

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Lesson 7 - Study Questions

John 7: 1-52

DAY ONE

1. What thoughts from last week's reflection or commentary inspired you, especially in regard to the Eucharist? Record some thoughts to share with your group.

Read John 7:1-9

2. In last week's lesson Jesus taught in Capernaum. As Chapter 7 opens, the author states "after this Jesus moved about within Galilee". For what reason did Jesus not wish to travel in Judea (verse 1)?

3. The Feast of Tabernacles (also called the Festival of Booths) was near (verse 2). This was one of the three most important pilgrim festivals held in Jerusalem. Read the first two pages of Chapter 7 of the McBride commentary and note a couple of interesting facts regarding this festival.

NOTE: For more on the Festival of Booths, refer to Leviticus 23:33-43 and Zechariah 14:16-18.

4a. Jesus' "brothers" (a term which in Semitic usage could apply to children of the same parents, extended family, or even close friends) encouraged Him to go to the festival. Complete the reasons they stated that He should leave and go to Judea (verses 3-4) and the underlying problem with their faith (verse 5).

So that your disciples also may see

No one works in secret

If you do these things

For his brothers

b. Jesus responded saying “My time is not yet here, but the time is always right for you” (verse 6). What do you think Jesus was telling them about their disbelief and His plans?

5a. According to verse 7, the world did not hate the “brothers” because they had not given it a reason to. On the other hand, why does the world hate Jesus?

b. Jesus then told them to go to Jerusalem for the Feast. What reason did He give them for not going with them and what did He do instead (verses 8-9)?

6. CONNECTION: In today’s lesson we read of the disbelief of Jesus’ family and their attempt to redirect Him from His plan ... God’s plan. Perhaps their motives were good, or perhaps Jesus’ teachings were too hard for them to accept. They may even have been discouraged by the departure of many of Jesus’ followers. Describe a time when you doubted a family member or a close friend or thought they were following the wrong path (and told them so). Looking back at your motives, would you do this again? Share some thoughts with your small group.

Read and record Philippians 2:3 and write a prayer today asking God to help you look for the truth and goodness in others, especially those closest to you.

DAY TWO

Read John 7:10-24

7a. What did Jesus do after His brothers went to the festival (verse 10)?

b. As we learned in John 7:1, the Jews were looking for Jesus. In addition, there was also much murmuring about Jesus among the crowds (verses 11-12). What two contradictory opinions did they have (end of verse 12)?

8a. Why would no one speak openly of Jesus (verse 13)?

b. Perhaps the people feared “guilt by association.” Was there a time when you, too, were concerned about being associated with someone who was “unusual” or different? Very briefly describe the situation and whether you would feel the same way now.

NOTE: As you study the Gospel of John you will see that the author often refers to “the Jews” in a negative manner. We should never take John’s negative references (mostly to the Jewish leadership of the time) as a reason for bitterness or prejudice against the Jewish people.

9a. What did Jesus do when the feast (the festival) was half over (verse 14)?

b. Those in the temple were amazed and wondered how Jesus knew scripture “without having studied” (verse 15). How did Jesus respond to their amazement (verse 16)?

10a. Jesus explained how the people could differentiate between one who spoke on his own or one whose teaching came from God. In your own words, who is truthful and has no “wrong in him” (verse 18)?

b. Identify either a historical person or living person who does not (or did not) seek his own glory in his teachings, but rather God’s glory.

11a. Jesus continued His defense by referring to Moses, who had foretold His coming. Jesus told them they did not keep Moses’ law. What did He ask them at the end of verse 19?

b. Read and record the crowd’s answer in verse 20.

12a. In verse 21 Jesus reflected on His “work” that had amazed them, the healing of the lame man on the Sabbath (John 5). What religious “work” allowed on the Sabbath did Jesus compare to His healing of the lame man (verses 22-23)?

b. What was Jesus’ final caution to the Jewish people (verse 24)?

13. CONNECTION: It was a dangerous time in Israel for Jesus and those who followed Him. There was doubt and division among the Jews ... was Jesus a good man or a deceiver? Some were even afraid to speak about Him at all. Those in authority were looking for an opportunity to kill Jesus.

Imagine what it would have been like to have lived at that time and been one of the following people: Pharisee, wife of a Pharisee, Rabbi, woman of a small village, Roman guard, disciple of Jesus. If you were that person, what would it have taken for you to believe in Jesus? Could you have “gone against the crowd”?

Read and record Matthew 10:22 and write a short prayer that your belief in Our Lord Jesus Christ remains strong and enduring.

DAY THREE

Read John 7:25-31

14. Jesus continued to preach in the temple in Jerusalem. Some of the people were surprised that He was allowed to speak openly in the temple since it was known that the authorities wanted to kill Him. What question did this prompt (end of verse 26)?

15a. In the time of Jesus, some people believed that the Messiah would just appear out of nowhere. How does this relate to what the people said in verse 27?

b. The messianic prophecy in Micah 5:1 (numbered 5:2 in many translations) predicted the birthplace of the Messiah. From that verse what town is mentioned?

16a. Jesus “cried out” to the people in the temple, “You know me and you know where I am from.” What did He cry out after that (second sentence of verse 28)?

b. What emotions could the description of Jesus “crying out” convey? In other words, what do you think Jesus was feeling while teaching in the temple that day and why?

17a. Jesus declared again that He was from God and sent by God (verse 29). What happened next and what was the result (verse 30)?

b. Many believed in Jesus. Put their comments from the end of verse 31 in your own words to explain the rationale for their belief.

18. CONNECTION: Everywhere Jesus went He captured audiences with His teaching. He spoke the truth with the authority given Him by His Father. Nowadays we are faced with “false journalism” and claims of all sorts. Not everything we hear is the truth or is something we should believe. Describe a time when a teacher or speaker spoke convincingly to you. With what methods did you determine that his or her message was truthful and worth listening to?

Read 1 John 4:1. Begin your prayer praising God that you are a recipient of His wisdom through the study of His word.

DAY FOUR

Read John 7: 32-36

19. Today’s lesson begins by listing, for the first time in the Gospel of John, two of the groups of Jewish authorities who opposed Jesus: The Pharisees and the chief priests. What did they do and what was the reason given (verse 32)?

20a. Jesus clearly knew that His time on earth was limited. Complete the following enigmatic phrases from verses 33-34 that demonstrate this.

I will be with you

And then I will go

You will look for me

Where I am

b. Consider and describe a reason that Jesus would be sharing this information with His followers at this time.

21. The idea that Jesus was going to a spiritual and not a physical place was confusing to the crowd. What was their first question in the first part of verse 35?

22. In the second sentence of verse 35, the crowd continued to ponder what Jesus was telling them about His leaving them. What question did they ask each other?

23. What is the “Dispersion” (also known as “diaspora”)? Refer to a dictionary or another source for your answer.

24. CONNECTION: In today’s lesson some of Jesus’ listeners missed the divine implications of His unexpected words. Some were threatened, some closed their hearts, and others were confused. Sometimes we too, miss God’s messages. Father James Martin, SJ, in his book “Jesus, a Pilgrimage” says that “God breaks into our lives in unexpected ways ... and we think ‘Why am I feeling these feelings of longing, gratitude or wonder?’ This is God beginning a conversation ... and sometimes we are grateful and sometimes we are fearful.” Can you share an experience, in which after looking back, you feel God was trying to talk to you?

Read and record 1 Corinthians 13:12 and begin your prayer today asking God to help you to open your heart to hear His voice.

“Like faith itself God reveals slowly, illuminating through experience, waiting for the ripe opportunities for acceptance.” (Author unknown)

DAY FIVE

Read John 7:37-44

25a. Today’s lesson begins on the last and greatest day of the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths. Jesus stood up in the temple area and “exclaimed.” What beautiful statements did Jesus share with the crowd (verses 37 and 38)?

b. Jesus' words echo several passages from the Old Testament. Read and record one of the following or select another verse which most speaks to you of spiritual water.

Numbers 20:11

Isaiah 44:3

NOTE: During the Feast of Tabernacles the high priest poured water over the altar as prayers were said for winter rains to sustain the people in the coming season. The feast also commemorated God giving the Jews water in the desert during their 40-year sojourn, approximately 1300 years earlier. The Spirit as water may allude to the water flowing from Jesus' side as He was "glorified" on the cross. This was a very fitting time for Jesus to proclaim Himself as "living water".

26a. In verse 39 Jesus referred to the "Spirit that those who came to believe in Him were to receive." Why had the believers not yet received the Spirit?

b. What do you think it meant that "Jesus had not yet been glorified"?

27a. After hearing Jesus' words, who did the people say He was in verse 40 and the first part of verse 41?

b. But others said, "The Messiah will not come from Galilee, will he?" From what city and of what family will the Messiah come from according to the scriptures (verse 42)?

28. According to verses 43 and 44, why was the crowd divided and what happened?

29. Today's passage ends with the phrase, "but no one laid hands on him". Explain why you think they did not "lay hands on him."

30. CONNECTION: Water is so plentiful for most of us that we often take it for granted. People in other parts of the world walk miles to retrieve it. It's no wonder that the Jews, a desert people, would hold a great festival to honor God's past blessings of water and pray for continued abundance. At the Festival of Booths, Jesus cried out that from the heart of every believer living water pours forth into the world. How would you describe this living water in your life or in the lives of Christians you know. Write some details to share with your group.

Reread John 4:14 remembering as you close in prayer that at Baptism we are immersed in this living water.

DAY SIX

Read John 7:45-52

31a. When the temple guards reported back to the chief priests and Pharisees, they were asked, “Why did you not bring him?” What reason did the guards give according to verse 46?

b. Describe a possible underlying reason that the guards would have said this.

32a. What response did the Pharisees make in verse 47?

b. In verses 47-49 what attitude did the Pharisees show toward the guards as well as the crowd?

33. This lesson mentions the chief priests and Pharisees. See what you can find out about them and make a few notes.

34a. Who was Nicodemus and what question did he pose to the Pharisees in verses 50-51?

b. Compare Nicodemus’ attitude in this passage with his attitude when he went to visit Jesus in John 3:1-2.

35a. How did the Pharisees reply to Nicodemus in verse 52?

b. Do you consider this remark to be an insult? Why or why not?

36. CONNECTION: One reason the Pharisees judged Jesus adversely was because He came from Galilee, from a class of people that were poor and uneducated. Today we might hear the term “hicks” or “hillbillies” to describe similar groups. The Pharisees didn’t think that anyone worth listening to would be from Galilee. Some people are quick to stereotype others rather than appreciating their differences, creating a barrier. Describe a time when you developed a friendship with someone from a different culture. How was your life enriched by this relationship?

Read Romans 2:11 letting this thought lead you into prayer.

Read Lesson 7 John 7:1-52 in the *Meditation and Commentary on the Gospel of John* by Rev. Alfred McBride, O. Praem. The Cornerstone Catholic Scripture Study acknowledges that scripture quotations in this study are from the New American Bible, Revised Edition (NABRE) © 2010, 1991, 1970 Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, Inc., Washington, DC. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

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