

*He Loved Me...*

*He Loves Me Lots*

*The Gospel of John*

Text

8:48-59

Topic

The Jews try to dismiss Jesus  
as a "Samaritan" with a "demon"

Title

***"I Won't Die Anymore, Now That You've Saved Me"***

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**An immortal billionaire with a space fetish.**

It sounds like the tagline for a SyFy flick that scored 38% on Rotten Tomatoes. It isn't. Billionaire, second-richest-man-in-the-world, founder of amazon, Jeff Bezos, is pursuing immortality.

He is not the only billionaire who thinks they can beat death:

- *Oracle* founder Larry Ellison has donated more than \$370 million to research about aging and age-related diseases.
- *PayPal* co-founder Peter Thiel has made headlines for his interest in immortality related to a start-up company called *Ambrosia*.
- Sam Altman, billionaire owner of *OpenAI*, is funding digital consciousness - uploading your brain to the cloud.

In the unlikely possibility you get the opportunity to meet a billionaire obsessed with immortality, say to them:

**Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps [God's] word he shall never see death.**

The Lord said this to the Jewish religious leaders. They quoted it back, but with a change. Instead of saying "he shall never **see** death" (v51), they say "he shall never **taste** death" (v52).

It presents two different aspects of the "death" Jesus was talking about. I'll organize my comments around two points: **#1 You Will Never See Death Because Jesus Went There For You**, and **#2 You Will Never Taste Death Because Jesus Defeated It For You**.

### **#1 - You Will Never See Death Because Jesus Went There For You (v48-51)**

How many times do you live?

- We like to say, YOLO, meaning, *You Only Live Once*. It became so popular that it made it into dictionaries in 2016.
- Ian Fleming wrote, "You only live twice. Once when you are born and once when you look death in the face." Would that be abbreviated YOLT?

More importantly: How many **deaths** are there? Everyone dies at least once; some will only die twice; too many will die three times.

1. **Everyone 'dies' at least once.** God told Adam and Eve that if they disobeyed His one reasonable command, "In the day that you eat of [the tree of good and evil] you shall surely die"(Genesis 2:17). They ate; **they died**. Not *physically*, but *spiritually*. They were separated from spiritual fellowship with God. It is passed on to us, their offspring. Every human thus dies at least once in that we are born dead in trespasses and sin.
2. **Some only die twice.** Adam and Eve began to physically die when they sinned. Greg Laurie likes to say, "Ten out of ten people die." There is one exception. When Jesus returns to resurrect the deceased saints of the Church Age, *believers who are alive will not die*. They will be transformed and accompany the resurrected saints to Heaven.
3. **The third death is the Second Death.** Also, "Who's on first?" If a person dies *physically* while remaining dead *spiritually*, it is called the Second Death. It is eternal conscious punishment in the Lake of Fire.

Jesus was talking about the Second Death. He made it possible to never **see** or **taste** the Second Death.

Augustine wrote, *"We made bad use of immortality, and so ended up dying; Christ made good use of mortality, so that we might end up living."*

Joh 8:48 Then the Jews answered and said to Him, "Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?"

"The Jews" is the apostle John's shorthand for the Jewish religious authorities. Many Jewish people believed Him, but not their leaders. They challenged Jesus, resulting in the dramatic back-and-forth dialog recorded in this chapter.

They called Jesus a "Samaritan." For a time in her history, Israel was split into two separate countries. The southern kingdom was called Judah, and the northern kingdom was called Israel. The Assyrian empire conquered Israel around 722BC. They carried away most of the Israelites. Those who were allowed to stay behind intermarried with the Assyrians producing the Samaritans. Jews looked down upon them as half-breeds.

The Jews knew that Jesus was not a half-breed. Their accusation was theological. The Samaritans had their own Temple, their own copy of the first five books of the Old Testament, and their own religious system. Calling Jesus a Samaritan was equivalent to accusing Him of heresy.

Can a demon be Christian possessed? The Jews often accused Jesus of having a "demon."

It was their baseless explanation of how Jesus was able to perform miracles. They would rather present a stupid argument than admit the obvious, that Jesus performed miracles in the power of God.

Multitudes of smart people are like that. They promote, for example, the Theory of Evolution even though the science doesn't support it. They'd rather give stupid arguments than believe in a loving Creator.

Totally off subject, but super intriguing, is figuring out what is meant in the Bible by "demon." The most common answer is that they are fallen angels. I'm not saying that is incorrect, but the Bible nowhere specifically states demons are fallen angels.

Demons could be the disembodied spirits of dead Nephilim and their giant-clan descendants.

The Nephilim are introduced in the sixth chapter of Genesis. They were the offspring of fallen angels who married human women. They perished in the global flood. They weren't angels, and they weren't exactly human. Where did their spirits go after their death?

The First Book of Enoch (not written by Enoch, BTW) suggests that their spirits wander Earth, seeking a host. As wild as this sounds, it does fit certain biblical facts, e.g., demons are presented as spirits having a strong desire to possess a body. Fallen angels already have amazing celestial bodies that are way cooler than ours. They are not portrayed as disembodied.

Joh 8:49 Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me.

Jesus always brought the conversations He was in to the point He wanted to make. You don't need to answer every question someone asks, or overcome every objection they have. God the Holy Spirit can direct you to say something that speaks to their genuine need.

It wasn't a "demon" Jesus was in fellowship with, it was the "Father." Everything about Jesus - thoughts, words, deeds - honored the Father. Dishonor Jesus and you dishonor God the Father.

It's uber-important that we honor the Lord in how we *present* Him, and how we *represent* Him.

Joh 8:50 And I do not seek My *own* glory; there is One who seeks and judges.

Jesus wasn't concerned with the judgements of the Jews. He lived to please His Father.

Most of us put too high a value on what others think of us. It's the source of a lot of compromise, and contention.

**It is better to seek the Lord's approval than the world's applause.**

God “seeks” “glory,” but He is no glory-hound. He deserves glory. J.I. Packer reminds us, “Our high and privileged calling is to do the will of God in the power of God for the glory of God.”

Joh 8:51 Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.”

Believers might die physically, but we will not, cannot, die eternally.

**T**here are certain places that you will never get to see. They’ve been destroyed. In 2016, ISIS destroyed The Gates of Nineveh as part of its ongoing campaign against cultural sites and relics.

**Christians of the Church Age will never see Hades; its ‘gates’ could not prevail against Jesus.**

Prior to the resurrection of Jesus, the spirit or soul of every human who died went to Hades. It is described in the New Testament account of the Rich Man and Lazarus. It has two compartments:

1. One compartment is a place of conscious torment. Nonbelievers are still confined there after death to await their resurrection to suffer the Second Death.
2. The other compartment is a place of comfort, known as Paradise or Abraham’s Bosom. Believers went there to await the coming of Jesus.

Lazarus could see across an impassable gulf to the rich man. Abraham had a conversation with the rich man.

After Jesus rose from the dead, the apostle Paul tells us that He descended to Hades and led the souls of believers waiting there to Heaven (Ephesians 4:8-10). From that glorious moment forward, *no believer who has died has seen Hades.*

Instead we are promised at the moment of physical death, “to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord” (Second Corinthians 5:8).

The moment I die, it won’t be Abraham I see, and there is no wait time. Heaven is a wonderful place, filled with glory and grace, and I’m going to see my Savior’s face.

Lester Roloff said, "I have all that I need here and Heaven hereafter! How much richer could anybody want to be?"

## **#2 - You Will Never Taste Death Because Jesus Defeated It For You (v52-59)**

When you go to the donut shop, all those munchy, baked delights are on display. You can **see** them, but you haven't **tasted** them.

We can't know why the Jews changed "see" to "taste." Perhaps God the Holy Spirit prompted it to point us to another portion of God's Word. In Hebrews 2:9 we read, "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might **taste death** for everyone."

There are some who translate it, "that He might taste of every death."

### **Jesus "tasted" of every death when He took your place on the Cross.**

Gourmet coffees will put their flavor profile on the bag. I'm enjoying Bali Blue from Red Elephant Coffee. The bag tells me, "This organic single origin is filled with flavors of dark chocolate, molasses, and brown sugar."

Apply this to sin. Substance abuse, spousal abuse, immoral sexual behavior, embezzlement, lying. *Every sin has its own putrid, rank, fetid, rotting taste.*

Put them together, in a sinner, and you've got something whose taste makes you want to vomit.

Foul as it was, Jesus "tasted of **every** death." He is the Savior of the whole world, especially those who believe.

Joh 8:52 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon! Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never taste death.'

We know and trust Jesus. If He says we will not taste death, we dig deeper to discover its meaning.

The Jews did not know the Lord. They had no desire to know Him. They wanted to murder Him. When He said there were those who would never taste death, they only thought about the physical death of the body. They were unwilling to search it out.

Joh 8:53 Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?"

Jesus must think Himself far greater than the founder of their faith, and its prophets, to make such a claim. Hence their disdain in saying, "Who do you think you are, Jesus?"

Joh 8:54 Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God.

These guys were part of a system that valued status and position. There was a lot of what we would call politicking. Jesus seemed to be leapfrogging over them, making Himself out to be greater than both them and their heritage.

They projected onto Jesus their own corruptions. The Lord wasn't posturing. If He was receiving honor, it was from His Father.

Two quick lessons:

1. Don't honor yourself. Don't look for accolades or applause. You do not need recognition. Those times you feel overlooked, passed over, used - rejoice in them. You serve the Lord.
2. If you wish to compliment someone for their service, do so in a context of God gifting them, using them. Tell them what God is showing you, how He is encouraging you.

Joh 8:55 Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word.

A tremendous number of people who think that they know God *do not know Him* because they have not received His son, Jesus Christ, as their Savior.

**"Jesus is either a liar or lunatic, or He is the Lord."**

I first read that well-used phrase in Josh MacDowell's book, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*.

Jesus was saying something like that:

- If He were to say that He was not God in human flesh, He'd be a liar.
- Neither was He a demon-influenced lunatic by claiming deity. He was telling the truth.

"I do know Him and keep His word." I want to be able to say that with some honesty. To be saved, and to serve according to His Word, is a high calling for every believer:

- It's doable, first of all, because God the Holy Spirit resides in you, enabling you to read the Word and do it.
- It's doable second of all, because the one thing God values is faithfulness.

When believers are compared to the managers of the Lord's household, called stewards, He tells us, "it is required in stewards that one be found faithful" (First Corinthians 4:2). He does not require we be "successful" by the measures of the world. Outward success is nothing. It's not a good measure of the Lord blessing someone. Some of the largest so-called 'churches' in America, and around the world, are led by heretics.

Joh 8:56 Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad."

Earlier Jesus told them that their spiritual father was the devil.

Here the Lord was talking about physical descent. The Messiah would descend from Abraham, through the nation of Israel. Abraham saw it by faith and rejoiced as a pilgrim stranger on Earth. He would see very few of the Lord's promises fulfilled, but he believed every one of them to the max.

Joh 8:57 Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?"

The Jews were terrible listeners. Jesus did not say that He had seen Abraham. It was Abraham who did the seeing, by faith in promises.

Jesus had, of course, seen Abraham. He created Abraham in his mother's womb. He visited Abraham as a Theophany.



We think, because of internal clues in the Bible, that Jesus was somewhere around 33yrs old at the time this was taking place. The only thing significant about 50yrs is that God limited the age of Temple priests to between 25 to 50 years.

Joh 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

Jesus did not say, "Before Abraham was, I was." That could mean that He came into existence, as a created being, *before* Abraham. Rather, He used the Name of God: "I AM."

The Lord Jesus had dwelt with God the Father from all eternity. There was never a time when He came into being, or when He did not exist.

Joh 8:59 Then they took up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

Stones never seemed difficult to find. The Temple was under construction during the time of Jesus. There may have been piles of stones.

Jesus could hide who He was:

- He did it in the synagogue in His hometown when they tried to throw Him off a cliff.
- After He rose from the dead, the Lord hid His identity from the two disciples returning home to Emmaus.

Adam Clarke wrote, "In all probability He rendered Himself invisible." I think the Lord had a lot of fun hiding Himself.

**J**esus tasted death for everyone. As the God-man, fully God and fully human, He could die in our place to pay the penalty for our sin. His resurrection from the dead proves that death - the Second Death - is a defeated foe. No one need die and wait in Hades.

"Death makes me very angry," admits Larry Ellison, CEO of *Oracle* and the fifth-richest person in the world. "It doesn't make any sense to me. Death has never made any sense to me. How can a person be there and then just vanish, just not be there?"

Jeff Bezos, Peter Thiel, Sam Altman, all the other billionaires seeking immortality, as well as the poorest pauper, *will not "just vanish."* They are going to live forever.

- God promises believers a new, glorified, fit-for-Heaven and space travel body. We will enjoy eternity with God in redeemed, restored creation.
- Nonbelievers will have a remarkable body, too... But it will be fit for an eternity of suffering.

One commentator said, *"The death of Jesus Christ means the death of death itself. The death of death in the death of Jesus Christ also means victory over death for those who trust in Christ as their God and Savior."*

"Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death *is* sin, and the strength of sin *is* the law. But thanks *be* to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (First Corinthians 15:54-58).