

The Healing at the Pool on the Sabbath

Joh 5:1-2 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

As chapter 5 opens, the time had come for one of the Jewish feasts. Many believe this was Passover, but it is impossible to be sure. Born into the world as a Jew, and obedient to the laws which God had made for the Jewish people, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for the feast. As Jehovah of the OT, the Lord Jesus had been the One who instituted the Passover in the first place. Now as a Man, obedient to His Father, He obeyed the very laws which He had made.

In Jerusalem, there was a pool named Bethesda, meaning “house of mercy” or “house of pity.” This pool was located by the Sheep Gate. The exact location is now known and excavated (near the Crusader Church of St. Anne). Around the pool there were five porches or large open spaces capable of holding a number of people. Some Bible teachers think that these five porches represent the Law of Moses and speak of its inability to help man out of his deep troubles. – Believers’ Bible Commentary

Joh 5:3-5 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

The fourth verse of this chapter is not in the better manuscripts. To say this does not mean that I don't believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. I want to assure you that I do believe in the inerrancy of Scripture. Why in the world do you think that I teach the entire Bible? But I do think we should heed scholarship—fundamental, conservative scholarship which suggests that because it is not in the better manuscripts, it was put in by a scribe as a word of explanation. I believe it is factual, and it helps me understand why this crowd of impotent folk were here. But whether it belongs in Scripture or not is not worth an argument. To me it is not the essential thing because there is something far more important here. However, I did want to give this word of explanation.

This is the explanation of why they were there. The belief was that an angel stirred the water at a certain season. I personally feel that a great many cures took place there that were psychological cures. There are a number of people today, just as there were then, who are sick in their minds, ignorant, and superstitious. There are quite a few who go to faith healers today who believe they get healed. There is always a question whether or not they were ever really sick. Another question is whether they stay permanently healed. My point is that the Lord Jesus Christ heals today just as He did at the pool of Bethesda, and that one is not healed by some moving of the water. – McGee

1. Are you looking at Jesus or your circumstances?
2. When have you been so focused on getting in the pool when the water is stirred that you have missed Jesus?

Joh 5:6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

That's a peculiar question to ask a sick man. It seems rather absurd, doesn't it? Of course, he wanted to be made whole, but the Lord asked him the question for two reasons. First, to beget hope in the man. His case was hopeless, and I think the light of hope had pretty much gone out of his life, and he was in despair. Secondly, and this is the most important, Jesus wanted to get the man's eyes off the pool. Jesus wanted him to look to Him. I think this man had never noticed anybody else who came up there. He never watched anything else but just kept his eyes on the pool. So our Lord startled him with the question, "Do you earnestly desire to be made whole?" I think the man normally and naturally would look up. Who would ask a question like that? His answer was, "Of course, I want to be made whole. But that's not my problem. What I need is somebody to put me in the water." - McGee

3. Jesus asked the question then and he says it again, do you want to get well?

Joh 5:7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me."

You put me in the pool?" The Lord Jesus has no notion of getting that man into the pool. He is going to get him out of it and away from it. The minute the man gets his eye on the Lord Jesus, something will happen.

4. **How are you like this lame man? Are you trying to Jesus to solve the problems your way?**
5. **Is there something you have been struggling with for years just like this man?**
6. **Have you ever been in a situation when you felt as hopeless as this man did? Did God meet you there too? Did you see it at the time, or do you only see now?**

Joh 5:8-9 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

7. **If you met Jesus and he healed you, are you walking now? How is your walk? He gave this man the power to rise and walk surely you believe he can help you walk out your faith?**

Joh 5:10-13 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.' " Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.

The next thing that happens is that the enemies accuse the man of carrying his bed on the Sabbath Day. Well, that was the proof that he was healed. Can you imagine how ridiculous these religious rulers were to be upset because he carried his bed on the Sabbath Day?

Our Lord seemed to use a miraculous way of getting away from the crowd there that day because the man really didn't know who it was that had healed him. - McGee

Joh 5:14-16 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you." The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had

made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

What actually happened was simply this: the Lord healed him physically at the pool of Bethesda, but He healed his soul there in the temple. Sin had caused the man's trouble. First he got a well body, and then he got a well soul. He came to know Jesus, you see. Then he was able to tell who He was. This impotent man was waiting and waiting, looking at the pool, and one day Jesus, the Lamb of God, came by and saw him. Then the man saw Jesus. The impotent man met the Omnipotent Man. The thing that is amazing to me is that there were multitudes left in those porches and they were not healed. Today there are multitudes who are not saved. Isn't Jesus willing to save them? Yes, but they haven't looked at Jesus. They're just waiting, friend, waiting for something to happen.

This is the incident that put those bloodhounds of hate on the trail of Jesus. (When John says the "Jews," he is actually referring to the religious rulers of the Jews.) This is the point at which they began to persecute Jesus and sought to slay Him. - McGee

Joh 5:17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working."

When that man got down into the ditch of sin, the Lord Jesus and the Father could no longer rest on the Sabbath Day. Although God rested after the creation of the physical universe, after the fall of man He didn't rest, because man, like an ox, had gotten down into the ditch. - McGee

8. Have you ever been afflicted due to sin? Knowing that it is documented in the bible will that change your attitude toward sin?

9. Are you addressing the physical needs before jumping to the spiritual needs like Jesus?

10. Have you missed out on a blessing or being a blessing due to legalism in your family, church, friends or others?

11. Under persecution, Jesus proclaims the father in spite of the consequences to his ministry. What would you do under the gun?

Jesus Is Equal with God

Joh 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

These men never let up until they folded their arms beneath His cross. – McGee

The Authority of the Son

Our Lord now goes on to make three tremendous claims concerning Himself. It is on the basis of these claims that we can use Joh_5:24 in presenting the gospel. We will try to put it all together here.

The first claim:

Joh 5:19 Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

The Lord Jesus is saying that He is God and that He can do what God does. There is a perfect correspondence and harmony between the Father and the Son. Therefore, the charge that was made against Him was absurd. The Son does not contradict the Father, nor does the Father contradict the Son. Jesus does what God does. Jesus can forgive sins. Then He goes on to say that there is a personal and intimate relationship between the Father and the Son. – McGee

Joh 5:20 For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

The second claim:

Joh 5:21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

Jesus imparts life, gives life, to whom He will. If the Father raises the dead, the Son will raise the dead. Today we hear a great deal being said about the gift of healing, but with that gift went the ability to raise the dead. Paul raised the dead, and so did Simon Peter. Our Lord gave them that gift. It was an apostolic gift of healing and raising the dead, which disappeared with the apostles. The Lord Jesus raised the dead. He raised the dead because He was God. These other men did it in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The third claim:

Joh 5:22-23 For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

A literal reading would be, "For not even the Father judgeth anyone, but He hath given all judgment unto the Son." You can have everlasting life if you hear His word and believe it. Why? Because the Lord Jesus does what God does, because He raises the dead, and because He is going to judge all men someday. Whether saved or lost, they are going to appear before Him. The believers will appear before Him at the judgment which we call the Bema seat of Christ to see whether they receive a reward (see 2Co_5:10). The lost will come before Him at the Great White Throne (see Rev_20:11). Remember that the Lord Jesus did not come to judge the first time, but He will come as Judge the next time, and all judgment is committed to Him. Jesus definitely puts Himself on a par with God the Father.

It is on the basis of these three claims, these three great principles, that He goes on to this wonderful statement in verse Joh_5:24 which is used so much in personal work today. It is right that we should use it, but we need to remember to back it up with these claims Jesus has just made. – McGee

Joh 5:24 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

In the preceding verses, we learned that the Lord Jesus had the power to give life and that, also, the work of **judgment** had been committed to Him. Now we learn how one may receive spiritual life from Him and escape judgment. This is one of the favorite gospel verses in the Bible. Multitudes have become possessors of eternal life through its message. Doubtless the reason for its being so greatly loved is the manner in which it sets forth the way of salvation so clearly. The Lord Jesus began the verse with the words "**Most assuredly,**" drawing

attention to the importance of what He was about to say. Then He added the very personal announcement, “**I say to you.**” The Son of God is speaking to us in a very personal and intimate way.

“**He who hears My word.**” To hear the word of Jesus means not only to listen to it, but also to receive it, to believe it, and to obey it. Many people hear the gospel preached, but do nothing about it. The Lord is saying here that a man must accept His teaching as divine, and believe that He is indeed the Savior of the world.

“**And believes in Him who sent Me.**” It is a matter of believing God. But does that mean that a person is saved simply by believing God? Many profess to believe in God, yet they have never been converted. No, the thought here is that one must believe God, who sent the Lord Jesus Christ into the world. What must he believe? He must believe that God **sent** the Lord Jesus to be our Savior. He must believe what God says about the Lord Jesus, namely, that He is the only Savior and that sins can only be put away through His work on Calvary.

“**Has everlasting life.**” Notice it does not say that he will have eternal life, but that he has it right now. Everlasting life is the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not only life that will go on forever, but it is a (higher) quality of life. It is the life of the Savior imparted to us who believe in Him. It is the spiritual life received when a man is born again, in contrast to the natural life which he received at his physical birth.

“**And shall not come into judgment.**” The thought here is that he is not condemned now and will never be condemned in the future. The one who believes on the Lord Jesus is free from **judgment** because Christ has paid the penalty for his sins on Calvary. God will not demand the payment of this penalty twice. Christ has paid it as our Substitute, and that is sufficient. He has finished the work, and nothing can be added to a finished work. The Christian will never be punished for his sins.

“**But has passed from death into life.**” The one who has trusted Christ **has passed out** of a state of spiritual **death into** one of spiritual **life**. Before conversion, he was dead in trespasses and in sins. He was dead as far as love for God or fellowship with the Lord was concerned. When he put his faith in Jesus Christ, he was indwelt by the Spirit of God and became a possessor of divine life. – Believers’s Bible Commentary

Joh 5:25-28 Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice

What does He mean in verse Joh_5:25 when He says, “the hour ... now is”? Well, we're in that period of the hour that is coming. Verse Joh_5:28 makes it clear that the hour has not yet arrived, but “the hour is coming.” The whole thought is that we are living in the period or the age or the dispensation that is moving to the time when “the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.”

If we are in the period of the “hour that is coming,” then what does He mean that it also “now is”? Who are the dead who hear His voice now? In John 11 where we have the incident in which Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, you will remember that He said to the two sisters at the time of the death of Lazarus, “I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die” (Joh_11:25-26, italics mine). “Though he were dead.” Does this mean the person that is in the grave hears? No, no, this is referring to spiritual death! Death means separation from God. The hour is coming when those who are in the grave shall hear His voice and shall live, but the hour is now when those who are spiritually dead hear His voice and live. Paul wrote to the Ephesian believers that they had been

dead in trespasses and sins. That is the spiritual condition of everyone. But then, “he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death [out of spiritual death] unto life,” the life that He gives. So in verses Joh_5:25 and Joh_5:28 He is talking about two separate things. The time is now when Christ gives spiritual life. The hour is coming when He will raise the dead out of the grave. McGee

Joh 5:29 and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

A better translation for the word damnation would be “judgment.”

There are two resurrections mentioned here. The Book of Revelation is even more specific and describes the completion of the first resurrection (Rev_20:4-6) and the second resurrection (Rev_20:11-15). The first resurrection is the resurrection of all the saved—the first phase of which is the next thing on the agenda of God. We call it the rapture of the church. “Rapture” is a good translation of the Greek *harpazo*. Paul used it in 1Th_4:17 where he says we shall be “caught up,” which means “to be raptured.” The Rapture takes place at some time in the future. It is not dated and there are no signs given for it. It could happen at any moment. He is going to call His own out of this world, both the living and the dead. That is part of the first resurrection. Then, during the Tribulation period a great many believers will become martyrs. They will be raised at the end of the Great Tribulation period together with the Old Testament saints. That also is part of the first resurrection. They will be raised to live forever here upon this earth. That is the first resurrection. It is the resurrection of life, as our Lord called it.

Then the resurrection of judgment is the Great White Throne judgment when all the unsaved of all the ages will be raised. They wanted to be judged by their works, and they will be! They will stand before God who is just and righteous; they will have an opportunity to stand before a Holy God and to plead their case. But God has already warned them; there is no one saved in that judgment. It is only the lost who are brought there, and they will be judged according to their works, because there are degrees in punishment (see Luk_12:47-48). – McGee

Witnesses to Jesus

Joh 5:30 I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.

At first, “I can of Myself do nothing” seems to say that the Lord Jesus did not have the power to do anything by Himself. However, that was not the case. The thought is that He is so closely united with God the Father that He could not act by Himself. He could not do anything on His own authority. There was no trace of willfulness in the Savior. He acted in perfect obedience to His Father and always in fullest fellowship and harmony with Him. This verse has often been used by false teachers to support their claim that Jesus Christ was not God. They say that because He could not do anything of His own self, therefore He was just a man. But the verse proves the very opposite. Men can do the things they want, whether they are in accordance with the will of God or not. But because of who He was, the Lord Jesus could not so act. It was not a physical impossibility, but a moral impossibility. He had the physical power to do all things, but He could not do anything that was wrong: and it would have been wrong for Him to have done anything that was not the will of God the Father for Him. This statement sets the Lord Jesus apart from every other man who ever lived.

As the Lord Jesus listened to His Father and daily received instructions from Him, so He thought, taught, and acted. The word judge does not here have the sense of deciding on legal matters but rather of deciding what was proper for Him to do and say. – Believers Bible Commentary

Joh 5:31-34 "If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved.

The Scripture teaches that in the mouth of two or three witnesses a thing is established. "I bear witness of myself"—that would not stand up in court. But, "There is another that beareth witness of me." The witness He is referring to here is not John the Baptist. They would immediately think that is the one to whom He is referring, but He makes it clear that He is not referring to a human witness at all.

Now, He is saying that John the Baptist did bare witness to Him. So that is one witness whom they knew. But He is referring to still another Witness, not a human witness, and that makes two witnesses for them to recognize.

He claims a higher Witness than the witness of man. Yet, He does give a testimony to John the Baptist. In our King James Version He calls John a "light." A more accurate translation is "lamp." You see, Jesus is the Light; John was His witness, His light bearer, His lamp, if you please. - McGee

Joh 5:35-36 He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.

Here we see that the credentials that the Lord Jesus had were the miracles that He performed. This idea today that there are those who have the same power that Jesus had is, to my judgment, blasphemy. You see, these miracles which He performed attested that He was who He claimed to be. And, friend, there weren't just a few isolated instances of healing. He didn't put on healing services. He took no offerings. He didn't have people get in a line and come by Him. He moved out into the crowds, into the highways and the byways. And as He moved along, people were healed. I've called attention to this in the Gospels again and again, and it is important to refresh our memories concerning this. Friend, there were not just a half dozen, or even a hundred or two whom He had healed; there were literally thousands of people whom He had healed. It was openly demonstrated. Nobody in that day contradicted the fact that He healed—he would have been a fool if he had. It is over nineteen hundred years later in a musty library in New York City, thousands of miles removed, that scholars can sit down and write books declaring that they don't believe Jesus performed miracles. But that doesn't prove a thing, friend. His miracles were His credentials. His works bore witness that the Father had sent Him. – McGee

Joh 5:37-40 And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

This last verse is so frequently misunderstood. It is not an imperative but is an indicative. Let me put it like this: "You search the Scriptures." He's making a statement; He is not urging them to do something. He tells them that they search the Scriptures thinking that in them they will find eternal life, but they don't understand that the Scriptures testify of Jesus. Friend, you had better be careful so that you find Jesus in the Bible. If you don't, then your search is in vain. The Scriptures speak of Him, but the religious rulers are unwilling to come to Him. They are missing the point. – McGee

Joh 5:41-44 "I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will

receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?

Someday the Antichrist is coming, and the world will receive him. They rejected Christ. The Antichrist will come in his own name, will have an image made of himself, and they will accept him. They looked for the applause of men. Back scratching is still the curse today in our churches, even our good churches. There are teachers with itching ears. Each one wants to compliment the other rather than tell the truth of the Word of God. They "seek not the honour that cometh from God only."

Joh 5:45-47 Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

riend, that is so important. Back in the books of the Pentateuch which I have recently taught, I have attempted to point out the Lord Jesus. Although I don't find Him on every page, I believe He is on every page of the Pentateuch. He says, "Moses ... wrote of me." I think He is on every page of the Bible. When a man begins to make an attack upon the Old Testament, watch out! He really is making a subtle attack on the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm afraid there are many men who very foolishly begin to question the Old Testament and don't realize what they are doing. It is like the man at the insane asylum who was digging at the foundation. A man came by and asked, "Why are you trying to dig out the foundation? Don't you live in the building?" "Yes," he answered, "but I live upstairs!" I'm afraid that a great many foolish people say, "But I live in the New Testament." My friend, the Old Testament is the foundation. Our Lord said, "If you believe not his writings, how shall you believe my words?" They both go together.