

Sent: 3/4/2015 11:20:40 P.M. Eastern Standard Time
Subj: Last Nite's MOB's Study

Last week, we "saw" how Jesus proclaimed, in John 8, that He is the "Light of the World, and that he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but have the Light of Life." And then, after eluding the grasp of the Jewish leaders, who wanted to kill Him, we saw--in last nite's lesson, from John 9--how He "just happened" to "pass by" a man who was "blind from birth." How ironic! And the scene unfolds!

It has the "drama" of a mini screen play, with the story broken down into five acts (as Kostenberger notes in his book): (1) the setting (vs. 1-5), (2) the healing (vs. 6-7), (3) the "neighbor's challenge (vs. 8-12), (4) the Pharisee's investigation (vs. 13-34), and (5) the "aftermath" (vs. 35-41).

The dialogue begins with the disciples asking Jesus an intriguing question: "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" It was a common belief in those days to think that way! Remember the story of Job? Well, Jesus answers that it was neither--but was "so that the works of God might be displayed in him!" Wow!

The "neighbors and others" then enter the scene. They couldn't believe what they were "seeing"! The man "looked" the same as he always had, but now he could see--for the first time ever! What a life-changing event! How could this be possible? Even after the man explained how Jesus had done it, they didn't know what to think, or what to say! And so they brought him to the Pharisees, who always had a lot to say!

The Pharisees were even more flabbergasted, and decided an investigation was in order! Then, after hearing the man tell his story again, they became greatly disturbed, and especially so after learning that it happened on the Sabbath--and was attributed to Jesus! "There He goes again!" They simply refused to accept it (really Him!), even though the Truth was right before their eyes! And so they went to all kinds of silly extremes to try to explain it away, or deny it! And to reject and condemn Jesus!

They called for the parents, who confirmed that this was indeed their son who "once was blind but now could see!" But, knowing that the Jewish leaders had already threatened that if anyone "confessed that Jesus was the Christ, they would be put out of the synagogue," they "just couldn't see" going there--and, instead, put the onus back on their son!

And so, the Pharisees again interrogated the son--"the man who had been blind." But the man stuck by his amazing story--not only of how Jesus had "opened his eyes," but also that "He must be from God, or He could do nothing!" In standing up to the Pharisees, he seemed to have much greater spiritual insight than any of these supposed religious leaders. The Pharisees, rather than seeing the error of their ways, and repenting, responded only with greater anger and indignation--then did as they had threatened to do by "putting him out" of the synagogue!

But in the aftermath, Jesus--knowing the man's dilemma--came to him and asked him whether he believed that He was "the Son of Man!" John records his reply! Yes! He "believed!" Then he

adds: "And he worshipped Him!" We don't know "the rest of the story," but it seems probable, to me, that the man continued to follow Jesus and ultimately became part of the "body of believers" who would change the world!

The irony of the story, as Jesus made clear, is that the man who was born blind could now see--and would now see forever!--while the Pharisees, who thought they could see, remained blinded by their own pride and hardness of heart! The implications can be clearly seen! (All of this seems somehow to be connected with the thing about "seeing" and "believing--or is it the other way around?)

There are many verses in the Bible that speak to the "light/darkness" symbolism represented by this story!

The Apostle Paul, in Colossians 1:13, wrote: "For He (God) rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sin."

And in II Corinthians 4:4, "And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

And in verse 6 of that same chapter: "For God, who said 'Light shall shine out of darkness, is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.'"

And so we "saw" in our lesson from John 9, last nite, that Jesus demonstrated that He truly was and is the "Light of the world" by giving sight to the man born blind!

We're challenged by the story to want to "confess our faith" and share with others how Jesus has become the "Light of our lives!" And we're challenged too, as Kostenberger notes, even to "see more clearly" how suffering and hardships often offer opportunities for the work of God to be displayed in our lives, and in the lives of all those committed to following, and worshipping, Him!

Well, I encourage you to get into Lesson #21, covering John 10--as the events in the life of Christ take Him to within 3 or 4 months of the cross (and Easter!), and we "see" more of the escalating conflict between Him and the Jewish leaders, and Him proclaiming Himself as "the Good Shepherd" who came into the world to "lay down His life for the sheep!"

Have a great week, men! See you Tuesday?

Lowell