

“The Gospel of John: The Third Sign”

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Scripture

John 5:1-16

“After these things 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 porticoes. In these lay **a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered**, *[waiting for the moving of the waters; 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]*.

A man was there who had been ill **for thirty-eight years**. 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?"**

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."

Jesus said to him, **"Get up, pick up your pallet and walk."**

Immediately the man became well and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. 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."** But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk'?" 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.

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.**" The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason, the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath."

The Purpose for John's Gospel

John 20:30-31

“Therefore, **many other signs Jesus also performed** in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book;

But these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that **believing** you may have life in His name.”

Many events in John not recorded elsewhere

The First Sign -> Water Made into Wine in Cana -> **Jesus can change physical properties**

The Second Sign -> Healing the Nobleman's Son -> **Jesus can heal remotely**

The Third Sign -> Healing the Long-Time Paralytic -> **Jesus can heal anytime He wants** (even on the Sabbath)

Similar story in Mark 2 where a paralytic is lowered into a roof where Jesus is speaking

The Pool of Bethesda Scene

Bethesda in Hebrew – means “House of Grace” or “House of Mercy”

John 5:1-4

“After these things 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 porticoes. In these lay **a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered**, [*waiting for the moving of the waters; 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*].

Sheep gate was built and consecrated by Nehemiah (**Nehemiah 3:1**) and his brothers, the priests.

Originally, an entrance point in the city for the Passover sacrifices, it is now called the Lions Gate.

There were a set of pools here, the original one was fed by an underground spring.

Later, Herod added a more luxurious, resort like pool above the original pool

The water levels would rise and fall with the water pressure from the underground spring causing a whirlpool-like effect

Because of the sporadic whirlpool effects, a myth developed that an angel was stirring the waters

The stirring would provide immediate healing once a day to the first who entered the pool

Lots of steps and levels around this pool -> not easy to get into the water

Therefore, many **who were sick, blind, lame, and withered** would come and lay there in the hope of healing

The end of verse 3 and all of verse 4 were not in the original writing -> **parentheses around the verse fragment**

Does not add any doctrine to the text, just adds narrative context to the story about the myth

Thirty-Eight Years

John 5:5-6

“A man was there who had been ill **for thirty-eight years**. 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?**’”

Why is it important that he laid there 38 years? -> **He was widely known by all**

Jesus sees him lying there but **everyone else knew** he was lying there for decades

Jesus asks a simple question: “Do you wish to get well?”

Who wouldn't want to get well?

Think about it -> being well would mean responsibility for his own care

Some in society **do not want to be made well**, they want to stay on social assistance programs

Is there a deeper question from Jesus here? -> **is he asking the man if he wants to be saved?**

Wish -> ethelo -> “an earnest wish or desiring”

Well -> hugiés-> meaning “restored or to be whole” -> could be physical or spiritual wholeness

I don't think so -> there is nothing in the text to presume a deeper question

The man responds to Jesus:

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.’”

“while I am coming” -> This man does not want to rely on social assistance -> **he wants to be made whole**

He wants to the ability to care for himself and others

Get Up!

John 5:8

“Jesus said to him, ‘**Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.**’”

Jesus gives him three things to do:

- 1) Get himself up (others had helped him up in the past)
- 2) Pick up your pallet (others had probably carried his pallet for him in the past)
- 3) Walk (do something that you haven't done in while on your own)

Pallet -> normally a mat made of straw, thick enough to avoid the heat of the ground in the summer, light enough to be carried by an aide on their shoulder if they were helped him

Jesus spoke the man's healing into existence **just as He spoke the World into existence**

John 1:3

“All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”

Jesus can speak direct healing! Jehovah-Rapha! -> “The Lord Who Heals”

He is the "I AM" -> God said, "Let there be Light" and there was Light

John 5:9-13

"Immediately the man became well and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day.

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."** But he answered them, "He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'" They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk?'" 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."

The man obeyed Jesus, completely: He got up, he picked up his pallet, and he began to walk...

What do we learn from that?

True healing leads to obedience -> physical as well as spiritual healing

Sabbath Traditions

"Now it was the Sabbath on that day" -> **Did Jesus knowingly heal on the Sabbath?**

The Jews response to the man carrying his pallet:

"It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet."

The man's response to the Jews:

"He who made me well was the one who said to me, 'Pick up your pallet and walk.'"

The Jews asked:

"Who is the man who said to you, 'Pick up your pallet and walk?'"

The man responded:

"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."

Should Believers Observe the Sabbath? -> A Great Question! -> Maybe I should take a poll?

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Sabbath (or Shabbat in Hebrew) simply means "to rest"

The Old Testament forbade working on the Sabbath:

Exodus 20:8-11

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. **Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.** For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; **therefore, the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.**”

Blue laws -> remember when nothing was open on a Sunday?

The sabbath was personal -> “your work” - https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Shabbat.7.2 (39 prohibited)

Matthew goes on to record what he learned from Jesus about the Sabbath:

Matthew 12:1-14

“At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, “Look, **Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath.**”

3But He said to them, “Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions, how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone? Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?”

6“But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here.

7“But if you had known what this means, **I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,** you would not have condemned the innocent.

8**For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.**”

9Departing from there, He went into their synagogue. 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.

11And 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? **How much more valuable then is a man than a sheep!** So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand!” He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.

14But the Pharisees went out and conspired against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.”

The disciples begin eating on their Sabbath day journey -> the fact that **they walked greater than a mile** was a violation of the Jews’ man-made laws let alone eating the grain

They eat the grain, and the Jews accuse them of breaking the law -> they DID break the man-made laws

Jesus said David and his men ate the consecrated bread from the house of God -> 1 Samuel 21:1-6

Jesus said that the Jewish priests break their man-made laws by working on the Sabbath -> Are they innocent?

Jesus says something greater than the temple is here -> He is here, and He is Lord of the Sabbath

Jesus asks which of them wouldn't rescue a sheep on the Sabbath if they needed help

The result of Jesus's healing of the man's hand and blatant disregard of their man-made laws is to kill Him!

Why? Because He is leading His people to ignore their authority

What do we learn from this?

Is Jesus just an Anarchist?

Jesus did not appreciate legalism -> Read Matthew 23 -> The Eight Woes for Hypocrites

Jesus did not like it when the way of the Father was maligned by human laws

Sabbath Intent

Mark 2:27-28

Jesus said to them, "**The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.**" So, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Jesus is God and He created the Sabbath day rest

It was meant for man to have rest with God being the example in His resting during the 7th day of creation

Did God need to rest on the 7th day?

Of course not, He is Omnipotent and all-powerful!

Sin No More

Jesus then finds 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.**"

The man is in the temple -> what do you think he's doing in the temple?

Seems pretty obvious the man's first reaction to his healing was to go praise God for it!

"You have become well" -> Jesus has given the man a new lease on life

“do not sin anymore” -> “Don’t screw it up!”

Some specific behavior happened in the man’s life that caused his illness.

Sin, sometimes, has its physical consequences -> theft usually leads to prison or death

How many of you have told someone they have another chance and not to screw it up?

“so that nothing worse happens to you” -> “You could’ve been killed!”

Persecution Begins

John 5:15-16

“The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason, the Jews **were persecuting** Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath.”

The Greek tense here indicates “from this point on” **Jesus was continually pursued and persecuted by the Jews**

Jesus intentionally and purposefully engaged the Jews over their man-made laws

We should do the same -> people try to do this all the time to control behavior

Cigarettes? Alcohol? Not wearing a seatbelt? Not eating certain foods?

The Third Sign -> Healing the Long-Time Paralytic

- > Jesus is above all man-made laws
- > Jesus can heal with His words and on any day, including the Sabbath
- > Jesus opposed the Jews’ hypocrisy

Next Week, we’ll do a little algebra: Jesus = God

Prayer

Benediction