

“The Miracle Worker”

John 5:1-15

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“Behold your God will come...He will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy” (Isaiah 35:4-6)

1. The Conditions of the Miracle—Jesus healed in Jerusalem, during a feast, publicly and selectively (5:1-5).
“One man was there who had been an invalid [“ill” NAS; “had an infirmity” KJ] for thirty-eight years” (5:5)
2. The Content of the Miracle—Jesus healed the man sovereignly, organically, in a word, instantaneously with a purpose (5:6-9a).
“Jesus said to him, ‘Get up...’” (5:8)
3. The Controversy of the Miracle—Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath in defiance of man-made religion (5:9b-15).
“Now that day was the Sabbath” (5:9b)

Notes

- 5:1—“after these things” = after Jesus’ ministry tour in Galilee (4:43-54; cf. Luke 4:14-9:50; Mark 1:14-9:50.)
- 5:1—“a feast of the Jews” = not sure which feast; 5 other times John mentions the specific feast, 2:13; 6:4; 7:2; 10:22; 11:55.
—the three feasts that required Jews to go to Jerusalem were Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles.
- 5:2—“a pool...called Bethesda” = this site can be seen today at St. Anne’s Church in Jerusalem where it has been excavated; it was 200 ft wide x 315 ft long.
- 5:3—“waiting for the moving...he was afflicted” = this phrase is not included in the NIV & ESV as it is not found in the earliest & best Greek MSS; in the English, those versions go from verse 3 to 5 with no verse 4! It’s a scribal gloss added after John wrote, probably to explain a local myth in vogue at the time.
- 5:5—“ill = GRK ‘astheneia’ meaning ‘sickness, weakness, disease, infirmity.’
- 5:5—“thirty-eight years” = this shows the severity, permanence, chronic and hopeless nature of this man’s illness.
- 5:6—“Jesus knew” = Jesus was omniscient, cf. 2:25; 21:17.
- 5:8—“Jesus said” = God created all things through His words—Jesus’ words have the same power.
- 5:9—“immediately/at once” = stress on the efficacy of Jesus’ power.
- 5:9—“the Sabbath” = the Scribes listed 39 tasks prohibited on the Sabbath and carrying a mat was one of them; the OT did not prohibit carrying a mat...the OT prohibited work that was the normal weekly occupation as well as 3 other tasks: plowing/ reaping, kindling a fire and wood-gathering (Exodus 34:21, 35:3, Numbers 15:32); Jesus was Lord of the Sabbath and had authority over it (Matthew 12:8); the Pharisees also taught healing on the Sabbath violated God’s Law—they were wrong (Matthew 12:10 ff.).
- 5:10—“the Jews” = a technical phrase used about 70 times in John’s Gospel to refer to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem who were hostile to Jesus.
- 5:10—“it is not lawful” = yes, it was!
- 5:13—“Jesus slipped away” = to withdraw, to dodge.
- 5:15—“the man went away and told the Jews” = the man never showed any signs of personal faith in Christ.