



Saturday 2nd week in Lent

Meanwhile some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, 'Isn't this the man they want to kill? And here he is, speaking openly, and they have nothing to say to him! Can it be true the authorities have recognised that he is the Christ? Yet we all know where he comes from, but when the Christ appears no one will know where he comes from.'

*Then, as Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he cried out:
You know me and you know where I came from.
Yet I have not come of my own accord: but he who sent me is true;
You do not know him, but I know him
because I have my being from him and it was he who sent me.*

They wanted to arrest him then, but because his hour had not yet come no one laid a hand on him.

There were many people in the crowds, however, who believed in him; they were saying, 'When the Christ comes, will he give more signs than this man has?' Hearing that talk like this about him was spreading among the people, the Pharisees sent the Temple guards to arrest him. Then Jesus said:

*For a short time I am with you still; then I shall go back to the one who sent me.
You will look for me and will not find me; where I am you cannot come.*

So the Jews said to one another, 'Where is he intending to go that we shall not be able to find him? Is he intending to go abroad to the people who are dispersed among the Greeks and to teach the Greeks? What does he mean when he says: "You will look for me and will not find me; where I am, you cannot come?"'

John 7: 25-36

You will look for me and will not find me; where I am you cannot come

There is a broad consensus among scholars that the writer of John did not know of the existence of the other gospels. Assuming that this is so, then the points in common between the two traditions testify to deep roots of at least certain elements of the tradition. Like the whispering game, however, the end of the process displays a transformation of the message, intensified when the one giving the final transmission is also using the story to illustrate a special agenda. Mark, followed by Matthew and Luke, record how Jesus spoke of his death long before the event. That same tradition surfaces here in John though in a radically different form. In John, Jesus' prediction plays a significant role. Jesus is never the victim of circumstances and powerful opposition: he is always completely in control (and through him, God is in control). Nothing happens, even his death, which is not determined by his and his Father's will. The prediction is a statement of what is going to happen because this is what he wills to happen.

Is it true to say that the great divide between a secular and Christian perspective on the world is not whether God exists but whether God is in control?