus.

If you are a believer, you *are* a member of the body of Jesus on Earth. Tragically, it has become popular for believers to quit the local church. We can call them the Forsakers.

The apostle Paul wrote, "If the foot should say, 'Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, 'Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body,' is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body *were* an eye, where *would be* the hearing? If the whole *were* hearing, where *would be* the smelling. But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased (First Corinthians 12:15-18).

It is as absurd to think you don't need to belong to a local church as it is to think you don't need certain members of your body.

Joh 8:22 So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come?' "

Jews thought that their chosen status meant a free pass into Heaven when they died. When Jesus said He was going where they could not come, they assumed He meant Hades.

He would not take His life by suicide; He would give His life in submission, as a sacrifice, as our substitute.

Suicide is not the unpardonable sin of blaspheming God the Holy Spirit. If your question is, "Can a Christian who commits suicide go to Heaven?", *you've answered it by identifying them as Christian.*

Joh 8:23 And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world.

Joh 8:24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am *He*, you will die in your sins."

No one else has ever, or will ever, be God in human flesh. You understand, don't you, that you and I will be raised or raptured in a glorified human body? We will never be gods.

You will "die in your sins," unless you believe Jesus is Who He says He is.

Joh 8:25 Then they said to Him, "Who are You?"

Impossible to hear the inflection in their question. It's probably safe to say that they were being argumentative. This is a "Who do you think you are."

Joh 8:25 ... And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning.

Author Steven King spends months and even years writing his opening sentences.

Jesus used the phrase, "from the beginning." There are two great "beginning" sentences in the Bible, the greatest opening sentences ever written:

- ☼ Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
- ☼ John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Jesus wasn't merely present, at creation, as a spectator. He was not the first thing created. *He is the Creator.*

Joh 8:26 I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."

He could have said more, judged more, but He limited Himself to His Father's will. Don't get the impression that Jesus wanted to do things that His Father would not allow. They were never in any disagreement.

One of the most asked questions is, "How do I know God's will for my life?"

God's will for you is mostly spelled out in His Word.

For instance, the apostle Paul wrote,

1Th 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality

- The passages regarding husbands, wives, and children reveal God's will for marriage and family.
- There are passages about your job and your work ethic.
- The Bible reveals how to handle your finances.

I mentioned the Forsakers. You find God's will for them in the Book of Hebrews: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as *is* the manner of some, but exhorting *one another*, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (10:24-25).

Austin Fisher tweeted, "The Bible talks about God's will a lot. Interestingly, the Bible does not tell us to *seek* God's will, but to *do* God's will. Why? Because whereas we often assume we don't know God's will & so need to seek it, *the Bible mostly assumes we do know God's will & just need to do it.*"

Joh 8:27 They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

William MacDonald pointed out, "*Previously when the Lord Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, they had realized He was claiming equality with God the Father. But not so anymore.*"

The more they rejected Jesus, the more confused they were becoming. Their flesh was getting harder to keep at bay. They wanted to kill Jesus, and by the time they maneuvered His crucifixion, they were wicked and hellish murderers who led the crowds to say, "His blood be on us, and on our children" (Matthew 27:25).

The time is always "now" for nonbelievers. "Today, if only you would hear his voice, Do not harden your hearts" (Psalm 95:7-8).

Here is one of those quotes, by William Booth, that stabs the heart: "*Can we go too fast in saving souls? If anyone still wants a reply, let him ask the lost souls in Hell.*"

The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists was founded in 1945 by Albert Einstein and scientists who helped develop the first atomic weapon in the Manhattan Project. Two years later they created the Doomsday Clock. It uses the imagery of apocalypse (midnight) and the contemporary idiom of nuclear explosion (countdown to zero) to convey threats to humanity and the planet. The Clock has become a universally recognized indicator of the world's vulnerability to catastrophe from nuclear weapons, climate change, and disruptive technologies in other domains. In March 2022, the Science and Security Board released a new statement in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

It is 100 seconds to midnight on the Doomsday Clock.

We have the correct view of the future, and of how to count it down.

There is no "Doomsday" in which humans are annihilated. There is what we listed earlier: Great Tribulation, Millennial Kingdom, and Eternity.

We may not have one hundred seconds:

- ☀ **The time is now:** Nonbeliever, repent and receive Jesus.

- ☀ **Time's up:** Church, having begun in the Spirit, let us not individually (or corporately) default to our energy. Let us not forsake assembling together. Let us "press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).