

Asclepeion - a healing temple of Asclepius, the Greek god of healing and medicine. Patients would spend time worshipping and sacrificing to Asclepius and other gods associated with healing. The Greeks believed that physical and spiritual well-being was related to divine favor. Medical facilities offered drugs and herbs (often hallucinogenic), serpents, baths, massages, and sometimes entertainment. We don't have specific archaeological evidence that the pools were pagan in the 1st century, but we know they were part of an Asclepeion in the centuries following Jesus. Archeologists have found over 400 such centers throughout the Roman empire, including the largest one at Pergamum, which was operative in the first century (see Revelation 2:12-17). That Bethesda was probably a pagan center, as opposed to a Jewish one, fits the overall context of John 5, especially when compared to John 9 and the Pool of Siloam, which was connected to the Jewish Temple service.

Bethesda - Bet Chesed $\tau\omicron\upsilon\eta$ - House of Mercy-Lovingkindness

Setting of Lesson 13 - Pools of Bethesda, Jerusalem



Memory Verse #12: Shema!: John 5:24 – “Amen, Amen, I say to you, the one who _____ My word and _____ Him who sent Me has eternal _____.”

Walking in His Dust (John 5:30): Talmidim act in the _____ interest of the One who _____ us. 2 Corinthians 5:20: We are _____ for Christ.

Walking in His Dust (John 5:43): Talmidim _____ the world. 1 John 2:16: For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life is not from the _____ but from the _____.

Lesson notes & questions:

Lesson Reflections (review before Apply nights):

- What is at least one new thing I learned about loving God or my neighbor?
- Which topics would I like to know more about or need clarification?
- How does the Holy Spirit want me to apply the lesson's Scripture to my discipleship?



“Go make disciples...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Mt 28:19-20)

Word Wednesday Lesson 13 – Pools of Bethesda

John 5

APPLY!

- Share your “Lesson Reflections” responses with the group.
- **Read John 5:1-15.**
 - How does the background that the pools were possibly pagan affect our understanding of the passage, specifically verse 14?
 - Why did Jesus bother to ask His question in verse 6 if He planned to heal the man all along? How does the man respond?
 - Of the many people there, why did Jesus heal only one person? Compare 2 Cor 12:7-9.
 - In what ways have you been focused on getting in a pool instead of focusing on Jesus?
- **Read John 5:16-29.**
 - What three claims does Jesus make that culminate in the promise of John 5:24 (see John 5:19, 21, and 23)?
 - Break down the following five phrases from John 5:24 in your own words (as if explaining to an unbeliever or a new believer):
 - 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 to life
- **Read John 5:30-40.**
 - What is the significance of the three “witnesses” in John 5:33, 37, and 39?
 - In what ways is Jesus an ambassador?
- **Read John 5:41-47.**
 - Whom do you think Jesus meant by “one who comes in his own name”?
 - It is natural to want to be appreciated by others. Why does Jesus criticise this?
- John’s Gospel tells us who Jesus is and establishes His authority. What are some things we learn about Him and His authority from John 5? What is your response to this deeper understanding of Jesus?

GO!

What is God saying to you, and how are you responding?

What is something you are excited about right now?

What is a big challenge you are facing right now?

Who is on your heart right now and why?

Review the last lesson’s GO section. What prayers has God answered?

Pray for one another!