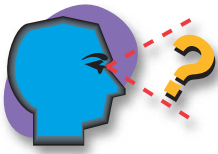


John



Responses to the Questions

NOTE: BE SURE TO ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS YOURSELF BEFORE READING THE ANSWERS IN ORDER TO MAKE THE MOST OF THIS STUDY.

Read John 7:1-53

1. The Feast of the Tabernacles celebrates the erection of the Tabernacle, or the Tent of Meeting—the Tent Israel carried with it in the wilderness. The Tabernacle, or Tent, given to Moses on Mt. Sinai was the Dwelling Place of God and contained the Ark of the Covenant. This Tent, or Tabernacle, served as the center of the priestly work of the nation and was the place where sacrificial offerings took place. The Feast of the Tabernacles is also called the Feast of Booths in commemoration of the Israelites camping in booths during their journey through the desert (cf. Leviticus 23:41-44), out of which God brought them into bountiful harvest. Ultimately, the Feast of the Tabernacles is a feast that commemorates God's faithfulness to his people (His willingness to remain always with his people Israel), as well as a reminder of Israel's ongoing need for cleansing from sin and her call to be a priestly people to the nations.
2. Many Scripture passages record doubt amongst Jesus' followers. Some of the most notorious verses are: Matthew 28:16-17; Matthew 14:27-33, and Mark 16:9-11. Matthew 28:16-17 records how the apostles doubted Christ even though they worshipped him as the resurrected Lamb of God. Matthew 14:27-33 explains how Peter's doubt in Christ nearly caused him to drown as he walked across the water, and Mark 16:9-11 details how the apostles did not believe Jesus was resurrected from the dead despite his telling them that the temple (i.e., his body) would be raised after three days. Reading the accounts of doubt amongst Jesus' followers help us to understand it is not always easy to believe in him. In order to facilitate our belief, God gives us signs, or sacraments, which impart grace to us and serve as living symbols of his presence among us. The sign of the Old Testament Tabernacle, Tent, or Dwelling Place of God amongst the Israelites prefigures the ultimate Tabernacle, or Temple—the Body of Christ, given to us in the sacrament of the Eucharist. In John 6:30-33, the Jews demand a sign from Christ in order that they may believe he is the Son of God. The sign Christ says he is going to give them is living bread from heaven, i.e., the Eucharist, his Body and Blood.
3. Jesus had not yet completed the work of his Father and knew it was not his time to die. As many of the religious leaders already hated him, he was to continue the work of his Father without bringing too much trouble upon himself and his followers. In Greek, the word time used here means the "opportune time." In John 2:4 we heard Jesus tell his mother, Mary, as she petitioned him to provide more wine for the guests at the Wedding at Cana, "'Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come.'"
4. John 9:22 explains that anyone who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah would be excommunicated or expelled from the synagogue.



Responses to the Questions (cont.)

5. Jesus was certainly taught his prayers and had knowledge of Jewish custom and Law. He had not, however, any formal training as a rabbi. Thus the Jews were astounded to hear him teach as a rabbi. The statement "he has never studied" refers to the fact that Jesus had no formal training as a rabbi. *Catechism* nos. 581-582 explains that not only did Jesus teach as a rabbi, he taught "as one who had authority, and not as their scribes." He interpreted the Law in a manner consistent with Old Testament Law, but also gave the Law its "ultimate interpretation in a divine way." In other words, he presented with divine authority the ultimate interpretation of the Law—obviously an interpretation shocking to the Jews.
6. *Catechism* No. 574 explains that some believed Jesus to be of demonic possession because of some of his acts, i.e., expelling demons, forgiving sins, healing on the Sabbath day, etc. As further reference, the *Catechism* points to Mark 3:22, John 8:48; 10:20, which also refer to claims of Jesus' being possessed by demons.
7. In verse 30, we are told the officers sought to arrest Jesus but did not lay hands on him because his hour had not yet come. In verse 33, Jesus tells the people when he shall depart from them. In so doing, Jesus announces that he will not be taken but will hand himself over to the authorities when it is time. Despite the fact that the Pharisees think they can control Jesus and his future, Jesus makes known he is in complete control of his destiny.
8. In verses 37-39, Jesus speaks of water and the Spirit, specifically about providing water to those who thirst. On the "great day" of the Feast when Jesus could have spoken about anything whatsoever, he chose to speak about drinking from rivers of running water that shall flow from his heart. The readings from Exodus and Numbers refer to the rock that produced water for the Israelites to drink. Ezekiel refers to a temple from which waters flowed. In verses 37-39, Jesus likens himself to the Temple in Ezekiel's vision. He is the True Temple and his heart is the Holy of Holies. The waters of the Feast of the Tabernacles, the water flowing from the rock of Moses, from the rock on which the visionary Temple of Ezekiel is founded, flow from Jesus' heart. 1 John 5:6-8 tells us that Jesus came "through water and blood." This passage refers to both Jesus' baptism and Jesus' shedding of blood by his death on the cross. We are told in these verses that there are three witnesses, "the Spirit, the water, and the blood," all of which are the source of the sacrament of baptism. In verses 37-39, John mentions that all who believe in Jesus shall receive the Spirit once he is glorified. It is the water that flows from Christ's heart (John 19:34-35) that is the source of the living water of baptism that the Feast of Tabernacles and the prophecy of Ezekiel mysteriously prefigure.
9. That the Jewish authorities were divided about the stance to take toward Jesus. Some of them could not help but believe in him, while others could not understand how he could possibly be the Messiah.



Responses to the Questions (cont.)

10. As we recall from Lesson Four, Nicodemus went to Jesus by night so as not to be identified as having gone to see Jesus. In coming by night, Nicodemus was trying to escape the oppression that might befall him by the Temple elite if they knew he had gone to see Jesus. In verse 50 of today's reading, however, Nicodemus openly questions the Pharisees about judging Jesus. Notice John tells us that Nicodemus is "one of them." As we read in John 12: 42-43 in response to question nine, many of the authorities were secret disciples of Jesus. Nicodemus, by this time, was one of them.