



## Lesson 234

# Healing at the Pool of Bethesda – Part 2

### Story Elements

- **Text:** John 5:1-47
- **Setting:** circa AD 28 in Jerusalem
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, the disciples, an invalid, and the Pharisees
- **Plot:** Jesus heals an invalid on the Sabbath, which angers the Pharisees. Jesus then defends his sabbath healing by equating himself with God, which angers the Pharisees even more.
- **Key word(s):** “\_\_\_\_\_” – The controversy centered on Christ working a miracle in the sabbath and commanding the healed man to carry his bed, which the Pharisees considered a violation of the sabbath.
- **Climax:** *John 5:9* *And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.* John’s last detail in v 9 sets the scene for the rest of the chapter: Christ had contradicted their understanding of the sabbath, and his defense of his actions further agitated the hatred of his enemies.

## Review

1. (v 1) Jesus and his disciples journeyed to Jerusalem to celebrate a feast – though not named it was probably the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - (a) (vv 2-9) Near the sheep market (Sheep Gate) was a pool called the pool of Bethesda. Every year an angel would come and stir the waters and impart some healing properties into the pool. Those first in the pool after the water was affected would receive a healing miracle.
  - (b) (vv 5-16) Jesus healed an invalid man had been waiting for someone to help him into the pool. As a result, the Jewish leaders were enraged and *and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.*

## Working Because of Authority

2. (vv 17-18) Jesus begins his defense by stating unequivocally that his Father works on the sabbath and so does he. Matthew Henry explains,

“God rested only from such work as he had done the six days before; otherwise he *worketh hitherto*, he is every day working, sabbath days and week-days, **upholding and governing all the creatures...to his own glory**; therefore, when we are appointed to rest on the sabbath day, yet we are not restrained from doing that which has a direct tendency to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, as the man’s carrying his bed had.”<sup>1</sup>

APPLICATION → It is important to remember at this point that the public miracles that Jesus did were demonstrations of a greater power, i.e., as he has the power to make the palsied to walk, so he has the power to forgive sin (Mark 2:9); and as he has the power to raise the invalid, he also has the power to raise the \_\_\_\_\_.

3. (vv 19-20) Jesus then declared his equality with the Father. Notice the chiasmic<sup>2</sup> structure of his argument and how Jesus shows the unity of his human and divine nature:

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1944.

<sup>2</sup> A chiasm is a literary pattern in which ideas are arranged in a mirrored order—often designated as **A–B–C–B’–A’**. The term comes from the Greek letter *chi* (X), reflecting the crisscross shape of the structure.

- (a) *The Son can do nothing of himself*. Christ, in his human nature, does nothing apart from that which is his Father's will. Yet Christ in his divine nature **is able to do what the Father does**.
  - i. (vv 20-21) *The Father raises the dead and quickeneth them*. An example of the powerful work that the Father does is raising the dead and making them alive. God has a sovereign prerogative to raise whom He will when He will – *even so the Son quickeneth whom he will*.
    - A. (vv 22-23) *The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son*. Christ is the appointed Judge of all people. **Acts 17:31** *Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.*
      - (vv 24-25) The difference between judgment (condemnation) and everlasting life is whether we believe on the Father through the Word of Christ. To hear the word of Christ is to have life.
    - B. (vv 26-27) *The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment*. As the Son of God, he has authority from the Father; as the Son of Man, he has authority over all of humanity.
  - ii. (vv 28-29) Some shall be raised *unto the resurrection of life* on Judgment Day; the rest shall be raised unto the *resurrection of damnation*.
- (b) (v 30) *I can of mine own self do nothing*. Christ does not seek his own will, but that of his Father's.

## Witnesses to His Authority

- 4. (v 31) *My witness is not true*. By this Jesus does not mean that he is not to be trusted, but that his testimony is established and verified at the mouths of two or three witnesses (cf. Deu. 19:15) Those three witnesses Jesus gives:
  - (a) (vv 32-35) John the Baptist, *a burning and a shining light* in whom even the Jewish leaders rejoiced for a while, was witness to the authority of Christ. But Jesus is not dependent upon the testimony of mere men, as great as they might be. He has other witnesses of his authority:
  - (b) (v 36) The \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ bore witness of his authority from the Father – both his miraculous power to heal and his power to preach and change hearts.
  - (c) (v 37) The \_\_\_\_\_ himself gave witness to Christ's authority at his baptism (Matt. 3:17).
  - (d) (v 39) The \_\_\_\_\_ are the third authoritative witness of Christ's equality with the Father. Thought the Jews revered Moses, they did not believe the words of Moses – otherwise, if they believed Moses, they would believe Christ.

APPLICATION → To deny that Jesus is God is to deny the entirety of the Bible – all of it, from Genesis to Revelation. Jesus clearly defended his divine authority, and the Jewish leaders hated him for it because they knew exactly what he meant – he made himself *equal with God*. (v 18) “Augustine famously remarks, ‘Behold the Jews understood what the \_\_\_\_\_ would not understand.’”<sup>3</sup>

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**Answer Key:** Key word(s): “work” • 1. Passover • 2. glory; → dead • 4. b) works; c) Father; d) Scriptures → Arians

<sup>3</sup> J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, VOLUME THREE, John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 282.