

Jesus Heals Impotent Man and Attends Second Passover

April 14:21, 27 A.D.

John 5:1-18

Lame Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda Controversy Over the Sabbath Healing

Texts:

John 5:1-18,

- 1. Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews.**
- 2. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.**
- 3. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie – the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. [Waiting for the moving of the waters.]**
- 4. [From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance could be cured of whatever disease he had.]**
- 5. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.**
- 6. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”**
- 7. “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”**
- 8. Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”**
- 9. At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,**
- 10. and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”**
- 11. But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”**
- 12. So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”**
- 13. The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.**

14. Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”

15. The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

16. So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him.

17. Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”

18. For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

Commentary:

John 5:1, Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews.

I. This feast of the Jews is thought to be the Passover.

A. John 2:13, When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

B. John 5:1, “After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.”

C. John 6:4, The Jewish Passover Feast was near.

D. John 19:31, Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jews did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down.

John 5:2, Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades.

I. The “sheep gate” was the gate near the temple through which animals were brought to be sacrificed in temple worship.

II. By this gate near the temple in Jerusalem was a pool called Bethesda in the Hebrew language.

A. The five porches were colonnaded areas to which people could resort to avoid rain or strong sunlight.

B. This pool was a highly decorated and popular pool.

C. This pool was uncovered by archaeologists in 1931 – 1932 and was found to have been located 100 yards north of the temple.

John 5:3, 4, Here a great number of disabled people used to lie – the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. [From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance could be cured of whatever disease he had.]

I. Verse 4, and the end of verse 3, were added to the Greek manuscripts of the Bible several hundred years after the original was written, apparently by some scribe who wanted us to understand what the man meant by saying the water was stirred. (Verse 7)

II. This pool served as a health spa such as Warm Springs, GA, Hot Springs, AR, and Bath, England.

III. The blind, sick, halt and withered gathered there in hope of being healed.

A. Some people, including this man, believed that an angel periodically came down and moved the water in the pool.

B. These people believed that the first person who entered the pool after the moving of the water was healed of any disease he had.

C. Theoretically, no Sadducees participated in these activities because they didn't believe in angels.

D. **Hebrews 1:14, Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?**

John 5:5, 6, One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

I. One particular man was at the pool who had been infirm thirty-eight (38) years.

A. How do you think he had lived all this time?

II. Jesus saw the man and had compassion on him.

A. Jesus asked him, "Do you want to be healed?"

1. Does this seem like a foolish question to be asking this particular man?

B. Jesus offered to heal this man, this man, but Jesus would not heal him against his will.

1. Note that the man never answered Jesus' question to him.

John 5:7, “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

I. This man said that he was alone with no one to help him in his time of illness.

A. Could this have been true? If so, how had he lived for thirty-eight (38) years?

B. Without help someone else would always enter the pool before he could get there when the waters were moved by the angel.

C. But was his problem a lack of will, or a lack of ability?

D. Jesus asked him if, after all these years, he really wanted to be healed.

1. He had survived thirty-eight (38) years on the hand-outs of others.

2. Is it possible that he had made a life out of saying that he was a victim, and thus nothing was his fault?

3. Jesus was being asked to take the man’s excuse away, and Jesus wanted to know if he was ready to take responsibility for his own life.

4. We shall soon see.

John 5:8, 9, Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked. The day on which this took place was a Sabbath,

I. Jesus directed the paralytic, “Arise, take up thy bed and walk.” The man was immediately healed, took up his bed and walked.

II. This man obeyed the Lord and received the promised blessings. This is also the way it is with us! What if the paralytic had not believed and obeyed?

III. This is the second paralytic mentioned in the Gospel According to John that Jesus has healed to this point in his ministry. Matthew 9:1-18; Mark 2:1-12, Luke 5:17-26.

A. Scriptures:

1. Matthew 9:1-18, “And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city. And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men. And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his

disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.”

2. Mark 2:1-12, “And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house. And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them. And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. But there was certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within

themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.”

3. Luke 5:17-26, “And it came to pass on a certain day, as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judaea, and Jerusalem: and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to day.”

- B. In both Jesus said, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.”
- C. In both the religious hierarchy wanted to kill Jesus.
- D. In both Jesus appeals to his works as evidence of his divine authority.

John 5:10, and so the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

I. Jesus performed this miracle at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath and this opened him to violent criticism from his enemies.

A. The Jews thought it was more important to observe the law according to their interpretation than it was to heal a man of his disability.

B. Jesus did not violate the Sabbath. He did violate the Jewish idea of how the Sabbath should be observed.

1. Is there ever a day when it is wrong to do good?

2. Do we criticize those who are doing good because they are doing it in the wrong way (not the way that we would do it)?

C. Jesus was in fact Lord of the Sabbath. **Matthew 12:8, For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.**”

D. The healed man did not violate the prohibition regarding labor on the Sabbath when he carried his pallet and walked.

1. Jeremiah 17:19-27, This is what the Lord said to me: “Go and stand at the gate of the people, through which the kings of Judah go in and out; stand also at all the other gates of Jerusalem. Say to them, ‘Hear the word of the Lord, O kings of Judah and all people of Judah and everyone living in

Jerusalem who come through these gates. This is what the Lord says: Be careful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. Do not bring a load out of your houses or do any work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy, as I commanded your forefathers. Yet they did not listen or pay attention; they were stiff-necked and would not listen or respond to discipline. But if you are careful to obey me, declares the Lord, and bring no load through the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work on it, then kings who sit on David's throne will come through the gates of this city with their officials. They and their officials will come riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied by the men of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, and this city will be inhabited forever. People will come from the towns of Judah and the villages around Jerusalem, from the territory of Benjamin and the western foothills, from the hill country and the Negev, bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings, incense and thank offerings to the house of the Lord. But if you do not obey me to keep the Sabbath day holy by not carrying any load as you come through the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle an unquenchable fire in the gates of Jerusalem that will consume her fortresses.'"

2. Nehemiah 13:15, In those days I saw men in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day.

John 5:11, But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’”

I. The legalistic Jews accused the man now restored to health of violating the Sabbath by taking up his pallet and walking, thus “working” on the Sabbath.

II. Unfortunately the man, though healed, continues to try to avoid responsibility for his own actions by trying to shift any potential blame over to Jesus, the very one who had changed his life.

III. The man (unnamed) replied that the one who had authority over his illness told him to take up his bed and walk and thus it could not be possibly his “fault” that he could walk and carry his mat.

A. After all, if Jesus had not come along, he could still be sitting by the pool crippled, minding his own business.

IV. The Jews were not interested in the man’s being healed! They did not mention the healing. They were only interested in glorying in the law and finding fault with Jesus and those associated with him.

V. The healed man had rightly assumed that if Jesus could command his infirmity to depart, he could command him to take up his bed and walk.

A. The Jews did not believe that Jesus had the authority to command either one.

John 5:12, So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

I. An astounding wonder had occurred in the presence of a multitude but these Jews were not concerned with that.

A. They did not even ask the man about this healing because they did not believe such things could happen.

II. The Jews were only concerned that their petty little hair-splitting regulations had been violated . . . and these were the religious leaders of Israel.

III. They wanted to castigate not only the man who took up his bed and walked, but the one who told him to take up his bed and walk.

John 5:13, The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

I. Jesus had not announced with great fan fare, “I am Jesus and I am going to heal you.”

II. Jesus saw a suffering man, provided relief and vanished into the multitudinous crowd.

III. We must, as we have opportunity, do good to all men for the glory of God without seeking honor and accolades for ourselves.

John 5:14, Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”

I. The man later went to the temple and Jesus found him there.

A. Jesus knew where this man was, and that he was still making excuses; continuing to think of himself as a helpless victim.

1. Now we can see why Jesus asked the man if he was sure that he wanted to be healed.

B. Jesus knows where we are.

1. He know who we really are behind our masks, regardless of the walls of excuses and denials we try to hide behind.

C. If Jesus were to come looking for us, where would he find us?

1. Could be living as victims of our own types of infirmities, convinced that we are powerless to change our lots in life?
2. Are we open to allowing Jesus to change all that?

II. Jesus told this man now healed of his illness to “sin no more lest a worse thing come upon you.”

A. What was his sin?

1. Whether it was something that directly contributed to his original sickness or not, his practice of blaming others and living his life as a helpless victim had become a comfortable defense mechanism.
2. So comfortable that he continued to use it even after Jesus healed him.
3. It may or may not have put him by the pool, but it definitely kept him there.

B. Sometimes our sins cause our illnesses, but certainly not always, as some Jewish legalists believed.

C. John 9:3, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life.

D. An incredible amount of the world’s woe is the result of the world’s sins.

III. What could be worse than a thirty-eight (38) year illness?

- A. The eternal fate of the wicked is worse.
- B. A worse more painful fatal earthly illness could befall him next time!
- C. Finding out that we had wasted so many years feeling like a helpless victim when we could have found victory in Jesus would also be worse.

John 5:15, The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

I. Now the man knew who had healed him.

- A. Instead of Jesus' warning about how he was living (using excuses to try to justify himself to others), he ran off and told the Jews it was Jesus who had healed him.
- B. Why did this man identify Jesus for his enemies?
- C. Did he who had received blessings from Jesus turn against him.
- D. He may have tried to bring the Jews to a positive regard for Jesus because he continued to credit Jesus for his healing.
- E. However his identifying Jesus only resulted in the Jews intensifying their opposition of Jesus.
- F. Most likely, he was just trying to clear himself with the Jewish authorities by blaming Jesus.

John 5:16, So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jews persecuted him.

I. The Jews persecuted Jesus because he did these things on the Sabbath.

A. These people had made the word of God ineffectual by their human traditions.

B. They were adamant in refusing to admit any error on their part.

John 5:17, Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working.”

I. Jesus did not violate the Sabbath.

A. Jesus stated that God was his father and

B. both he and his Father worked on the Sabbath. If Jesus were a Sabbath breaker so was God the Father.

C. God never ceased to work in physical and spiritual matters. God the Father healed on the Sabbath and made the sun rise on the Sabbath as well.

John 5:18, For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

I. The Jews recognized that Jesus claimed to be one with the Father.

A. For this reason they thought even more about killing Jesus!

B. This is not a very godly thing to do. Religious people have done horrible, ungodly things in the name of God!

II. Jesus did not break the Sabbath. The Jews **claimed** he broke the Sabbath. He did assert his divinity!

A. **John 19:7, The Jews insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.”**

B. The break between Jesus and his enemies was now irrevocable and would continue to grow until Jesus was crucified!

III. Two early heresies are laid to rest by John (John 5:17, 18); viz.,

A. **John 5:17-18, “But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work. Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.”**

B. Arius (died 336 A.D.) who taught that Jesus was a created being.

1. But John (Chapter 1, verses 1, 2) said that in the beginning Jesus already existed in fellowship with God the Father.

C. Sabellius (circa 230 A.D.) who taught that God, the Holy Spirit, and Christ are identical, and that Jesus was not God come in the flesh.

1. But John (Chapter 14, verses 16 and 26) describes the three persons of the God-Head.

2. **John 14:16, 26, “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ... But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”**

Lame Man Healed at the Pool of Bethesda

Questions

1. Jesus went up to _____ for a _____ of the Jews which was also called _____.

2. In _____ near the _____ there is a pool which is called in _____ which is surrounded by _____.

3. At that place a great number of _____ people gathered including the _____, _____ and _____.

4. The people there believed that occasionally an _____ of the Lord would come down and _____ up the _____. The first person into the _____ after each _____ would be _____ of whatever _____ he had.

5. One man who was there had been an _____ for _____ - _____ years.

6. Jesus _____ this man had been an invalid a long time and asked him, “Do you want to _____?”

7. The invalid man said, “I have _____ to _____.” How sad this is! When have we felt this same way? But was it really true? If so, how had he been fed for thirty-eight (38) years? _____

8. Jesus said to him, “_____! Pick up your _____ and _____.” Jesus expects us to do our part by responding to his offer to heal our broken lives.

9. At _____ the man was _____. He picked up his _____ and _____. This took place on the _____.

10. The Jews condemned the man who was healed for carrying his _____ on the _____. Religious leaders condemned this man for doing what Jesus had _____ him to do!

11. The man who _____ had no idea who had _____ him.

12. Jesus later found him in the _____ and told him, “_____, you are _____ again. _____ or something _____ may _____ to _____.”

13. Was this man’s sickness caused by his sins? _____ Are our illnesses ever caused by our sins? _____.

14. The man went and told the _____ that it was _____ who had made him _____.

15. Because Jesus was _____ on the _____, the Jews _____ him.

16. Jesus answered, “My _____ is always at _____ to this very _____, and I, too, am _____.”

17. For this reason the _____ tried all the harder to _____ him; not only was he heading the _____, but he was even calling _____ his own _____, making _____ equal with _____.

18. The _____ _____ was the gate near the _____ through which _____ were brought to be sacrificed in _____.

19. What are some things we believe and do which conflict with God's will? The Jews here, for example, condemned Jesus for healing on the Sabbath.

20. We must, as we have _____, do good to _____ for the _____ of _____ without seeking _____ and _____ for ourselves.