

Sent: Wednesday, January 07, 2015 3:14 PM

Subject: Last Nite's MOB Session

Last nite, we kicked off our MOB gathering for 2015 with Lesson #13, covering John 5:17-47, and titled "The Sabbath Controversy." John MacArthur has called this text "one of the greatest Christological discourses in Scripture." Jesus is responding to the reactions of Jewish leaders over His healing of the paralytic man on the Sabbath, and His claim to be the Son of God--and equal with His Father! But rather than retreating from these claims, Jesus uses this opportunity to further identify who He is and why He was "sent" to the earth, to do the will of His Father! The tragedy of it all was that these Jewish leaders, despite their knowledge of Old Testament Scripture and extreme "religiosity," missed it all completely--thus sparking an "escalating conflict" between them and Jesus, which John writes about in His Gospel, and which we'll see more of as we continue our study!

Among other things, Jesus talked about the "greater works" which the Father would demonstrate through Him--including giving Him the authority to give "life to whom He wishes," as well as to "execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man." He went on to say that "he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him!" Wow!

And just as Jewish law required at least two "witnesses" for a case to be established (see Deut. 17:6), Jesus too cited witnesses to testify to His identity as the Son of God. He first cited John the Baptist, who many of the Jews recognized as a prophet, and who testified that when Jesus was baptized, he (John) "beheld the heavens opened and the Spirit of God descending like a dove upon Him, and a voice out of heaven saying: this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!" And it was this same John the Baptist who later addressed Jesus as the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"--and testified that "this is the Son of God" (John 1:34).

The second witness Jesus cited was the "works" that He did! In John 5:36, Jesus said "...the very works I do--which the Father has given Me to accomplish--testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me." This coincides with the very reason John wrote his gospel: to record a select number of "signs" (works) that Jesus did, among the many others that He did, in the presence of His disciples "...so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you might have life in His name" (John 20:30-31).

Well, the third witness Jesus cited was "the Father who sent Me," which is already referred to above, and about which we'll hear more in our upcoming studies.

And, finally, the fourth witness cited is the Scripture itself! God spoke to Moses (in Deuteronomy 18:15) of how He would "raise up a prophet from among your countrymen who would speak all the words that I will command him." And remember how Nathanael responded to Jesus' call to follow Him, by telling Philip: "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote..." (John 1:45).

And so, can there be any doubt about the claims of who Jesus said He was--or why He came? And yet there still is that "belief factor," with which everyone needs to deal!

In John 5:24, which is our memory verse for this lesson, Jesus says: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed from death unto life." In his book, Kostenberger calls Jesus the "eternal life giver" and notes that just as God breathed life into the original creation, it was granted to Jesus to award eternal life to those who believe in Him! And so, this is the central message of the Gospel--and of the entire Bible--for the whole world, and one we certainly don't want to miss ourselves, or fail to share with those we love!

Well, the Gospel of John is clear! And we're going to get more into it as we move on to Lesson #14, and John 6:1-21--dealing with Jesus "feeding the 5,000, and then "walking on the water." Why did He do that? You can get the "study guide" on the IBC/MOB web site, if you don't already have it!

Hope you're all having a great start in 2015!

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