

The Scandalous Healing of the Lame Man (5:1-18)

The center of this story is not the healing of the man. In fact, I don't think the man represents a good example of a person of faith. The point is that this is the beginning of the confrontation between the religious leaders and Jesus over the breaking of their traditions. Jesus has brought the new Kingdom and they are clinging to their old positions of power over the people.

I. The Authority of Jesus is Demonstrated in the Healing (1-9)

A. Jesus Comes to the Sick in Jerusalem (1-3)

1. Jesus Returns to Jerusalem (1)

- i. The feast of the Jews was taking place
- ii. Jesus went up to Jerusalem

2. Jesus Visits the Infirm in Jerusalem (2-3)

i. Jesus comes to the pool of Bethesda

- a. The remains of the pool is still in Jerusalem
- b. It is called the pool of St. Anne and it sits next to the church of St. Anne
- c. Many different structures were built on these ruins over the years but archaeologists have discovered the remains of the pool.



This is the church of St. Anne built behind the ruins of the pool of Bethesda

ii. Under the roofed walkways many sick lay there hoping to be healed.

NOTE: You may notice that verse 4 is placed in the margin of some translations. The reason for this is because this verse doesn't appear in the oldest manuscripts of John. If you have any questions about textual variants or don't understand their ramifications please see the notes and lesson audio "Can we trust the text of the NT" on the website.

This in NO WAY affects the fact that the Bible is the inspired infallible word of God.

iii. The verse explains why so many people were waiting around the pool.

- a. The pool was believed to have healing properties
- b. An angel was believed to disturb the waters
- c. The first person in the water would be healed
- d. This explains why the man later claims he can never get to the pool because others get in front of him.

B. Jesus Beheld a Hopeless Lame Man (5-7)

1. Jesus Notices a Man who had been Sick 38 Years (5-6a)

- i. This man had been infirmed for 38 years
 - a. Try to imagine how long this had been
 - b. Almost a lifetime being sick (probably lame, unable to walk)
- ii. Jesus knew that he had been there for a very long time

2. Jesus Asks the Man if He Wanted to Be Made Whole (6b)

- i. Seems like a dumb question doesn't it?
- ii. Who wouldn't want to be healed
- iii. After 38 years the man may have gotten used to his plight

3. Jesus' Question is not "exactly" Answered (7)

- i. He doesn't say "yes I want to be healed"
- ii. He instead tells Jesus the reason he can't be healed
 - a. Notice that the man places all his hope in the pool
 - he never even considers that healing could come another way
 - he blames other people for not helping him – "no one will put me in" and "someone always gets in front of me"
 - b. The man is not in front of the Temple praying for healing. He is not calling upon God. He is depending on a miraculous belief in an angelic pool.

C. Jesus is The Source of True Healing (8-9a)

1. Jesus Commands the man's Healing (8)

- i. Jesus needs no help or rituals fulfilled to heal

- ii. Jesus doesn't need to explain anything or reveal anything. He simply says, "Get up" and the man is healed.
 - 2. Jesus' Command is Obeyed (9a)
 - i. The sickness obeyed Jesus' command
 - a. At Jesus' word the disease or lameness disappears
 - ii. The man obeyed Jesus' command
 - a. He immediately took up his mat (which he had sat on for 38 years and walked.
- II. The Authority of Jesus is Questioned (9b-15)
 - A. The Accusation of Sabbath Breaking is Made (9b-13)
 - 1. The Jews Accuse the Healed Man (9b-10)
 - i. The day Jesus healed the man was the Sabbath (9b)
 - a. Jesus healing on the Sabbath will be a continual source of conflict in the gospels
 - b. Healing was considered work on the Sabbath
 - ii. The man was not allowed to carry anything on the Sabbath
 - a. Even something as small as a mat was considered breaking the Sabbath
 - b. Of course this was not what God meant by the command to keep the Sabbath Holy
 - c. This was the man-made rules which the religious leaders enforced
 - iii. It is instructive that the Jews could care less that the man had been miraculously healed – they were more concerned about him breaking their precious man-made rules
 - 2. The Man Transfers the Blame to Jesus (11-13)
 - i. The man informs the Jews of Jesus' Command (11)
 - a. The man didn't even know he Jesus was yet
 - b. Some people think that the man was trusting in Jesus here rather than obeying the tradition of the Jews
 - I think he was just scared of their threats and wanted to shift the blame on someone else.
 - He did not yet know who had healed him
 - Later when he finds out it was Jesus, the first thing he does is go and find the Jews and tell on Jesus.
 - The Jews shift their focus of blame from the man to Jesus when they find out the man was healed and commanded to carry his mat.
 - ii. The Man Could not Identify Jesus to the Jews (12-13)
 - a. They immediately want to know who healed him and told him to walk with his mat
 - b. Instead of rejoicing in miracle of a healed man, they were concerned about who was breaking their rules.
 - c. The man could not identify Jesus because Jesus had withdrawn himself

B. The Warning of God is Given (14-15)

1. Jesus Warns the Man of His Sin (14)

- i. Sometime Later Jesus finds the man in the Temple
 - a. Notice that the man would not be allowed in the Temple if he was still an invalid
 - b. It is because of Jesus' miracle that He could be in the Temple
- ii. Jesus Reminds the man of His blessing
 - a. Jesus says, "see you are well"
 - b. The man must realize what Jesus has done for him
- iii. Jesus Commands the man regarding his sin (14)
 - a. "Sin no more" so that nothing worse happens to you
 - b. In Ch. 9 we will see that sickness cannot be attributed to one's sin all the time - but Jesus may be doing this here.
 - c. More likely Jesus is warning the man that there is something worse than physical sickness coming.
 - unless the man repents he will suffer eternally much more than he ever did for those 38 years.

2. The Man Reports Jesus to the Authorities (15)

- i. Immediately the man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who healed him
- ii. This reaction leads me to believe the man was not trusting in Christ.
- iii. The first thing he does when Jesus reveals himself is go tell on him
- iv. Perhaps he was still worried about the Jews accusing him and wanted them to know it was Jesus' fault

III. The Authority of Jesus is Denied (16-18)

A. The Jews Begin Persecuting Jesus (16)

1. They cared more about the Sabbath regulations they had invented
2. They did not care that Jesus was doing miracles
3. They did not care that Jesus had brought the Kingdom of God
4. They wanted their own authority acknowledged

B. Jesus Claims the Authority of God Himself (17)

1. Jesus references the fact that the Father works on the Sabbath
 - i. It was commonly known that God held the universe together
 - ii. God didn't take a break from running the universe on the Sabbath
2. Jesus (being God the Son) also works on the Sabbath
 - i. Jesus does good on the Sabbath
 - ii. Jesus is denying that He is subject to their man-made rules
 - iii. NOTICE: At no time did Jesus ever break the Sabbath command of God. The command was to honor the Sabbath and keep it holy as a day of rest devoted to God. The Jews had added hundreds of minute restrictions to this law to ensure

that they would never break the law. These included carrying anything, walking certain distances, or administering any medical aid.

3. Jesus is Claiming Himself to be God

C. The Jews Recognize Jesus' Claim to be God (18)

1. From this point, the Jews conspire to kill Jesus

2. They accused him of breaking the Sabbath

3. They accused him of calling God his own father which would make him equal with God

i. For all the people who say that Jesus never claimed to be God, this verse destroys their argument. The Jews who were listening to Jesus understood that He was claiming to be God and this is why they later charged Him with blasphemy.