

Sent: 9/17/2014 6:28:53 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time
Subj: Last Nite's MOB Session

Men--It was so good to get together last nite for Lesson #1 in our study of the Gospel of John. We concluded that John, the son of Zebedee and "beloved disciple" of Jesus was, in fact, the author of this great book--in case there ever was doubt--and in spite of questions raised by so-called "higher critics". This conclusion is based on both "external" (historical) evidence and "internal" evidence (the writings in the gospel itself)--as expounded on by Andreas Kostenberger in his book, "Encountering John---The Gospel in Historical, Literary, and Theological Perspective." His book is already proving to be an excellent supplement to our study!

In the prologue to his gospel (John 1:1-14), John introduces Christ as God in human form. He was "with God and was God...and became flesh and dwelt among us" (and thus the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the Deity of Christ!). He was there (as part of the Godhead) "in the beginning"--when the world was created. John says, "all things came into being through Him" (1:3). We see the parallelism between John 1 and Genesis 1 John calls Jesus the "Light of the world." And in Genesis 1:3, God said: "Let there be light." Psalm 33:6 says: "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made..."

John claims to have been an "eyewitness" of His glory and majesty, and so recorded many of the things Jesus said and did in his earthly ministry. In John 20:30-31, he said there were "many other signs that Jesus performed in the presence of the disciples that are not recorded in his writing of this gospel, but these have been written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life in His name." (And so we see John's purpose in writing this book!)

The time of his writing is alleged by Rostenberger (and others) to be sometime during the period 80-90 A.D.--not long after the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jews. And thus we see an appeal to his Jewish kindred, in particular, to "turn to Jesus"--the Lamb of God--who shed His blood for the remission of sin. No more need for temple sacrifices and all the rituals that went along with it! But John's message is clearly for "all the world"! John 3:16 (our first memory verse) says: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life." This theme echoes through the pages of his writings! John 1:12 says: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."

We're going to see a lot more of John's storyline in the weeks ahead. Next week, we'll have another "overview" of John--examining the literary make-up of the book, including the "seven signs" of the Messiah; also the seven "I am" sayings of Jesus; and the responses of various people to the claims of Christ!

Your assignment is to read, re-read, the entire Gospel of John, but particularly chapters 5 through 12, which you'll find on our Lesson #2 schedule. Read also Rostenberger's excellent exposition in chapter 2 of his book. And, don't forget our new memory verse for this lesson: John 11:25--"I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never perish." (One of the "I am" passages!)

This is obviously more than a literary study! I like what Rostenberger says in his book in this regard: "Readers of Scripture are not merely dispassionate literary critics--they are existentially addressed and engaged by the biblical message and must act in response to it..." Wow! We can all agree with that one I think!

Don't forget to include prayer as part of your study time! In that regard, continue to remember Al Dobras, who is recovering from lung surgery, and Tann Pinney's wife JoAnn and her father who is in hospice care. Both Al and Tann (who is far off in Australia through the end of September) were key and active members of our past MOB group, and we expect to see them both back with us when they are able!

I will follow up this message with some specific questions to consider as you prepare for Lesson #2. You may want to include this message, and those to come--along with other handouts and information you accumulate, in the special white binder you all were given last nite.

May God bless your week!

Lowell Mininger