

Gospel of John - episode 23

Chapter 12

Welcome to our Sharing on chapter 12 of St. John's Gospel. We now consider the dramatic moment when Jesus entered Jerusalem as the Jewish Messiah. So let us just refresh ourselves again: "the next day, the crowds who had come up for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took some branches of palm, and went out to meet him, shouting, Hosanna, blessings on the King of Israel who comes in the name of the Lord. Jesus found a young donkey and mounted it. As Zechariah 9:9 says, 'Do not be afraid, daughter of Zion; see, your King is coming mounted on the colt of a donkey'. The Jewish leaders had demanded that Jesus show himself and declare who he was after all the signs he gave. The people who speak to Jesus during this procession into Jerusalem quote Psalm 118, "Hosanna". It actually means 'hoshiannah', which means 'save us now'. But they may have used the word in the same way as we use the word 'Halleluia'. We say Hallelujah meaning wonderful, whereas the words actually mean 'praise God'.

They may not have, in fact, said, 'Save us now', but that's the meaning of the prayer they were praying. They also declared 'blessings on the King of Israel' - that means the ruler of the entire people of God - who comes in the name of the Lord. You couldn't get a better description of Jesus than the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Of course, they are unconsciously asking him to save them now, and that is precisely why he came. For example, in Chapter 4, the woman said, 'give me that water', without realising what she was asking for, and the people who asked for bread didn't realise what they were asking for. The man who was blind from birth, didn't know what 'seeing' was. They didn't know. They had never experienced these gifts. Yet, the Lord manages to get us to ask the right question so that he can supply what he knows is our deepest need. Even if they ask on the wrong level, God is so merciful that he will hear you anyway, because that's what He wants to do.

In the first Book of Maccabees, Chapter 13: 51, we are told that a procession like what you see now entering Jerusalem is really the sign of a victorious, political king entering Jerusalem, but that's not what Jesus is about! We must go back to Psalm 118:22 which Jesus fulfilled: "the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone (or capstone). The Lord has done this, and it's marvellous in our eyes". Psalm 118 was recited during the Feasts of Tabernacles, and also at Passover, when they prayed to God for their Messiah. They knew the Messiah would be the head of their nation, but they didn't realise that he was to be the head of the Kingdom of God on a much higher plane. So, while all Israel looked for a political, glorious Messiah who would fight Rome, Jesus did something to tell them that that was not that type of King.

He deliberately looked for a donkey and a little colt so that he could straddle them as he went into Jerusalem. You might wonder is there a meaning to that also? Yes, the donkey represents Israel and all its stubbornness. The little colt that had never been ridden before represents the Gentiles who have not been tried and tested. That's still in the future. Jesus has chosen both; he is for everybody. That's why

they go to the trouble of mentioning a donkey and its colt. As Jesus rides into Jerusalem the Prophet Zechariah 9:9 is fulfilled, "Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion. Shout with gladness, daughter of Jerusalem. See now, your king comes to you. He is victorious. He is triumphant, but he's humble, riding on a donkey". He's on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Jesus chose to be a king of peace, not a political king of war as he will explain to Pilate who will order his Death, 'that his kingdom is not **of** this world'.

When the people bring their palm branches to wave them at Jesus, we remember to go back into the books of Kings for the explanation. When Israel wanted to proclaim a man king, they would do two things. Usually, he would be on horseback, of course, not on a donkey. They would take their cloaks off, and put them on the ground so that he rode over them. The significance for this was that the cloak or the mantle was a symbol of that person. It was that person's outer garment during the day, and their blanket at night. It meant that they "put the government upon your shoulders. We've taken it off ours and we put it on your shoulders". The waving of the palm branches was the declaration that this person was king. So, what the people are doing is something Jesus fled from in chapter 6! Back there, they wanted to make him king, and he escaped. He knew if a crowd that big tried to force him, there would be trouble. Here he doesn't run. He wants to proclaim himself the Messiah. He must tell Jerusalem who he is **and** what kind of Messiah he is.

The Old Testament had two streams of prophecy regarding the Messiah, so the people were confused. They weren't sure which stream of prophecy was true. One said he was going to be a victorious Davidic king and that his kingdom would last forever. The other stream of prophecy - which they didn't want to look at - said that he was going to be a suffering servant and that he would lay down his life for them. They chose not to look at that because he couldn't be both. Jesus was both. So, they never came to understand who he was.

We also have the fact that Zephaniah 3:16-20 spoke of the great day of the Lord when God himself would be among His people. Jesus has been trying to tell them that this is fact; that he was among them as a warrior Saviour and he would renew them with his love, and rescue all those who were in need. Well, we've seen that in all the signs John has illustrated in this Gospel. So, for those who have eyes to see on the above level, the Lord God has come, and he is about to go into do personal single combat with evil in order to rescue all the children of God - that is, every person who lives. He himself will do this so that he can release the New Life into the world and create a New Kingdom. Therefore, he can fulfil the vision of Daniel 7:13-14: the Son of Man would go to the one of great age where kinship and sovereignty was conferred on him by God; a sovereignty that would be eternal, lasting forever. They would not understand this until after the event.

So, what you have now is in 12:17, "all who had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead were telling how they had witnessed it. Because of this, too, the crowd came out to meet them when they heard he had given this sign". So apart from the fact that they were declaring Jesus king and waving their palm branches, we notice at the same time that those who witnessed the raising of Lazarus were witnessing to everybody. Well, that's the duty of a believer to witness to other people as to who the Christ is, so that they will come to know him. You can hear from this

text that many of the people in Jerusalem didn't know about the raising of Lazarus. Listen to this. " all who had been with him when he raised Lazarus from the tomb told the crowd how they had witnessed it. And it was because of this, too, that the crowd came out to meet them". So, as they spread the news about the raising of Lazarus, the crowds joined this procession more and more. You can expect a reaction from the leadership, can't you? They are watching from the Temple Mount. They can see everything that's going on. So, the pharisees said to one another - these are the group that are determined to get rid of Jesus - "you see, there's nothing you can do. The whole world is following him". They unconsciously say something that is more truthful than they know themselves. They give an unconscious prophecy that with this particular Passover; with the Death of this particular Lamb, that the whole world is, in fact, going to experience the salvation of God! The whole world will go after Jesus.

At this particular moment, it seems as if Jesus was looking for a sign. That would surprise you, wouldn't it? Why would he need a sign? **Timing**. If the whole world is go running after him, wouldn't they need to show some interest? The next couple of verses are very interesting. "Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks". These were Gentile converts to Judaism. They approached Philip who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and they put this request to him, "Sir, they said, We would like to see Jesus". Now, to see Jesus means that we would like to get to know him; we would like to believe in him. "Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus".

Jesus's reaction was very strange. He said, "**Now** the Hour has come". It was this request 'of the whole world' coming through these Greeks that made Jesus declare that his Hour had arrived. So, let's look at that for a moment. Notice that when these people came they approached Philip who went to Andrew! Now, you may not remember that it was Philip and Andrew who were very much part of the action in Chapter 6, cooperating with Jesus in providing the bread of life for the Jewish people. Philip and Andrew are upfront again in opening the gate of the Kingdom of God to the Gentiles. They can't do it at this time, but they can come to Jesus and ask him. If they were involved in that particular incident, then they will be involved here because in going to his Death, Jesus is going to provide the Eucharistic food for the whole world. He will be able to feed the world.

John specifically makes connexions for us so that we won't miss out. Jesus said, "Now the Hour has come". Notice that he alone can decide when the Hour is here. The scribes and pharisees said back in verse 19, 'there is nothing we can do. The whole world is going after him'. They have no power until God permits it. Jesus is the one who is shown in John's Gospel to be in control, so that's why he is completely calm. Nothing will happen until it is the right moment, the right circumstances, and until it's God's kairos time. This signal from the Greeks tells Jesus that it is God's kairos time. Jesus did not personally need it. This signal will tell the disciples and the Church in the future that God waited for the Gentiles to say, 'give us some of that salvation', just as the others had unconsciously asked for the right thing as well.

"The Hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified". So, you must ask the question 'how will he be glorified?' Jesus gives a very important answer to his disciples and to anybody who can hear in this crowd. He said, "unless a wheat grain falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain. But if it dies, it will yield a harvest". In this lovely little parable, Jesus is saying that he has to be ground to powder



to produce the flour that will create the Eucharist; you already know that the little wafers are made from flour and water only. It is unleavened bread. When Jesus is ground to powder he donates his body and blood to the church, which will feed on the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist from that time to the end of time. Does nature itself not illustrate this? You know that if you sow, that the seed is the promise of a harvest, but the seed must agree to die. The harvest will only come if the seed is genuinely sown in the Earth. If water, wind and soil all work on the seed to crush it, it releases its energy to produce a new harvest.

This must happen to Jesus also. He must use language like this because the idea of dying as a crucified man would be so horrific to anybody in his audience that they would all have run away. He would have lost them all, so he must speak to them in very delicate words. He says in 12:25, “anyone who loves his life loses it, and anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it onto life eternal”. There Jesus tells us that we must make a choice in life; there is a ‘dying and rising’ going on in us all the time. If we are to live on the level of above the ego must die in order to let grace come alive. Selfishness must die if love is to rise. So, death and resurrection happens inside of us.

This is the mystery of living the life from above. To the extent that ‘the self’ dies, divine love can be born in us - that is the extent to which you will become a saint also. If you only do it 10%, then you only get 10% harvest. If you do it 90%, you get a 90% harvest. We learn from the parables of the seed in Matthew’s Gospel that people give a very wide variety of response to the Lord. But this mystery of death and life goes on inside of us anyway! ‘Anyone who loves his life’ - that means that you choose to live on the level of below illustrated by the choice of money, sex, and power. You want to get the most out of this life, as people say, but you might lose your eternal life. You have to make very wise choices. Jesus says that we must make sacrifices while we are living on the Earth so that we can make room for the level of above to express itself in us. The choice is ours, whether we live on the level of below or on the level of above. The choice is ours whether we become a 10% saint or a full saint. So, true disciples will serve Jesus as he serves the Father. We saw Mary of Magdalen do this in Bethany at this wonderful banquet, and we’ve been told in Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8, and 10 that the servant must serve. In other words, the love you have inside of you must be expressed. Otherwise, it will die. It only comes to life as it is expressed. True disciples will also live in obedience to Jesus and the Father, just as Jesus lived in obedience to the Father.

This is our summary of the Gospel: True disciples will follow Jesus all the way in love, obedience, service, and in laying down the life, if that is what is required. This is 12:26, “if a man serves me, he must follow me so that wherever I am, my servant will be there, too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him”. So, we have a journey to take in following Jesus.

Now 12:27: an extraordinary verse, because all of a sudden, Jesus says, “and now my soul is troubled. What shall I say? Father, save me from this Hour? But it was for this very reason that I came to this Hour”. Then very strongly, he says, “Father, glorify yourself!”. Why did I say this was an extraordinary moment? Because this is the ‘agony of Jesus in the garden’, except that there’s no garden! John doesn’t give you the agony of Jesus in the garden, just as John didn’t give you the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness,



nor the trial before the Sanhedrin. John gives us everything - the agony of Jesus, the trial and the temptations of Jesus - in public, upfront, in the eyes of everybody. It is absolutely public. John wants you to see that that is the normal way for all of us, that whatever happens to us, good or ill, happens in everyday life. John wants to say to you also that there are mysteries of life that are hidden in plain sight. Sometimes we don't see what we're looking at.

You will see this now: 12:29-30, "A voice came from heaven. I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again. But the people who are standing there who heard this thought it was a clap of thunder. Others said it was an angel speaking to him. Jesus said, It was not for my sake that this voice came". Notice that for Jesus, it was a voice. For some people it was a clap of thunder. For others it was an angel. What you see here is the relationship those people had with God, and therefore, the level of spiritual insight that they had. It's a very interesting thing. First of all, Jesus faces the fact that now is the Hour. So, suddenly it hits him. The frightful thing he must go through in order to pay for the Redemption of everyone. It's wonderful to offer all of these gifts of life, light, bread and living water. It's quite another matter to pay the price. So, what John shows you is that Jesus chooses to be the Lamb of God. It is his own personal choice. We saw this in chapter 10:17-18, when Jesus said, "the Father loves me because I lay down my life for others. I lay down my life of my own free will. Nobody takes it from me. And not only do I lay down my life of my own free will, but I take it up again of my own free will".

There in chap 10 you have Jesus' teaching; here, we have the moment when he makes that decision. It's a wonderful to witness him freely choosing to be the Lamb of God. This means that he has chosen to go down into the very depths of the unbelieving world and all its awfulness. You're going to see this in the Passion; all the sin and darkness of the unbelieving world, because if he doesn't do that, he can't release his Divine Love into them. So, you will find in the Passion that The Cross of Jesus will have the longest beam going down into the depths of the Earth, identifying with us at our very worst. You will have two beams of the cross embracing the entire universe, and on either side of the cross, you will have the two types of children, the one who accepts and the one who rejects.

What a mystery. What an incredible mystery! And it's there in plain sight, and yet many of us don't see it. Not only will Jesus have to go down into the depths of the degradation of the Cosmos in order to be able to save it, but we will hear in the beginning of the Book of Revelation 1:17 that he has to go down into the very depths of Hell in order to snatch the keys of Death and Hell from Satan in his great victory of the Resurrection. So, he has to bear the cross of the pain of the loss of God for the Cosmos. So, I have given you a tiny picture of the Crucifixion so that you would somehow appreciate what Jesus is saying here and why he might react to it in a painful way. Thank you for listening. Goodbye. God bless you.

INTERVAL

Welcome to our Sharing on chapter 12 of St. John's Gospel. We are near the end but still have a bit of drama to go. I want to begin with 12:28, "A voice came from heaven. I have glorified it". This is God the Father speaking. The amazing thing is that in the Bible people often said that God's voice was like a clap of thunder. Now, a clap of thunder means something that is loud, something that must be heard, something that you cannot avoid. If God's voice is so loud and clear, it means that his creatures hear it!



The reaction around Jesus is very interesting because God the Father said to Jesus, “I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again”. That means I have glorified My Name in all that you have done, in all your ministry. The biggest revelation of the glory of God is still coming in the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Those around either heard a clap of thunder, or some said an angel spoke to him, but none of them got the message! That's the extraordinary thing, that God can speak, and we don't hear. That is the position of all of us, that the Word of God is proclaimed in the scriptures, and many times, we ourselves don't hear it. That is because we are not paying attention or not clued-in correctly, and we're not at the right level of relationship with him. But God is speaking to us all the time. John is warning us to be alert.

Jesus's reaction to the Father speaking is very important because he makes an announcement that we must take note of. This is 12:31, “Jesus said, now the Hour has come, now sentence is being passed on this world - this world is the Cosmos, the unbelieving world. The Prince of this world is Satan, will be overthrown. So, here Jesus announces his victory before the event. This is extremely important because it will help the disciples who believe in Jesus to persevere in faith. Even if they fail in faith - which they will - they will recover because Jesus announced the victory ahead of time. He said, “When I am lifted up from the Earth, I will draw all people to myself”. This is universal salvation. I will draw all people to myself. This is not something that will be confined to the chosen people. This is for all the children of God everywhere.

But, of course, we were told that in chapter 10 - that he would gather together the scattered children of God. So, Jesus' Hour is going to be an Hour of judgement for the unbelieving world. It will show up the sin that is in the world because there will be lots of it during the Passion of Jesus. It will show up the spiritual sickness that is in the world, and there will be lots of that during the Passion also. It's going to be an Hour of terrible darkness. It will be an Hour of judgement. But even though it is an Hour of darkness and an Hour of judgement, Jesus says to everybody, penetrate the Hour; look deeply at what is happening. Don't stay on the surface. You've been warned about this from the beginning of the Gospel, because you have to see who is behind the Cosmos, who is behind the power struggles on Earth, who is behind all the massacres, the wars, all the destruction and all the degradation. Who is behind all that? It is the enemy, the Prince of this world.

Jesus says that the battle is between himself - the beloved Son of God, humble and totally obedient to the Father's Will and the rebel angel who has warred against the Will of God from before our creation, the one who has brought great degradation to the Earth. Once he succeeded in bringing the human race down - which resulted in this terrible fault of original sin inside of us and our weakness that draws us towards sin, he could literally use us as play things. So, the two opponents are very clear. If we keep our eyes on this we won't lose focus, because this is a struggle between light and darkness, between love and hate, between good and evil. It is the primaeval struggle, which continues as long as human beings are on the Earth. The answer that Jesus gave to the Greeks was exactly the same as the answer he gave to the chosen people, that he was the Messiah, the light of the world, and they need to follow him.

So, the crowd hears that this is The Way, but the law has taught them something else, so, they have one final question for Jesus. This is 12:31-32, “now, sentence is being passed on this world. Now, the Prince

of this world is to be overthrown. And when I am lifted up from the Earth” - you see, he keeps on using that symbol which Moses gave them in the desert, that he took the Tau sign, (the wavy T, I call it). He put the serpent hanging down dead on this sign. The Tau sign was the sign of Messiah for the power of the snake was to be destroyed by the Messiah. That's why Jesus keeps reminding them of that particular symbol. So, “when I am lifted up from the Earth, I will draw all men to myself”. John says, “by these words, he indicated the Death he was going to die”. The crowds got it. He was talking about his Death. Now, he has used this symbol a number of times before, and they didn't get it then.

But you see, the Hour has come, so, the veils are being removed so that people begin to see a little bit. This time, the problem is with the crowd - not the Scribes and Pharisees - because it's the crowd that's with Jesus in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem. They say to him, “the law has taught us (that means the first five books of the Bible, the Torah, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). The law has taught us that the Christ would remain forever. Now, there are lots of references that I could give you for that: Isaiah 9:7, Daniel 7:14, Psalm 89:37, Psalm 110:4, Micah 4:7, just to give you a taste. So, the scriptures had said that the Messiah would remain forever. That means that he wouldn't die. How can you say the Son of Man will be lifted up? Who is this Son of Man? This is their final question to Jesus, and it's really interesting. So let me give you a flavour of a few of those texts, the that I have referred to.

Let us look at Psalm 89:3-4, “I have made a covenant with my chosen one. I have given my servant David my sworn word. I have founded your dynasty to last forever. I have built you a throne that will outlast all time”. So, if Jesus is the legitimate claimant to the throne of David - which he was - if therefore he should be king, how is it that he is talking about Death? He's supposed to last forever. If he is the Davidic Messiah, his kingship is supposed to last forever. Daniel 7:14, “I have founded your dynasty to last forever. I have built you a throne that will outlast all time”. Psalm 45:6 says, “your throne, O God, will last forever and ever”. So, the final question to Jesus is about who the Son of Man is. You are using the same expression. Who is **this** Son of Man? You and I who are the readers of the Gospel, have knowledge and hindsight that this crowd doesn't have, because John has taught us and primed us from the very beginning of his Gospel as to who Jesus really is.

We also know Jesus is the Davidic King Messiah. We know that his rule will last forever. We know that he is the Son of Man. We know he is the fulfilment of the scriptures, but the crowd speaking to Jesus do not have this information. Also, we are looking back at events that have already happened, that Jesus has already accomplished, but the people's response here is different. What we are going to find with this particular crowd is that on Palm Sunday they wave their palm branches and proclaim him king. But five days later, they call for his death! They will act like the reed blowing in the wind. It will go this way and that way because we have heard it before a number of times. This crowd doesn't really believe. They are a miracle hungry crowd. So, Jesus gives them a repeat lesson one final time. He tells them one more time - but if you are talking to someone who can't hear, you're wasting your words. If you put a book in front of someone who can't see, you're wasting your time.

Jesus said, “the light will be with you a little longer”. (It's only a few days now). “Walk while you have the light”. In other words, do something while I'm still here. Now, this is 11th Hour. He said, “or the dark will



overtake you". He is warning them. He knows what is going to happen. He also knows that as soon as the events of this particular Passover take place, that darkness will fill the whole of Jerusalem, and they will all be caught up in it, including the Apostles. Everybody will fail him. Everybody will let him down. He knows that. The darkness will become so thick that the chosen people will do the unthinkable - which is to kill their own Messiah - that they had waited 4,000 years for! That is why Jesus said, "while you still have the light, believe in the light, and you can become sons of the light". He must have been very sad when he was saying it. He is literally begging them one last time to believe in him. They know that God is light because we've had this before many times in this Gospel, Psalm 27:1 says, "the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life, before whom shall I shrink?" Jesus has revealed that to them, and we've had these texts over and over again. So, from 12:37 to the end, we have the conclusion to Jesus's Ministry. It's all over. There's nothing left but for Jesus to give himself in sacrifice for us. So, what we have here is a very interesting thing in these verses. In 12:37-40 John gives us insight into all these events. So let me read some of these verses: "Though they had been present when Jesus gave so many signs, they did not believe. This was to fulfil the words of the Prophet Isaiah, Lord, who could believe what we have heard? And to whom has the power of the Lord been revealed? Indeed, they were unable to believe because, as Isaiah said again, He has blinded their eyes. He has hardened their heart for fear that they would see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn to me for healing.

Isaiah said this when he saw his glory and the word that's referred to Jesus". This statement tells us how to read the Old Testament, because what John is referring to Isaiah 6:1-10. The prophet, who was a good man, a holy man, had an extraordinary revelation of God where he saw the glory of God in the temple. When he saw the Holiness of God Isaiah became the prophet to teach holiness, and he literally invented the expression 'the Holy One of God'. It was when he saw the Holiness of God in the temple that he said, Lord, there's no hope for us. I'm a wretched man, he said. I'm a man of unclean lips, and unclean lips means unfit for the presence of God. He said, I belong to a people of unclean lips. There's no hope for us. If you are wholly like this, how are we ever going to have any contact with you. So, the Lord cleansed his lips with a coal from the heavenly fires. Then Isaiah said, 'Lord, you can send me as your messenger'.

But what is the condition of the people? God said, The people have become so blind that no matter how they try to use their eyes, they will not see. They've become so deaf that no matter what you say to them, they won't hear. Their hearts are so hard that nothing will soften them. That has been the experience of Jesus from chapter 2-12. It's been really sad. Everything Isaiah saw has been fulfilled. John said that Isaiah said this when he saw God's glory. John is saying that what Isaiah saw was the glory of Jesus in his pre-existent life in heaven! He saw the Divine Holiness of Jesus and his incredible Majesty. John has been trying to tell us that this glory had come to us in the Incarnation, that this light came from God, and that we are in such an unworthy state, there was no way we could get it, not until Jesus died and rose to release all this Holiness, Grace and Glory to us.

John continues, "and yet there were many who did believe in him". The fact is that the nation as a whole rejected the Lord, but individuals did receive him. These individuals are called 'The Remnant'. When you study the Old Testament, you find that that has been the situation throughout history. If you look at our



Christian nations today - so-called Christian nations - you find the same thing; whole nations have rejected the Lord, yet individuals in those nations live a vibrant Christian life. It's the same mystery. If you take the message of Jesus to the entire nation, you find the same blindness, deafness, and inability to understand. So, this is the mystery that we're dealing with when you look at the Cosmos and you look at people who are not in the place where they can see and hear and understand.

So, "there were many who did believe in him, even among the leading men". This is a very important statement of John. He is telling you that he has information that he is not passing on to us because when they were writing the Gospels, they kept strictly to the subject, and they don't feed our curiosity.

We would love to know who these leaders were. We do know some of them, of course, but what John is saying here is that even in the Sanhedrin Jesus had believers! This is very interesting. We know Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea because he turned up after the Death of Jesus. We know from some of the saints and the mystics that Gamaliel, the great teacher, eventually became a Christian. We know from the Acts of the Apostles 6:7 that "many of the priests made their submission to the faith". So, there were people in the ruling classes that did believe in Jesus, but they had the same problem as the parents of the healed man in John 9. They were afraid of the cabal in the Sanhedrin who were determined to destroy Jesus, because this group were those who held power. The others were secret disciples of Jesus, just as the parents of that healed man in chapter 9 were - out of fear of the Pharisees who, with the Scribes were the opponents of Jesus. You meet them a lot in the Synoptic Gospels.

I find it quite sad that even in the Sanhedrin, there were people who believed in Jesus, but did nothing to stop his Death. They did nothing to stop the horror which happened to Jesus. They wanted to remain in secret. John showed us that that was not the way that a disciple should be. So, there were many who did believe in him, even among the leading men, but they wouldn't admit it. This is verse 42. They wouldn't admit it through fear of the pharisees and fear of being expelled from the synagogue. That's exactly what John dealt with in chapter 9. They put honour from men before the honour that comes from God. That's what Jesus told them in the controversies from chapter 5 to Chapter 8 - that they were more concerned about what human beings thought of them than their relationship with God. So, they compromised their relationship with God simply because they to put human beings before God. There is a big lesson there for us all; when we are up against authorities of church or state we might forget our commitment to God also. That is the very time when we need to bear witness to Jesus.

The final words of Jesus in the first half of the Gospel are these 12:44-50, "Jesus declared publicly, whoever believes in me, believes not in me, but in the one who sent me". If you put your faith in me, you are in fact putting your faith in God. Why? Because God the Father and God the Son are one. "I, the light, have come into the world, so that whoever believes in me need not stay in the dark any more, but he can have the light of life". Here we have Jesus saying, 'you can still come to me. It's never too late. That's why we use that expression, that 'between the cup and the mouth', if a person is poisoning themselves, that they can still repent. We can say of people who are on their deathbed that between closing the eyes and relaxing in death, they can still give themselves to God. They can relax into his arms. It's never too late if there is breath in your body. This is very important for us to remember.



"I, the light, have come into the world so that whoever believes in me may not stay in the dark anymore. And anyone who hears my words and keeps them faithfully", as Jesus faithfully kept his Father's words as he told us from Chapter 5. To faithfully keep God's words means that you actually live the Word of God. ' "It is not I who will condemn him if you don't faithfully keep the words", he said. "I did not come into the world to condemn the world". This is our reminder of John 3:16. That "God so loved the world that he sent his only Son not to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved. I have not come to condemn the world; I came to save it. But he who rejects me and refuses my words is condemned already. The word itself that I have spoken, (that is what we call the Gospel), will be his judge on the last day". Now, you remember in the controversies that Jesus told the chosen people that he wouldn't condemn them on the last day, even though he is the final judge. He said the covenant of Moses would condemn them.

Now the Christians are told that Jesus won't condemn us; it will be the Gospel. In other words, in both cases, we are judged according to the Word of God. This is a terribly important, and it's the final Word Jesus gives before his Passion. "For what I have spoken, he said, does not come from myself. No, what I was to say, what I had to speak, was commanded to be by my Father who is in heaven. And then he said, And I know that his commands mean eternal life, and therefore what the Father has told me is what I speak". Jesus is saying that the author of Christianity is the One and Only True God. The author of the Gospel is the One and Only True God. If, like the rebellious angel who caused all the trouble on planet Earth, if we rebel against God's Holy Will and against God's Holy Word, we ourselves have put ourselves outside of salvation. Therefore, like Judas who destroyed himself, we would destroy ourselves in Hell. There's no need to do that. We only have to turn to him and accept him. Thank you for listening. Goodbye. God bless you.