

## C H A P T E R

# ◇ 5

**Read verses 1 through 18.** This section records the healing of the sick man at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem, and the rage of the Jews who accused Him of breaking the Sabbath.

**Verses 1 through 4.** Was it the Passover Feast, or some other feast that occasioned this visit of Jesus to Jerusalem? This question cannot be answered by examination of the text. The significance is that if it were the Passover Feast, Jesus' ministry probably lasted 3 1/2 years, and if not, it was of shorter duration. Most conservative scholars favor the Passover, and the longer version of Jesus' ministry.

95. True or False? It is probable that the event which caused Jesus to visit Jerusalem at this time was the Passover.

The sight which met the eyes of Jesus as He came to the pool of Bethesda was a pitiful one. Sick, lame, and impotent folk, many in pain, were lying about, waiting for the stirring of the waters. It was believed that the first person to enter the waters following this would be healed. This seems a superstitious belief, and many attempts have been made to discount the supernatural elements in it. However, it is very dangerous to rationalize or explain away any of the miracles recorded in the Bible. "Is anything too hard for God?"

96. Underline your choice: a.) That healings took place at the Pool of Bethesda was a superstitious belief. b.) That healings were accomplished at Bethesda could be accounted for by psychological reasons. c.) The healings at Bethesda were real and miraculous.

**Verses 5 through 9.** How Jesus knew that this man had been helpless for many years is not important. He knew it and asked if he wished to be made well. The helpless man, not expecting a miracle, tells his sad story, hoping merely that he might receive help in getting into the pool first after the stirring of the waters. How astonished he must have been to hear his questioner say, "Arise, take up your bed and walk." He must have felt the immediate thrill of renewed life in his body, and was able to arise, pick up his cot, and walk away. It all took place on their Sabbath.

97. True or False? Jesus required faith in the part of the impotent man before he could be healed.

**Verses 10 through 18.** These verses record the growing opposition of the Jewish leaders to Jesus, and the questioning of His authority.

**Verses 10 through 13.** The Jews who criticized the one who was healed for carrying his bed on the Sabbath had probably witnessed the whole affair and were merely seeking to find fault with Jesus. When the man answered, "The one who made me well told me to pick up my bed and walk," they did not ask who had made him well but, "Who was the man that said to you, 'Pick up your bed and walk.?' " Breaking the Sabbath was the most common accusation brought against Jesus by the Jews.

98. When the Jews questioned the healed man, they were not so much interested in entrapping him as they were in finding grounds to accuse Jesus of

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**Verses 13 through 16.** Jesus disappeared into the crowd, but later met the man in the temple and said to him, "Now you are well. Do not sin any more lest a worse thing may happen to you." My understanding of the biblical position is that sickness and death entered the world through sin, but not all sickness can be directly attributed to the one who is ill. (See John 9:1 - 3.)

99. True or False? Jesus showed that He knew all about this man's earlier life when He said to him, "Do not sin any more, lest a worse thing befall you."

After this, the man told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him whole. The Jews then sought to kill Jesus because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

100. The Jews now sought to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

**Read verses 17 through 47.** This section records the anger of the Jews against Jesus, their rejection of the authority He claimed as God's Son, and Jesus' vindication of that claim.

**Verses 17 and 18.** In this encounter, Jesus put His work, His teaching and healing ministry, on the same level as God's. This infuriated the Jews even more. In their eyes, He had not only broken the Sabbath, but also claimed to be equal with God. The terrible hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders is very evident in this event; no feeling of joy at the deliverance of this man from his crippling disease, but only the nit-picking attitude of professional fault-finders.

101. True or False? The Jewish leaders rejected Jesus' claim to authority as the Son of God.

**Verses 19 and 20.** Jesus continued the vindication of His ministry, claiming that His work and His Father's work were one and the same. Their unity was not through binding ordinances; they were bound by love, not law, into a perfect unity of will and purpose. Nothing that the Father did was hidden from the Son.

102. True or False? Jesus said He could do nothing of Himself, but did only what He saw the Father doing.

**Verse 21.** In the latter part of the previous verse, Jesus said that the Father would show Him even greater works. Verse 21 would seem to indicate that the "greater works" are raising the dead and quickening them. Commentators describe this as one act in two stages. The important thing is that Jesus asserted the right to perform these miracles in accord and with God's will.

103. "The Son \_\_\_\_\_ whom He will."

**Verses 22 and 23.** Although in these and previous verses, Jesus claimed equality with the Father and that in honoring Him the Father was honored, he carefully pointed out that the task of judging humanity has been allotted to Him.

The "right" of judging all men has been given to Jesus that they may honor Him as they honor the Father.

**104.** The right to \_\_\_\_\_ has been given by the Father to the Son.

When men honor the Son in recognition of this right, they \_\_\_\_\_ the Father also.

**Verse 24.** This is a very important verse, but could easily be misunderstood unless all the circumstances involved are given consideration. Jesus said that all who received His word and believed on God who sent Him had passed from death into life. Jesus and the people to whom He was speaking were still under the "Old Covenant." The "New Covenant" could not come into force until after the death, burial, and resurrection. (See Romans 6:1 - 6.) Jesus had the power and the right to set the terms of salvation for those who came to Him at that time, as He did the thief on the cross.

**105.** Jesus set the terms of salvation for the people of His time when He said, "He who hears my word and believes on Him who sent Me. . . has passed from \_\_\_\_\_ into \_\_\_\_\_."

**Read again verses 25 through 29.**

**Verse 25.** Jesus said there is a time coming, beginning now, when the dead shall hearken to the voice of the Son of God and shall live. If it were not for that phrase that signifies that the time begins now, we would think that this would refer to the Resurrection, when the "trumpet sounds and the dead in Christ shall rise." But it cannot be this, so the dead are the spiritually dead who hear and obey Christ's word and thereby receive eternal life. The teaching here reinforces that in verse 24.

**106.** "Dead" in verse 25 refers to the \_\_\_\_\_ dead.

**Verses 26 through 29.** These verses restated Jesus' claim to authority over life, both physical and spiritual, and His right of judgment. He did add something new, however, when He said, "For the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth. . ." In the former verse He told those living then how they could be saved; here He was talking about the resurrection and judgment, when good and bad would receive their just reward.

**107.** In these verses Jesus was talking about the physically dead and the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Verse 30.** This verse seems a repetition and amplification of verse 19. The argument here is that, because He does not make decisions just to please Himself, but only in accordance with the Father's will, His judgment is true.

108. God is \_\_\_\_\_ and as Jesus desired only to do God's will, His judgments must also be \_\_\_\_\_.

**Verse 31 through 38.** Again it is the matter of authority. Under Jewish law, the witness of one person was inadmissible and it was to this which Jesus referred in verse 31. He then proceeded to name three witnesses: John the Baptist, the miracles which He performed, and the Father. The Father witnessed to Him through the Prophets and also at His baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration.

109. Jesus rules out His own witness and then names three that testify to the truth of His claim to Divine Authority: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Read verses 39 through 41 again.**

**Verses 39 and 40.** "You search the scriptures," said Jesus. But searching the scriptures is not enough. We need to study them seriously with a mind set to learn God's will. Too often we search the scriptures to find "proof text" which supports our own position. That is what the Jews were doing; zealously supporting their party's position, but giving little thought to pleasing God. Yes, they should have found eternal life in the scriptures. Had they studied with open minds, they would have been led to Jesus, the author of eternal life.

110. True or False? Through reverential study of the Scriptures, the Jews should have been led to the source of eternal life.

**Verse 41 and 44.** These two verses deal with the same subject and therefore are considered together. One of the most subtle pitfalls in the path of the Christian worker is seeking honor from men. A young worker starts out enthusiastic, zealous, and devoted to the cause of Christ. He achieves a measure of success and receives praise from men. This proves such strong tonic, that his ego begins to expand, and gradually receiving honors and applause from a man becomes of first importance. Love for God has not been strong enough to keep *self* in subjection. "How can you believe," asked Jesus, "you who receive honor from men and seek not the honor that comes from God only." What a terrible indictment of the proud, who take to themselves the glory that belongs to God alone.

111. Jesus strongly condemns those who seek \_\_\_\_\_ from men rather than from God.

**Verses 42 and 43.** Jesus gave the lack of love for God as the underlying reason for their failure to recognize Him as the Son of God and to honor Him as such. He was

of humble birth, from a despised village, and He assumed the posture of a servant, therefore, "He was despised and rejected of men." Another, coming in wealth, position, and power, and flaunting his own would gladly be received. This is the way of the world, then and now.

112. If the Jews had loved and honored God as they should have, they would have \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus as God's Son.

**Verses 45 through 47.** The critics of Jesus boasted of their belief in Moses, but Jesus told them that if they had truly believed on Moses, they would have believed in Him, for Moses wrote of Him. (Deuteronomy 18:18.) Therefore, there was no need for Jesus to accuse them, as they were already convicted by the very writings of Moses. They stood convicted of hypocrisy and unbelief, and it could hardly be expected that they would believe the words of Jesus.

113. When the Jews who were critical of Jesus claimed to believe in Moses and yet refused to believe Jesus' words, they were guilty of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**ANSWERS:**

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| 95. True   | 104. Judge, honor            |
| 96. Be assured in your own mind of the answer, either (a) or (c) | 105. Death, life             |
| 97. False  | 106. Spiritually             |
| 98. Sabbath breaking   | 107. Judgement, resurrection |
| 99. True   | 108. Just, just              |
| Prophets   | 109. John, miracles, Father, |
| 100. Kill  | 110. True                    |
| 101. True  | 111. Honor                   |
| 102. True  | 112. Recognized              |
| 103. Quickeneth  | 113. Hypocrisy, unbelief     |