

Gospel of John - episode 17

Chapter 8 part 2

Welcome to our Sharing on St. John's Gospel. We continue the great controversy between Jesus and the leadership of Israel in chapter 8. We have come to a very dramatic moment where they say to him, "who are you?" They know who he is. They know he is Jesus of Nazareth. We will discover that they know something about his birth as well. They know much more about him than they want to acknowledge. But **they realise** that he is giving himself an identity that has nothing to do with Nazareth, and it has nothing to do with his immediate family - that he is giving himself an identity that goes all the way back into eternity and to the Father. This is the discussion that is going on between them; they are going to so upset that they become angry and nasty also. Throughout the whole thing Jesus remains calm; he remains completely in control. His patience and kindness in dealing with them is totally astonishing.

So let us begin in Chapter 8:25-26: The leadership said to him, 'who are you?' Jesus answered, "what I have told you from the beginning. About you, I have much to say, and indeed, much to condemn. But the one who sent me is truthful, and what I have learned from him, I declare to the world". Now, this should not have been so astonishing to them because they have had centuries of prophets coming to them, and they all said, "the Word of the Lord came to me and this is what the Lord says". They are used to that. So, they shouldn't be so shocked at Jesus using this language - except that they are aware of the fact that he is claiming to be much more than a prophet - that he is, in fact, claiming to be the actual Son of God. John distinguishes between that audience that Jesus was dealing with and you and me. The readers of the gospel have much more knowledge, much more understanding of the whole situation than the people actually involved in the discussion - because we have been armed since chapter one with the information that John has given to us about who Jesus is.

So, you and I - reading the text – know more than the leadership in Israel, who knows nothing about this. They don't know what you and I know, so, they are at a greater disadvantage than us. John is speaking therefore - not only on the two levels of above and below - but also the two timescales then and now. The Lord is speaking to us on the two timescales also because as the Word of God is proclaimed to us, the Lord is asking us to make a decision also. This is very important. Jesus will continue to give them the Word of the Lord, even when they reject him. It doesn't matter what they say or what they do. He will do only two things: One is the Will of God, and the other is he will love to total excess of love. By the time he dies on the cross, he will have shown the ultimate limits of love, both divine and human. That is what he came to reveal, and that is what he will do. At any cost to himself, he is going to make this manifestation. We have already seen in chapter 7 why Jesus would have something against them and also their behaviour with regard to the woman taken in adultery; it was absolutely despicable. So, he has a lot of fault that he could find in them. So, if he wanted to condemn them, he could, but he hasn't come to condemn. He has come to save.

John tells us in 8:27-28 that they failed to understand because the more they reject grace, the more blind they become. It is exactly the same thing that John is saying to you and me, that if we reject grace, we

become more blind. There is a level of blindness that you can reach where the darkness has the ability to penetrate us; it's really sad. So, Jesus tells them that he understands their difficulties because none of the things that he has offered, the new life, the new manna from heaven etc - none of this is going to happen until his hour. This is what he says in verse 28, "when **you** have lifted up the Son of Man" - this means the leadership who are going to bring this about – "when you have lifted up the Son of Man, you will then know that **I AM HE**. Now, when we arrive at the cross and witness Jesus dying on the cross, it is in his death that his own executioner said, "that man is a Son of God!" Even the pagan Roman centurion could recognise it. John is going to say that it is in the extraordinary mystery of Jesus being lifted on the cross and afterwards, lifted into glory, that the Gentiles will see. But unfortunately, many of the Jews will persist in their own belief. So, "it is when you have lifted up the Son of Man, you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing by myself". Now, what they are accusing him of is that he is setting himself up, that he is just simply trying to take over from the Sanhedrin. Nothing could be further from the truth! He was not interested in that. He told us back in Chapter 5:19 that "the Son can do nothing except what the Father does. He will only do what he sees the Father doing". Since they don't accept that he is the Son of the Father, he says, 'I do nothing by myself'.

So, this is a repeat lesson. He will tell them again in verse 44. "What the Father has taught me is what I preach". Now, he has said that in chapter 3:11, and in chapter 5:19. It is what the Father has given to me. But in saying that, he's not different to the prophets. All the prophets said, 'the Word of the Lord came to me'. In other words, God has spoken, and I'm giving you His Word. There was very clear instruction given to the prophets in the Old Testament, and that is, they were only to speak God's Words. They were not to add any words of their own. So, they were used to people coming to them and giving them the Word of God. That's how the scriptures came to us: the Word of God coming through the words of men. That is why we say that the scriptures are inspired. Jesus said, "what the Father has taught me, that is what I preach. He who sent me is with me". Now, he has told us this all the time. In chapter 8:16, we will hear it again in chapter 10 etc - that Jesus is not alone. for the Father is with him. The Father and the Son are working together for redemption. If you go back to Genesis, the Father and the Son work together for creation also.

The blessed Trinity are three in one. There is only one Will among them. Jesus said, "I always do what pleases him". Now, here you've got this incredible commitment to obedience. The more they press him, the more Jesus acknowledges his absolute dependence on the Father, his absolute obedience to the Father. But what John is telling us also is that this is the standard for all Christians, that we must be absolutely committed to the Will of God, and that our lives must be absolute obedience to God. We don't follow the way of the world. We don't follow any other way. We only follow him. We are going to get a very good teaching on how to do this in chapter 10. So, it is only when the mystery of the Passover is accomplished that they will have any inkling as to who he really is. The extraordinary thing is that it is in the greatest scandal of all - which is his crucifixion - that they will find out who he is! They didn't find out who he was in all his miracles and wonderful signs, even though they were demanding more and more signs.

If they only knew what you and I know, that the God of Israel, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God who Moses saw in the burning bush, the God who Moses communed with on Mount Sinai, that He is in their presence in the likeness of man, that God has humiliated himself to the absolute zenith in order to reach us. Saint Paul speaks about that very eloquently in his letter to the Philippians, Chapter 2:6-11. “His state was divine, but He didn’t cling to his equality with God. He became as man. And even as men are, he was humbler yet, even to accepting death”. That is the absolute humiliation of God. Our minds can’t take that on board, the extraordinary humiliation that that is. So, if they only knew that this was the person speaking to them, they would fall down in adoration. But instead of that, they blaspheme and insult him. It is really incredible.

So, we move on then to the next stage of this dialogue, and that is that in chapter 4, the woman said, “are you greater than our Father Jacob?” Jesus showed them that he was greater than the Father Jacob. In chapter 6, “are you greater than Moses?” And now we come to, “are you greater than Abraham?” They are, in fact, making a step-by-step discernment to find out just how great Jesus is claiming to be. Let me read it for you first; this is 8:31-59: **the subject is ‘My Father and your Father’**. It is a very important moment, not only in this dialogue, but also in the scriptures, because now we are bringing the scriptures to a single point. We are taking the whole history of the people of Israel to find out can it all be encapsulated into one point? The answer is Yes! But before we start the discussion you have to understand that the word ‘Father’ in English comes from a Hebrew word which means ‘my origin, where I come from’. That is terribly important. My Father is where I come from. We know biologically that the seed comes from the father; if the seed doesn’t come from the Father, you don’t exist.

So here it is, “where do you come from?” Is **the issue**. Can’t you see where we’re going with this? They said, ‘who are you?’ The next thing is, ‘where do you come from?’ We are bringing this right back to its beginning, its absolute origin. Listen to this. “To the Jews who believed in him, Jesus said, If you make my Word your home, you will indeed be my disciples. You will learn the truth, and the truth will make you free. They answered, we are descended from Abraham. We’ve never been slaves of anyone. What do you mean? You will make us free”. I’m going to stop there because this is a long dialogue. It is fascinating. So, the question of Fatherhood, of course, has to be dealt with on the two levels that run right through this particular gospel. They are going to be talking about a fatherhood that comes from natural descent; they are the descendants of Abraham. It was an incredible honour for them to be the children of Abraham, to be the descendants of the man who had begun the whole movement of monotheism in the world, the first one to believe in one true God, the living God.

Abraham came out of the darkness of paganism with all the false gods that they had, and all the occultic spirits that were bringing them into greater darkness. This one man emerges from that and begins to believe in the one God. Since that is so, God said to him, ‘I will give you an inheritance. I will give you a people. And it is through that people, I will bring the knowledge and understanding **of who I am** to the rest of the world. So, it was an incredible privilege to be a descendant of Abraham. But Jesus has been telling us, -and John has been telling us (the readers) since chapter one, that Jesus wants to give us a greater Fatherhood. So, no matter how great Abraham is and his descendants and his whole national thing – that

is wonderful on earth. But Jesus wants to make us **children of God**, children of the Father, and therefore that our sonship will be eternal and our home will be heaven, not just earth.

No matter how great Abraham is all of his descendants had to leave the earth, and where were they to go afterwards? It really depended on their relationship with God as to where they went. So, we are talking about two types of Father and two types of son also. On earth, at the time of Jesus, being children of Abraham really mattered, but in heaven, only the children of God matter. Whether you are a child of Abraham or not, didn't make any difference. So, **the searing light** of the Beloved Son of the Father is now striking very deep. It is striking at the very heart of their self-understanding as a people of God, and they resented that very much, so things are going to get nasty. The gloves are off, and this battle is going to continue to the death - somebody's death! There are three possible fathers that you can have. One is God, the heavenly Father, who gives life, truth, freedom and eternal happiness to everyone. You can have Abraham as a father and be a member of the chosen people and therefore be part of the privilege of bringing the knowledge of God to the ends of the earth.

There is a third father, a sinister one, and he is called Satan. He is the father of lies, deception and murder. He is the ruler of the realm of below, whereas God is the ruler of the realm of above. Now, it is possible to have two fathers among those three, but you can't have the three. You can be a child of God and a child of Abraham, or you can be a child of Satan and a child of Abraham, but you can't have the three Fathers. This is what is going to be clarified in this discussion. Jesus will make an argument that might be different to the way you and I think: "by their fruits, you will know them". Let's put it in a modern way. Supposing I say to you, I am a Christian, you can say to me, could we prove that in court? Is there enough evidence to prove that in court? It is one thing to make a claim; quite another matter altogether to prove it. Jesus would say, 'if Frances is a Christian, you will know it by her fruits. You will know it by the life that she lives. You will know it by her relationship with God, and you will know it by her relationship with her neighbour'.

Can you see where he is going with this? So, there is no point in just making a claim you can't prove. There is a second level at which Jesus is going to argue which reflects the way children were reared at the time of Christ. It should be the way now, but I think things are different. And that is, a son should be like his father, that the child should accept the father as a model - that the child should go the way of the Father. Therefore, if you are a Son of God, you will be like God, and you will go the way of God. This is the way Jesus is arguing, and we have to see it from his angle. So, the background for this discussion is that Abraham and his descendants were asked to be a blessing to the ends of the earth. This is what God said to Abraham in Genesis 22:17-18, that "all the nations of the earth would bless themselves by your descendants". But as history wore on, the chosen people lost the sense of responsibility to be a blessing to other nations; they only remembered their privileges.

It is very human to do that. So, Jesus reminds them in verse 31 that they have got to make his Word their home. They have to take it in. They must internalise it, because only then they would be like him who is like the Father. In his Word is the truth. Now, **what is truth?** Truth is reality as it really is. There is a modern heresy that speaks about my truth and your truth, which means that we make it up. That is not

true. I'm sitting here at a table, and if I tell you that this table is a bed, there is something wrong with me. The reality is that it is a table. It is only when I'm dealing with reality that I can actually go forward. If I decide that this object is something else, then I have gone wrong. This is what Jesus is saying to them, that **only the truth**, the reality, as it really is, can set them free. Jesus has been telling them that since the very beginning of his ministry, and John has been telling us that since the prologue. He has been telling us who Jesus is and why he came - and that this is an incredible manifestation of God's love and mercy for everybody.

In the letters of Saint Paul, you find that he - who had been such a narrow fanatical Pharisee - when he came to Christ, he understood that he had been enslaved to certain ideas. This is what he said in Galatians 5:1, "it is for freedom that Christ set us free. Stand firm then and do not allow yourselves to be bound again by the yoke of slavery". Now, all of them knew that the law of Moses was very burdensome. There were so many rules. It governed absolutely everything. It's a bit like Islam today, that absolutely governs every movement they make. It is ferociously burdensome. Jesus wanted to set us free from these burdens and to be like Adam and Eve were before the fall - that we would be absolutely free within ourselves; free to love and serve God and free to love and serve our neighbour also - and to love and serve the planet that we live on so that it survives as well. In Romans 8:2, he says that it is through Christ Jesus that "the law of the spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death".

So, Paul came to understand what Jesus was saying that only the truth can set you free. But of course, these people who are listening to Jesus are on the wrong level. So, they hear 'slavery' in a different manner, and they react. They answered in verse 33, "we are descendants of Abraham. We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean by making us free?" I always laugh when I read that text. It is because the history of this people started out with slavery in Egypt. After their long journey to the Promised Land, they managed to keep the land for about 400 years. Afterwards, they were enslaved successively to Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and now Rome! And they say, "we have never been enslaved to anyone! It is simply a declaration of national pride. What they are probably trying to say to Jesus is that in spite of all of these nations trying to enslave us, we have managed to keep our faith, to remain faithful insofar as they could to the religion of Moses.

But of course, that's not what Jesus is talking about at all! He is not talking about that. He has to take them from this low level of national politics right up into the spiritual realm where he operates. It is in the spiritual realm that the Kingdom of God exists where he is the Ruler, King and Shepherd. He says to them very simply in verse 34, "but anyone who sins is a slave". That is a most fantastic statement. You could write a book just on that one line alone, because Jesus says that you can have your national freedom or slavery. You can have your political stuff, but it is what's going on inside of yourself that matters. Many a person who spent years in prison were completely free people because they were free inside, and the people who were jailing them were the very ones who were unfree. So, we have to go and look at what we mean by slavery and freedom, and we will do that in our next episode. Thank you for listening.

INTERVAL

Welcome to our Sharing on St. John's Gospel. We continue sharing on the great dialogue that Jesus had with the Jewish leaders in the temple in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles. The subject has come up to the point of discussing what slavery and freedom is, because Jesus has told them that if they take his Word and if they internalise it and make it their own and live it, that they will become free. So, they then gave him this big nationalistic statement that they had never been slaves of anybody, even though their nation had been enslaved by Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and now Rome, they were not free people in any political sense. But of course, Jesus wasn't speaking at this level. Jesus was speaking at the higher level. I want to read 8:34-36, "Jesus said, I tell you most solemnly". He only uses that expression when he is saying something extremely important. "Everyone who commits sin is a slave". We are still in chapter 8, and we remember the disgraceful behaviour of the leadership bringing a guilty woman to Jesus and misusing the law to try and kill her and to use her to kill Jesus. I mean, what is sin? Jesus said, Everyone who sins is a slave. That means true freedom is internal. It's not external. You can be in jail and become somebody very free. Externally, you are not free, but internally, you are. I have met not only very free people in jail, I've met very holy people as well, because they allowed their incarceration to bring them from the level of below to the level of above. Jesus said in verse 35, "now, the slave's place in the house is not assured. But the son's place is assured. So, if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed". Jesus is speaking in the context of the Roman Empire, of course, and there it was perfectly normal to have slaves. A slave in the house could be thrown out any time, and they were often killed also. So, the slave's place in the house was not assured. But if you were the son and heir of the father, your place was assured. So, it is through that image that Jesus is saying to them that being a son of Abraham is not enough.

They need to become sons of God, and they need to be heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven. The only person who can give them this privilege is Jesus. Nobody else can do it. He has come to the earth to offer us this divine sonship, and he himself is going to pay for this privilege so that we can all have it. So, Jesus is saying to them, Listen, there's only one way, and that one way is through Christ. Everything for us is through him, with him, and in him, as the church declares in the Eucharist all the time. There is only one Mediator. There is only one Saviour. So, 'if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed'. The Father will accept whatever the Son decides. Jesus says that they have a need to reach out and accept the gift that God is offering to them. But you see, we are free. So, he is telling them that although they claim Abraham as their Father, they don't behave like him!

Watch this. Verse 37, "I know that you are descended from Abraham, but in spite of that, you want to kill me - now, premeditated murder is a serious breaking of the Fifth Commandment. He said, "because nothing I say has penetrated into you. What I, for my part, speak of is what I have seen with my Father". Now, that brings you right back to Chapter 1:18, that Jesus was in the bosom of the Father for all eternity. Therefore, he is the only one who can reveal him, the only one who can teach the truth. "But you, he said, You put into action the lesson that you learn from your father. Now, do you remember the three Fathers? You could be a child of Abraham and a child of God: two Fathers. You could be a child of Abraham and a child of Satan, meaning that he is the one you are following: that is what Jesus is saying now. They give a very negative response to him. What Jesus is saying here is he is trying to remind us of something.

I keep on telling you that what you read here has its foundation in the Old Testament: if you go back to Abraham, because that is the person we're talking about, Abraham had two sons. The first born was Ishmael who rejected his father's faith. He was born of the slave girl; both the slave girl and her son were eventually thrown out of the house; their place was not assured. The second Son was Isaac who was the chosen one. He did choose his father's faith and his father's God, and he was the one to whom the inheritance was given. So, the son's place was sure; the slave's place wasn't sure. They know this from their history, and it is something that's very familiar to them. Jesus is saying this works on the spiritual level as well - when he said they needed to be set free from slavery. They must grasp that Jesus is saying that sinners are slaves, and therefore, their place in the Kingdom of God is not sure. Believers, the ones who have internalised the Gospel - the ones who are trying to live it - the ones who are living on the level of above - their place is sure. We heard that very clearly in chapter 6 - that he would give us eternal life.

So, we are talking about 'slaves are sinners'. We have shifted from the below level to the higher level. It is clear that some people are enslaved to money, sex, alcohol, power, all kinds of stuff. They are enslaved. They are not free. The only people who are truly free are the ones who are free to love and to serve others. Real freedom is in the heart, and real slavery is in the heart also. But if you happen to be a slave and a sinner, Jesus came to set the sinners free. You saw that in the whole story of the sinful woman and the sinful accusers as well at the beginning of Chapter 8. (You realise how important that text was at the beginning of Chapter 8). This dialogue between Jesus and the leadership would be very difficult to follow if we didn't have the case of how Jesus dealt with that woman who is a sinner and with all the accusers who are sinners. We will hear this dialogue continue in Chapter 9 also. Jesus said, I came to save sinners, but you have to acknowledge that you're a sinner, and you have to acknowledge you need a Saviour.

They are going to give him a very nasty reaction. They said, this is verse 39, "Our Father is Abraham. And Jesus said, But if you were Abraham's children, that means his spiritual children, you would do as Abraham did". In other words, the child must be like the Father, and like Isaac, you must accept your father's faith, and you must accept your father's spirituality as well. "But as it is, Jesus said, You want to kill me when I tell you the truth, as I have learned it from God". I'm not telling you something I've made up. I'm telling you something that comes from its source - that is in God. "But what you are doing is what your father does". Jesus is moving in on them, and it's not going to be nice. They will react very nastily now, "and they said we were not born of prostitution. We have one Father, and he is God". Now, there are two levels on which you can hear their reaction to him. To be born of prostitution in the Old Testament sense is that you have been involved in slavery to idol worship and all the evil and immorality that goes with it.

But John is saying something to us here, that the leadership are saying to Jesus, there is something strange about your birth. This means that the leadership had inquired as to where Jesus was born, and they had been told that he was born of a virgin, but of course, they don't accept that. So, if they don't accept that he has been born of a virgin, then you could hear them saying, 'We were not born of prostitution!'. In other words, we are the true sons of Abraham. They haven't got the courage to say, 'you're not'. It is a very nasty response that they give him. When they say that they are the true children of

God, in a sense, they are right because when you go back to the Book of Exodus, Israel had become the first-born son of God. This is in Exodus 4:22, where Moses told Pharaoh that God wanted his first-born Son to worship him in the wilderness. But it was the entire nation that was God's first-born son. Israel was God's first-born son among the nations. What Jesus is revealing is that what was offered to the nation in the past is now offered to each individual now.

If I can put it this way, each one of us is a nation in God's eyes, so, all the privileges that was given to the nation before are now given to the individual. They felt that it didn't matter being a sinner since they belonged to the nation - the whole nation will be saved anyway. Jesus says, No! Every single one of you needs personally to be saved. Every single one of you needs personally to become a son of God so that your place in heaven is assured. Of course, the principle is that you behave like your Father. But since Jesus is saying that their behaviour is wrong and sinful, well, then the father is not in heaven. It's the other father! You could be a child of Satan and a child of Abraham. That was the other alternative. Jesus says to them in 42, "if God were your Father, you would love me". In other words, if you had a true relationship with God, you would recognise the Son. Let me put that very simply to you. When we meet fellow believers, don't we recognise them? Don't we recognise the same life there? Don't we recognise the same grace there? In a sense, regardless of their address, colour, sex, race or language, we recognise them. I have travelled in many countries, and you feel completely at home when you're going to the church, because the church is the same everywhere. We recognise each other. That is what Jesus is saying, that if people have this relationship with the Father, we recognise the sons; we recognise the children. that recognition is deep within our being. It's not something that somebody has to tell you. We don't need a long dissertation to say that these people are okay because this, that, and the other. Not at all. It's an immediate recognition. That is what Jesus is saying. 'If God were your Father, you would recognise me because you would have the same spirit, "since I have come from God. Yes, I have come from him". I don't know how Jesus kept his patience. I think his patience dealing with these people is fascinating. It is just that we don't look at Jesus being extremely patient and kind.

"And he said, I have truly come from him. Not that I came because I chose it, but I was sent by him". So, Jesus is saying, Look, I am the Father's emissary. I am his representative. I am the one that was sent with a mission, and I act in obedience to him. He is behaving with extraordinary humility here. Then in verse 43, he says, "do you know why you cannot take in what I'm saying? It's because you don't even understand my language". Now, those of us who walk the ways of the Spirit, the ways of above, know that there are many people around us who would have no idea of the language that we speak. If they are living on the level of below and you are speaking about the level of above about the things of the Kingdom of God, they would have no idea what you're speaking about. So, when Jesus says, "you don't even understand my language", he is saying, 'you are completely outside of this mystery'. I think that is very sad.

So, if they are outside of the mystery, then verse 44, Jesus comes plain. He says, "the devil is your Father". That means that the origin of the darkness that's in you comes from there. The origin of the sin that you are manifesting is there. The origin of your absolute disobedience to God is there. What Jesus says, The devil is your father, and you prefer to do what your father does". Now, what did the devil do?

Back before time, he instigated the rebellion of the angels. He has been fighting God since the rebellion of the angels. We find out in Revelation Chapter 12 that when they were banished from heaven because anyone who sins is a slave. Satan sinned against God in the heavens, and the slave is thrown out. When Satan was thrown out of heaven he did not go to hell, he came to the earth! The only hellfire and damnation sermon I ever preach is to say that if Satan doesn't want to go to Hell, I wouldn't recommend it! He knows what it's like. Take one leaf from his book, Hell is not worth going there. When he was sent to Hell, he came to the earth in order to do as much damage as he possibly could upon the earth.

So, this is the judgement that Jesus gives to them, that you are in the wrong place; you are at the wrong level; you are taking your cue from the wrong leader. You are going in the wrong direction; you are going to end up in the wrong destiny. Now, let's go back to Chapter 3:16. "God so loved the world - that is the sinful, sinning, rebelling world that these men actually belong to – "He loved the world so much that he sent his only Son not to condemn the world, but that through him, the world might be saved". So why is Jesus saying this to them? You have to see Jesus here in the position of a doctor. A doctor has examined me and has said, Look, I'm very sorry, but there's this thing wrong with you. Is the doctor condemning me? No. The doctor is saying, If you do something about this, you can continue to live. So, if Jesus shows them what is wrong in their lives they can turn to him as the only Saviour; they can repent, and receive life. It's not all over.

Jesus wants to unmask the real enemy who is not, in fact, the Jewish leaders. People who suffer from anti-Semitism have completely misunderstood the scriptures. These people were not the enemy. Saint Paul tells us quite clear in Ephesians 6 that "the enemy is not flesh and blood. The enemy are the spirits and the powers of darkness in high places". So, this is what Jesus says about Satan. Satan was a murderer from the beginning. Now, from the beginning means before time. He has never been grounded in the truth. There is no truth in him at all. When he lies, he is drawing from his own store because he is a liar and he is the father of lies. Truth Himself is speaking, yet millions on earth are caught up in the occult; they are trapped in lies and deceit believing the most extraordinary things. So here is a comparison between the two opponents. The enemy is not the Jewish leadership. Not at all. It is because of their stubbornness against Jesus that they happen to land themselves in the wrong field.

There are two rulers in contention to rule the earth: one is Jesus and the other is Satan. Now, Satan came to the earth after the fall of the angels, so, he has been ruling the earth because of the sinfulness of human beings. Every time we sin, we give Satan power. Every time we resist sin and we make reparation for sin; every time we choose grace, and life, we are giving Jesus power to rule the earth. So, we have the casting vote. That's the extraordinary thing in this battle. Satan is deceit; Jesus is the truth. Satan is hate; Jesus is love. Satan is evil; Jesus is good. Satan is darkness; Jesus is light. This has been made very clear in the last eight chapters of John's Gospel.

So, demons are the real enemies, and the reason why Jesus is being so patient, kind and so loving - even though he is getting a vicious negative reaction from the leadership - is because **he is going to die to try and save them!** He wants every single one of them saved. He loves them infinitely. Jeremiah 31:3, "I have loved you with an everlasting love, and my love is constant". God loves us not because we're

good, not because we're bad, but because we are his. We are His idea. Here is a mystery that I cannot explain; that God decides that this Earth was not complete without you and me; that you and I are an essential part of the mystery of this planet that we call Earth. Now go back to the Lord and ask him to explain that. It's the most wonderful thing, the most incredible thing. So, in this battle that's going on, Jesus says, 'My enemy is Satan. Please don't join his army'. The real battle is 'who will rule the Earth'?

Jesus has been talking about truth, life, grace, living water, living bread and the Kingdom of God etc. Now, he turns to them and says the most incredible thing in 8:46. "Can any one of you convict me of sin?" The only person who ever stood in public throughout the entire history of the human race and was able to say that, absolutely, was Jesus Christ. The leadership are going to make all kinds of accusations against him, **but they know he has not sinned**. They actually know that. They try to make him sin, and they don't succeed. In the Synoptic Gospels, in Matthew 4 and Luke 4, we are told that Satan tried to make Jesus sin because Satan tries to pull everybody down. When we sin, Satan has a victory. He gets more power. When Jesus said, Who can convict me of sin? He was saying, I alone am the solution to planet Earth because Satan has no power over me. He will tell us this in chapter 12. Satan has no power over him. Why? Because he does not sin! The more you and I choose grace, choose life, reject sin, reject darkness, reject unbelief; the more we choose the good and reject the evil, the more we enter the Kingdom of God, and the stronger we are in the Kingdom of God resulting in less power that Satan has over us. That's an incredible lesson that Jesus teaches us here, and we must not lose it. It's very important. So, in that one statement, 'who can convict me of sin?' Jesus has said so much. No wonder the Samaritans said, 'he is the saviour of all the world'. They stumbled on the real truth.

But of course, the leadership is going to throw false accusations against Jesus. They say to him in verse 48, "now we know that you are possessed". They told him before that he was possessed, and he was a Samaritan as well, which is the same accusation. He said, you are either full of God or full of Satan. These people, speaking in darkness, said, 'you are full of Satan'. Jesus had said, 'I am full of God'. We will continue this discussion in our next episode.

Goodbye. God bless you.