

Healing At Pool Of Bethesda

John 5:1-29

Part 1

Introduction.

1. The healing of a crippled man is the 3rd sign recorded by John. (Jn. 2:1-11, 4:41-46).
2. He had mentioned other signs without any details. (Jn. 2:23; 3:2).

Jn. 2:23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing.

Jn. 3:2 this man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You have come from God *as* a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him."

Jesus Attends A Feast Of The Jews

John 5:1 After these things [Jesus' short 2 day stay in Samaria] **there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.** See "two days" (Jn. 4:43).

1. John did not give his readers the name of this feast, but called it "a feast of the Jews."
 - a. Literally the Greek has "feast" without an article.
 - b. It seems to be a reference to one of the Jewish religious holidays, but there is no way of knowing what feast John had in mind.
2. Many have assumed it was the "Passover feast," and have used this verse to determine the length of Christ's ministry.
 - a. The length of Jesus' ministry is determined by counting the Passovers Jesus observed in the gospel of John.
 - b. It is most commonly believed to have been about 3 1/2 years.
 - c. John mentioned by name the Passover three different times.
 - 1) 1st Passover - Jn. 2:13, 23
 - 2) 2nd Passover? - Jn. 5:1 - The word "Passover" is not used.
 - 3) 2nd or 3rd Passover - Jn. 6:4
 - 4) 3rd or 4th Passover - Jn. 11:55; 12:1; 13:1
3. If the feast in John 5:1 was a Passover feast, the ministry of Christ was about 3 1/2 years.
4. If the feast in John 5:1 was not a Passover feast, the ministry of Christ was about 2 1/2 years.

5. Though it is impossible to be sure, it seems very unlikely John was referring to the Passover feast in John 5:1 since it was his habit of mentioning the Passover feast by name.

The Pool of Bethesda

John 5:2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep *gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. NKJV “porches” - A covered colonnade where people could stand or walk protected by the heat of the sun.

1. John here refers to “a pool”...“by the sheep gate.”
 - a. It is believed by many that the “sheep gate” [through which sheep were led into Jerusalem] was north of the temple grounds. (Neh. 3:1; 12:39).
 - b. A pool fitting John’s description has been excavated in Jerusalem north of the temple.
 - c. Stairways have been uncovered in the corners that would enable people to go down into the pool.
2. There was a pool by the sheep gate called in “Hebrew [Aramaic] Bethesda.”
 - a. There are variations of the name of the pool in the Greek manuscripts.
 - b. Some have “Bethzatha, others Bethsaida and others Bethesda.”
 - c. It is difficult to be sure, but there is strong evidence for “Bethesda.”
 - d. The copper scroll, written on copper, found at Qumran supports the reading of “Bethesda.”
 - e. Some believe this is the same pool known today as St. Anne, but this is unproven.
3. This pool was probably a spring-fed pool with “five porticoes.” Some believe water was pumped into the pool and this caused the bubbling described by John as “the moving of the waters.” (Jn. 5:3).
4. It had “five porticoes.”
 - a. The NIV has “five covered colonnades.”
 - b. The Greek “stoa” [stah **ah**] was “a colonnade, a covered walk supported by columns.”
 - c. John used this word in John 5:2, 4, 7. See also Jn. 9:7,11, 10:23.
 - d. It also occurs in the book of Acts. (Acts 3:11; 5:12).

John 5:3 waiting for the moving of the waters;

1. This man and many others waited “for the moving of the waters.”
2. They believed the first one in the waters would be healed.

Note: Early mss do not contain the remainder of v 3, nor v 4

John 5:3-4 [for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water;

whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.]

1. The last half of verse 3 and all of verse 4 are omitted by the oldest and best Greek manuscripts.
2. They were likely added by a scribe who was attempting to explain the stirring or troubling of the waters. (Jn. 5:3a,7).

John 5:5 A man was there who had been ill [an invalid] for thirty-eight years.

- “astheneia” [ahs **theh** nay ah] means “ill, sick, feeble.”
- Here it is used with the meaning “invalid, cripple.”
- That he was crippled is supported by John 5:8 where John recorded Jesus uttered these word **"Get up, pick up your pallet and walk."**
- See also John 5:6 where John writes, **“when Jesus saw him lying there.”**

1. He had been an invalid for 38 years, but his age is not given.
 - a. The blind man in John 9 had been blind since birth. (Jn. 9:1-2).
 - b. It does not appear the crippled man’s condition related to birth.
2. He was there at the pool hopeful of entering the water at the right time that he might be healed.
3. There is no evidence that the first or last one entering the pool was actually healed, but evidently some or many held to this belief.

Jesus Spoke To Crippled Man

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

1. He may have been brought there for years [the text does not say], but he had not given up.
2. Others had ignored this man, but not Jesus who asked “Do you wish to get well?”
3. Jesus knew the answer to His question. He knows all things, and saw the disappointment on the face of this man who had been coming a long time hoping to be healed.
4. The question was asked to solicit a response from this man who was crippled and most likely in a very pathetic condition.
5. It appears he was dropped off at the pool, but no one helped him get into the pool first when the water was troubled.
6. It is not stated how Jesus knew about the details of this man’s condition.
 - a. As the omniscient Son of God, He knew everything.
 - b. Jesus manifested His omniscience in His conversation with the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4:17-19).

John 4:17 The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have correctly said, 'I have no husband';

John 4:18 for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; this you have said truly."

John 4:19 The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

- c. Jesus knew all about this crippled man because of His omniscience, but it is also possible someone told Him about the crippled man.

Crippled Man Expressed His Frustration

John 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."

1. The Greek word translated "Sir" is "kurios" meaning "Lord" used here with the meaning of "Sir" since he did not know who Jesus was. "Kurios" was also used with the meaning of "Sir" since she did not know the identity of Christ during their initial conversation. (Jn. 4:11).
2. The man was in a hopeless state!
3. No one would put him in the pool when the water was "stirred up," but always someone got into the pool before him. This must have been very discouraging to this crippled man, but he had not given up trying.
4. His state was hopeless without Jesus, and our spiritual state is also hopeless without Him.
5. At this time the crippled man did not know Jesus and that He had the power to heal.

Jesus Heals Man

John 5:8 Jesus said to him, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk."

- "pallet" is from "krabbaton" and was likely a sleeping mat.
 - Jesus was instructing the man to stand up, roll up his sleeping mat and go home."
1. This command must have been a shock to this man who had been crippled for 38 years.
 2. Though he did not know who Jesus was, he obeyed Him.
 3. It is noteworthy to point out Jesus did not always require faith for healing.
 4. **This man did not even know who Jesus was.**
 5. Why he obeyed Jesus is not stated, but he did obey Jesus without knowing anything about Him.

John 5:9 Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and *began* to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.

1. John emphasized the healing was instantaneous and complete.
2. He did not walk in stages over a period of time, but immediately "began to walk."

3. John also emphasized “it was the Sabbath” because of the reaction the Jews had to this healing and the man carrying his pallet on the Sabbath.
4. These religious leaders were heartless in regard to this man and could not care less if he remained crippled another 38 years.
5. The important thing to them was Jesus had broken the rules they had made in regard to the Sabbath day.

Reaction Of The Jews

John 5:10 So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet."

1. The Jewish religious authorities were not happy this crippled man had been healed on “the Sabbath.”
2. They immediately criticized the man because he had carried his pallet on “the Sabbath.”
 - a. The law commanded the Jews to rest on the Sabbath day. (Exod. 31:15; Num. 15:35; Exod. 20:10, 11).
 - b. They had made this law much stricter than its original intention.
 - 1) They interpreted it to mean carrying one’s bed to be a violation of the law.
 - 2) Jesus pointed out that they would pull an animal out of a pit on the Sabbath and they believed it was permitted to save a valuable sheep on that day, but not the healing of a man. (Matt. 12:8-14).

Matt 12:8 "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

Matt 12:9 Departing from there, He went into their synagogue.

Matt 12:10 And a man {was there} whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, asking, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"--so that they might accuse Him.

Matt 12:11 And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out?"

Matt 12:12 "How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

Matt 12:13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.

Matt 12:14 But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, {as to} how they might destroy [kill] Him.

- 3) The Sabbath law was intended to condemn all unnecessary work on the Sabbath day.
 - 4) The Jewish Mishnah [first major collection of Jewish traditions] said it was lawful for a living man to be carried on a couch on the Sabbath, but it was unlawful for one to carry the bed itself.
3. **They thought more of a sheep that had fallen into a pit on the Sabbath than this helpless man!**
 4. They did not rejoice with him, but were angered at him for violating the Sabbath law that they had misinterpreted.

The Former Crippled Man Repeated What Jesus Had Said To Him

John 5:11 But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'"

1. He still not know the identity of Jesus. (Jn. 5:13,14).

2. The former crippled man referred to Christ as “he who” and “the one.”

Who Is The Man?

John 5:12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up *your pallet* and walk'?"

1. At this point they did not know who healed the man.
2. They wanted to persecute [not praise] whoever had healed this man for breaking the Sabbath.

John 5:13 But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in *that* place.

1. This former crippled man was not a believer before he was healed or immediately after he was healed.
2. He did not even know who had healed him.
3. Jesus had slipped away “into the crowd” before the former crippled man could converse with Him.
4. Jesus was not ready to have a conversation with him or deal with the crowd.

Jesus Found The Man In The Temple

John 5:14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you."

1. It is interesting “Afterward Jesus found him in the temple.”
 - a. “Afterward” is not defined and could denote a very short time or perhaps days later.
 - b. This would be the outer court of the temple.
 - c. This man, not being a priest, would not have been allowed inside the actual temple.
 - d. One would like to believe he was there to give thanks for his cure. See Mk. 1:40-44; Lk. 17:14.
2. Jesus said to this man He had healed, “Do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.”
 - a. This seemed to infer this man had been crippled because of sin, and the words “do not sin anymore” may mean he was continuing in sin.
 - b. The time or the nature of the sin is not specified by John.
 - c. “Nothing worse” is not defined, but probably means eternal condemnation.
5. Much suffering is the result of sin, but not all suffering. (Jn. 9:3).

John 9:3 Jesus answered, "{It was} neither {that} this man sinned, nor his parents; but {it was} so that the works of God might be displayed in him.

- a. Jesus was speaking of the man who had been blind from birth.

- b. Jesus emphatically declared this man's blindness was not because of sin.

Man Began To Inform Others That Jesus Had Healed Him

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

1. The former crippled man was excited and informed "the Jews" that it was Jesus who had healed him.
2. Assuming he told the Jewish authorities himself about his healing, the purpose of him reporting to them is not clear.
 - a. It could be that he wanted them to know about Jesus so Jesus would be praised and recognized for the great thing He had done.
 - b. One would like to think he was not merely reporting back to them.
3. He still did not know much about Jesus, but told them it was Jesus who had healed him.
4. It is possible he had heard what others were saying about Jesus, but this is uncertain.
5. At this point the Jewish leaders directed their anger primarily against Jesus, but would later punish this former crippled man for standing up for Jesus.

Reason The Jews Began To Persecute Jesus

John 5:16 For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.

1. The Jews began persecuting Jesus based on the testimony of the former crippled man. (Jn. 5:15).
2. John stated the reason for this persecution was because He had healed the man "on the Sabbath."
 - a. The form of the persecution is not stated, but for sure it included speaking evil of Jesus and discouraging or forbidding others from following Jesus.
 - b. The gospels do reveal that the religious leaders were envious of Jesus (Matt. 27:18; Mk. 15:10), and used every opportunity to belittle Him and destroy His influence among the people.
 - c. One of the principle reasons the Jewish authorities opposed and hated Jesus was because of His attitude toward the Sabbath day and His actions on the Sabbath violated their teachings.
 - d. They were envious of Jesus and hated Him because He received the praise and fame the coveted and demanded.
3. It is significant they did not deny the miracle.
4. No one could deny this miracle or any other miracle Jesus performed.
5. The KJV has the words "and sought to slay him." This may be a fact, but these words are not supported by the original Greek manuscripts.

"Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE®,
© Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation
Used by permission." (www.Lockman.org)

