

*He Loved Me...*

*He Loves Me Lots*

*The Gospel of John*

Text

John 7:25-36

Topic

Jesus announces He will return to the One who sent Him but the Jews won't know where He is going

Title

***"Returned to Sender; Address Unknown"***

---

**It's hard to believe that *Newsies* opened on Broadway as a limited engagement.**

The popular musical's limited engagement became an extended run of more than one thousand performances.

A 2014 revival of *Jesus Christ Superstar* lasted only 116 performances. One critic thought it clever to title his review, *It is Finished*.

**A musical about the Lord's first coming might be titled, *Thy Kingdom Come*.**

- John the Baptist "came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, "Repent, for **the kingdom of heaven** is at hand!" (Matthew 3).
- Jesus "began to preach and to say, "Repent, for **the kingdom of heaven is at hand**" (Matthew 4:17).

The “Kingdom” offered by John the Baptist and Jesus was the on-Earth, rule-from-Jerusalem, sitting on the historic throne of King David, kingdom.

- People will beat swords into plowshares and shields into pruning hooks (Isaiah 2:4).
- “And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little boy will lead them” (Isaiah 11:6).
- You will send your toddlers outside and say, “Go play near the cobra’s den, honey” and “the young child will put its hand into the viper’s nest” (Isaiah 11:8).

Many of the conditions predicted to be characteristic of the Kingdom were implemented by Jesus as He went around performing miracles. They were coming attractions. Surely, this was the time Thy Kingdom (would) Come.

But in this exchange Jesus made a startling announcement: **He would soon return to Heaven** (v33-34). What about the promised Kingdom of Heaven on Earth?

**The Kingdom of Heaven was a ‘limited engagement’ because Jesus was rejected.**

Jesus would go to the Cross, offering Himself as a sacrifice and taking our places in death so that we might live. He would rise, conquering sin, death, and Satan. But instead of afterward establishing the Kingdom, Jesus would temporarily return to Heaven.

Don’t worry; He’s coming back to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth. God cannot fail to keep His unconditional promises to Israel.

**The Kingdom of Heaven on Earth will have a one thousand year ‘extended run’.**

We live in a glad-You-were-sent but wish-You-never-went age. After Jesus went, and before His Second Coming, is the Church Age. It is a mystery revealed in the New Testament.

I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 Knowing Jesus Was Sent Encourages You About Grace**, and **#2 Knowing Jesus Went Alerts You To Urgency**.

### **#1 - Knowing Jesus Was Sent Encourages You About Grace (v25-31)**

*Jesus Christ Superstar* follows the predictable secular blasphemies:

- Jesus is confused and unsure of Himself.
- Mary Magdalene is unbiblically portrayed as a prostitute who wants Jesus to be her baby daddy.
- Judas is the antihero who betrays Jesus out of love, to motivate Him to do the right thing.

There is plenty of drama in the biblical account. We are picking up the story with Jesus attending the annual Feast of Tabernacles in Jerusalem.

Joh 7:25 Now some of them from Jerusalem said, "Is this not He whom they seek to kill?"

Thousands of pilgrims were there. It was a time to recall God's faithfulness to the generation of Israelites that wandered in the wilderness forty years.

**At this holy feast, with Messianic hopes high, it was openly known that certain groups wanted Jesus dead.**

You bump into a friend at the store. You ask them what is going on at the church they attend. "Same-o, same-o," they answer. "We started a new discipleship study, and we're making progress trying to murder our pastor."

Religion is dead, and it spreads death. One of the first things you hear when you get saved is "Christianity is not a religion, *it's a relationship*." True, and since it is true, folks ought to be able to see the difference between a *walk* with

God and doing *works* for God. We were captives but have been freed. We were dead but made alive. We were debtors whose debts have been paid in full.

The one thing we do, that is not a work, is believe.

Joh 7:26 But look! He speaks boldly, and they say nothing to Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is truly the Christ?

Joh 7:27 However, we know where this Man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one knows where He is from."

"Christ" means *anointed one*. It is a title for the promised Messiah.

The local Jerusalem guys did not think for a minute that Jesus was truly the Christ. They were mocking their rulers.

Undermining God-ordained, godly leadership, is evidence that grace is not at work. Yes, there are abusive pastors and elders who oversee churches by what the Bible calls "lording over" believers (First Peter 5:3). I don't think it is as common as the multitude of anti-Church bloggers would have you believe. Abusive churches aside, God does establish government in the local church.

Their teaching in Jerusalem was, "When the Christ [the Messiah] comes, no one knows where He is from." Scholars argue that this comes from emphasizing a few obscure prophecies about the Messiah. It made them feel superior. To quote Captain Kirk quoting Khan, they believed theirs was "the superior intellect."

They were not just proud, they were wrong. Thirty years earlier King Herod called upon Jews to tell him where the Messiah would be born. They promptly responded, "in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matthew 2:5).

Joh 7:28 Then Jesus cried out, as He taught in the temple, saying, "You both know Me, and you know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.

- On the one hand, they “knew him and knew where he was from.” He was Jesus of Nazareth, the carpenter’s son.
- On the other hand, He was sent by God the Father from Heaven to Earth.

We immediately understand what Jesus was claiming.

He was, at once, a man from Nazareth AND God from Heaven. He was God in human flesh. We like to call Him the God-man.

Jesus boldly stated that these Jews “[did] not know” God the Father. They weren’t saved Jews sincerely waiting for their Messiah.

There were God-fearing Jews. Simeon was an old man who hung around the Temple because God had told him he would see Israel’s Messiah before his death. When young Jesus was brought to the Temple to be dedicated according to the Law of Moses, Simeon said, “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel” Luke 2:29-32).

Simeon’s words ought to have been internalized by every Jew. He was speaking as the nation could and should have spoken.

For all their ‘superior’ knowledge of the Messiah, the Jerusalemites did not know Him at all.

They could not recognize God tabernacling with them when He was right in front of them.

### **Don’t lose Jesus while you are looking for Jesus.**

Things that are good when overemphasized can cause you to lose Jesus while you are looking for Him. Here are two common examples:

1. You can never read or study the Bible too much. But what you can do that might distract you is bind yourself to a particular systematic theology. There can never be one system of biblical interpretation that is always

correct, simply because they are man-made. It doesn't stop Christians from becoming so engrossed in their systematic theology that they think themselves superior. They once shared Christ with nonbelievers, but instead share their theology with believers.

2. Preferring and promoting certain manifestations of God the Holy Spirit is another potential for losing the Lord. The focus shifts from Jesus and on to the worshipper's behavior.

Joh 7:29 But I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me."

God promised our parents that He would come to conquer sin, Satan, and death. Centuries passed. God progressively provided more and more detail about His coming among us, and about His mission.

Joh 7:30 Therefore they sought to take Him; but no one laid a hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come.

Jesus must die on the Cross. God the Father would see to it, by what we term providence, that Jesus be protected until He could say, "Mission accomplished."

President George W. Bush ignited a controversy when he declared. "Mission accomplished." The President was criticized because the war in Iraq continued for several years thereafter.

Jesus' mission was accomplished, but spiritual warfare obviously continues. He is criticized.

Jesus' words from the Cross were, "It is finished." It was; it is. Sin, Satan, Death are defeated.

Why the wait? God is not willing anyone perish. He is being longsuffering, giving all men everywhere and anywhere the opportunity to be born-again, to be saved and avoid the wrath that is coming.

Joh 7:31 And many of the people believed in Him, and said, "When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this *Man* has done?"

They saw the signs and believed. A sign communicates more clearly than words, especially if you are dealing with a language unknown to you. Jesus' miracles were signs God put up to communicate one thing: That He was their promised Messiah. They were unmistakable, irrefutable, incontrovertible, incontestable, undeniable, unassailable, unquestionable, indisputable.

Unequivocable, unimpeachable, indubitable.

So much so that when Jesus was asked by disciples of John the Baptist if He were the Messiah, instead of saying "Yes," the Lord said, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that *the* blind see, *the* lame walk, *the* lepers are cleansed, *the* deaf hear, *the* dead are raised, *the* poor have the gospel preached to them" (Luke 7:22).

**J**esus was "sent." It is a word worthy of our deepest contemplation. It is a word that puts grace into action. J.I. Packer said, "Grace means God sending His only Son to the Cross to descend into [Hades] so that we guilty ones might be reconciled to God and received into Heaven.

Blaise Pascal said, "The Incarnation reveals to man the enormity of his misery through the greatness of the remedy it requires."

No one asked for God to send. He determined to do it, knowing that adding humanity to His deity, then dying in our place, was the only possible way mankind could be saved.

No one deserved for God to be sent. We don't merit it, or earn it, or work for it in any way. It is completely independent of us, something God does in spite of us.

- It's one thing to send for help.
- It's another for help to be sent without anyone asking.

- It's yet another when you send help that is unwanted and rejected. "Send Me," said Jesus, knowing His own would despise and reject Him.

Our God sends. Be ready and able to say to Him, "here I am Lord, send me."

## **#2 - Knowing Jesus Went Alerts You To Urgency (v32-36)**

[gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org) is a site dedicated to answering your Bible questions. According to the counter on their website they have answered nearly 750,000 questions.

Ask them, "Why do most Jews reject Jesus as the Messiah?, and this is part of their answer:

*The Jews rejected Jesus because He failed to do what they expected their Messiah to do - establish a kingdom with Israel as the preeminent nation in the world. The Jews believed that the Messiah, the prophet which Moses spoke about, would come and deliver them from Roman bondage and set up a kingdom where they would be the rulers. The people of Jerusalem shouted praises to God for the mighty works they had seen Jesus do and called out, "Hosanna, save us," when He rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. They treated Him like a conquering king. Then, when He allowed Himself to be arrested, tried, and crucified on a cursed cross, the people stopped believing that He was the promised prophet. They rejected their Messiah.*

Our text shifts from Jesus being sent to Him went. (That is proper English in Riverdale).

Joh 7:32 The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things concerning Him, and the Pharisees and the chief priests sent officers to take Him.

The authorities listed "heard... murmuring" that some were believing in Jesus. They used their authority to issue an arrest warrant. The Temple had its own limited power police force. Officers were dispatched to hook-up Jesus.



We won't see what happens until a future study. They don't arrest the Lord, stating to their superiors, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" (7:46).

Joh 7:33 Then Jesus said to them, "I shall be with you a little while longer, and *then* I go to Him who sent Me.

DC Talk sang, *Time is tickin' away, Tic Tock tickin' away*. It captures a sense of urgency. In the case of first century Israel, opportunity to accept the Lord was ticking down.

Graciously, their opportunity would continue after Jesus went. It isn't until some years later that God announced to Israel through the apostle Paul, "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!" (Acts 28:28).

Paul would explain in his letter to the churches in Rome that,, "blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (11:25). And then he rejoices saying, " and all Israel will be saved" (11:26).

Joh 7:34 You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come."

Adam Clarke writes, "*When the Roman armies come against you, you will vainly seek for a deliverer. But you shall be cut off in your sins, because you did not believe in Me.*"

Albert Barnes writes, "*[Their Messiah] would be in Heaven; and though they would earnestly desire His presence and aid to save the city and nation from the Romans, yet they would not be able to obtain it.*"

Joh 7:35 Then the Jews said among themselves, "Where does He intend to go that we shall not find Him? Does He intend to go to the Dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?"

Their comments were derogatory. They insinuated that even if He went out to less learned, more liberal Jews, and even idolatrous Gentiles, Jesus would not be received.

They did not realize it, but their comments were prophetic:

- The "Dispersion" were Jews living outside the Holy Land.
- "Greeks" means Gentiles, all non-Jews.

**Jesus would "Go!" to these by commissioning His disciples after Him to Go into the whole world making disciples.**

Joh 7:36 What is this thing that He said, 'You will seek Me and not find Me, and where I am you cannot come?' "

Pinky and the Brain. One is a genius; the other's insane. They're laboratory mice whose genes have been spliced.

Every episode the Brain asks Pinky some iteration of the question, "Are you thinking what I'm thinking?" Pinky always answers along these lines:

- "Uh... yeah, Brain, but where are we going to find rubber pants our size?"
- "I think so, Brain, but we'll never get a monkey to use dental floss."
- "I think so, Brain, but if they called them 'Sad Meals' kids wouldn't buy them!"

Answering their question with the same question is a Pinky-like response.

**T**hy Kingdom Come the musical would feature a rendition of the classic song, *Jerusalem*, by Gentle Faith.

*Jerusalem, Oh Jerusalem*

*Why won't you believe in Him?*

*Don't you know can't you see*

*Your King is this Man from Galilee?*

*Israel, Oh Israel*

*Whose Messiah can't you tell?*

*Don't you know, can't you see*

*Your King is this Man from Galilee?*

The lyrics are suggested by something Jesus said, recorded by Matthew in his Gospel. We call it His Lament Over Jerusalem:

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, “BLESSED is HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!” (23:37-39).

Jesus went, and He is poised to return ever since. There is always a sense of urgency. It might be today.

One of the last things Jesus promised us in His Word was, “I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to give to every one according to his work” (Revelation 22:12).

J.C. Ryle writes, *“Let us remember, there is One who daily records all we do for Him, and sees more beauty in His servants’ work than His servants do themselves... And then shall His faithful witnesses discover, to their wonder and surprise, that there never was a word spoken on their Master’s behalf, which does not receive a reward.”*

The extended run of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth will give way to the eternal run of new heavens and a new Earth.

***Believe Jesus and God and you will be saved.***