

Healing a Man at the Pool of Bethesda

Sermon by Andy Sochor

Text: John 5:1-18

Throughout Jesus' earthly ministry, He performed various miracles to demonstrate His divine power. The miracle we are discussing here was Jesus healing a man at the pool of Bethesda. As we study this miracle, as with every Bible passage, it is important to understand the context. This miracle teaches us certain things about Jesus and provides an important lesson for us.

Context

- Jesus returned to Jerusalem (John 5:1) – He had already been here and had some who were not happy with Him; He previously drove the money-changers out of the temple (John 2:13-21); He also knew that He could not “entrust” Himself to anyone there (John 2:24)
- This was during one of the feasts (John 5:1) – many commentators believe this was likely the Passover, but it is not stated; regardless, there would have been a large crowd in the city (cf. Deuteronomy 16:16)
- The pool of Bethesda was believed to have miraculous healing properties (John 5:2-4) – likely more legend than fact; the text does not indicate that this was a place of regular divine healing, but people believed that it was
- This was done on the Sabbath day (John 5:9) – this would be a point of contention with the rulers (John 5:10, 16); the Sabbath was a day of rest (Exodus 20:8-10); however, Jesus was not violating the law

The Miracle

- Jesus found a man there who had been ill for 38 years (John 5:5) – Jesus knew this about him (John 5:6); the man explained why he was still there (John 5:7), waiting for the angel and hoping to reach the pool in time; yet Jesus healed him immediately (John 5:8-9)
- Jesus told the man to pick up his pallet and walk (John 5:9) – naturally, he did this despite the fact that it was the Sabbath; the rulers questioned the man and claimed he was doing something that was not permissible (John 5:10); the man said that the one who made him well told him to do it (John 5:11), but he did not know who it was (John 5:12-13)
- Jesus found the man afterward (John 5:14) – told him not to sin anymore; the punishment for sin is worse than any physical ailment (cf. Romans 6:23; Revelation 20:10, 15); the man then went to the rulers and identified Jesus as the one who healed him
- The rulers persecuted Jesus for this (John 5:16) – they claimed He was violating the Sabbath law; Jesus responded with a statement about His Father working and that He

was working (John 5:17); they immediately understood the point (John 5:18), that Jesus was equal with the Father; they wanted to kill Him for claiming this

The Lesson

- Much of the account of this miracle focuses on what happened AFTER the miracle – controversy over Jesus' identity (who healed the man and who He was in relation to the Father); how we react to Jesus is dependent upon us understanding who He is
- This miracle proved that Jesus was the Son of God and equal with the Father – He proved to be greater than the angels (Hebrews 1:4); His word must be obeyed immediately (John 2:5; Matthew 28:20); we are to put away sin from our lives in order to please Him (John 8:11; 1 John 1:5-7; 2:1); we must recognize Him as the Son of God (John 20:30-31; cf. Colossians 2:9)

Conclusion

- Jesus healed this man by performing a miracle that was immediate and obvious – yet there were still people who wanted to kill Him because they refused to accept who He was
- We need to recognize Jesus for who He is – then obey Him as the Son of God