

JOHN 5 | *The Father and the Son*

Third Sign: Invalid Healed at Bethesda Pool

1 After this there was a feast¹ of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades.² 3 In these lay a multitude of invalids—blind, lame, and paralysed.³ 5 One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.⁴ 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew⁵ that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, Do you want to be healed?⁶ 7 The sick man answered him,

Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.⁷

8 Jesus said to him, Get up, take up your bed, and walk.⁸ 9 And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked.⁹

Jesus, Sabbath Breaker

Now that day was the Sabbath.¹⁰ 10 So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed. 11 But he answered them, The man who healed me, that man said to me, Take up your bed, and walk. 12 They asked him, Who is the man who said to you, Take up your bed and walk? 13 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. 14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, See, you are well! Sin no more,

¹ This may be the second Passover of *John*. Three other Passovers are mentioned (Jn 2:23; 6:4; 11:55).

² A twin pool north of the temple area was discovered in 1856 at St Anne's Church, and many have since identified it with this locale (D. F. Payne, "[Bethesda, Bethzatha](#)," *NBD*, 132). It's architectural style and inscription point to Herodian times, making it one of the many magnificent building projects of Herod the Great (W. A. Elwell and B. J. Beitzel, "[Beth-Zatha](#)," *Baker Encyclopaedia of the Bible*, 294). No extant Greek manuscript before ad 400 contains the omitted v. 4 (E. A. Blum, *BKC*, 2:289).

³ Our world has a multitude of invalids. Things haven't changed.

⁴ Very likely the malady happened in childhood.

⁵ See *Jesus' Omniscience* (Jn 1:48; 2:24-25; 4:18).

⁶ Before we want healing, we must recognise we are sick. **Is 1:5-6** 5 Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds. They are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil. **Lk 5:31** 31 ... Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

⁷ The sick man's situation is seemingly hopeless.

⁸ Jesus' word is powerful, and what he can do on a small scale he can do on a large scale. See *Jesus' Omniscience*.

⁹ **Is 35:6** 6 ... Then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

¹⁰ See *Sabbath*.

that nothing worse may happen to you.¹¹ 15 The man went away and told the Jews¹² that it was Jesus who had healed him. 16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath.

Father and Son Working Together

17 But Jesus answered them,

My Father is working (pres.) until now, and I am working (pres.).¹³

18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. 19 So Jesus said to them,

Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he desires (θέλω, pres.).

22 For the Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honour the Son, just as they honour the Father. Whoever does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.

24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life.¹⁴ He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.¹⁵ 25 Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.¹⁶ 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have

¹¹ Jesus is warning the invalid, who has not yet believed in him, that hell is worse than being an invalid.

¹² We are not told whether the invalid believed in Jesus.

¹³ This is a bold claim by Jesus that he is equal to God and was understood as such. God of course rested on the seventh day (Ge 2:2-3) from his work of creation. But Jesus pointed to the continuous work of God as a justification for his Sabbath activity. God sustains the universe and gives life on the Sabbath. So does the Son (E. A. Blum, *BKC*, 2:290). In many respects, God never takes a day off. Neither does Jesus.

¹⁴ **Jn 3:18** 18 Whoever believes in [the Son] is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

¹⁵ **1 Jn 3:14** 14 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death. **Ro 6:13** 13 ...Present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life.... **Eph 2:5** 5 ...Even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Messiah—by grace you have been saved....

¹⁶ **Jn 11:43** 43 ...Jesus cried out with a loud voice, Lazarus, come out.

done evil to the resurrection of judgment.¹⁷ 30 I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own desire (θέλημα) but the desire (θέλημα) of him who sent me.¹⁸

Five Witnesses to Jesus

31 If I alone testify about myself, my testimony is not true.¹⁹ 32 There is another who testifies about me, and I know that the testimony that he testifies about me is true. 33 You sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. 34 Not that the testimony that I receive is from man, but I say these things so that you may be saved. 35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. 36 But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John.²⁰

For the works²¹ that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, testify about me that the Father has sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified about me.²² His voice you have never heard, his form you have never seen, 38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe the one whom he has sent.²³ 39 You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life. And it is they that testify about me,²⁴ 40 yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

¹⁷ **Da 12:2** 2 ...Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

¹⁸ **Jn 4:34** 34 ...My food is to do the desire of [the Father] who sent me and to accomplish his work. **Jn 8:29** 29 ...He [the Father] who sent me [Jesus] is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.

¹⁹ **Jn 8:14** 14 Jesus answered, Even if I do testify about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going....

²⁰ **Jn 10:41** 41 ...Many came to [Jesus]. And they said, John did no sign, but everything that John said about this man was true.

²¹ “Works” and “signs” are synonymous. **Jn 3:2** 2 [Nicodemus] came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.

²² **Mt 3:17** 17 ...Behold, a voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. **Mt 17:5** 5 ...A voice from the cloud said, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. Listen to him! **Jn 12:28** 28 ...A voice came from heaven: I have glorified [my name], and I will glorify it again.

²³ **Jn 6:45** 45 It is written in the Prophets, And they will all be taught by God. Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me.... **1 Jn 5:9-12** 9 If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater, for this is the testimony of God that he has borne concerning his Son. 10 Whoever believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself. Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son. 11 And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life. Whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

²⁴ **Jn 12:41** 41 Isaiah said these things because he saw [Jesus’] glory and spoke of him.

41 I do not receive glory from people. 42 But I know that you do not have the love of God within you.²⁵ 43 I have come in my Father's name, and you do not receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. 44 How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God (τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ)?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you: Moses, on whom you have set your hope. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?²⁶

²⁵ **Dt 6:5** 5 You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.

²⁶ **Lk 16:29-31** 29 ... Abraham said, They have Moses and the Prophets. Let them hear them. 30 And [the rich man] said, No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will change their minds. 31 He said to him, If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead. **2 Co 3:15** 15 Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts.

Biblical Worldview

1. Third Sign: Invalid Healed at Bethesda Pool (Jn 5:1-9).

- a. This is a chess match, and Jesus decides it is time to make another move. This third sign is done during a feast (v. 1) in the heart of enemy territory, Jerusalem (v. 1). Previously Jesus had withdrawn to Galilee (Jn 4:3).
- b. This is John's first official sign in Jerusalem, although Jesus did many signs there (Jn 2:23). John selects this one to show the heightened conflict between Jesus and the Jewish leaders over the Sabbath.
- c. This early sign from Jesus foreshadows the early sign Peter and John will present just after Pentecost (Ac 3:6-7). Both healings are public and concern a person who have been physically handicapped for many decades. They are signs means specifically for the Jewish leaders and people of Jerusalem.

2. Jesus, Sabbath Breaker (Jn 5:9-16).

- a. Instead of getting upset about Sabbath-breaking, the Jewish leaders should have rejoiced at the arrival of Messiah.
 - (1) Is 35:3-6 3 Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. 4 Say to those who have an anxious heart, Be strong! Fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you. 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. 6 Then shall the lame man leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

3. Father and Son Working Together (Jn 5:17-30).

- a. See *The Father and The Son* and *Jesus' Deity*.
- b. The Father and the Son are co-equal.
- c. Jesus does what only God can do. He:
 - (1) Works continually, even on the Sabbath.
 - (2) Has life in himself.
 - (3) Gives life to whom he desires.
 - (4) Raises the dead
 - (5) Judges the world.

4. Five Witnesses (Jn 5:31-47).

- a. John the Baptist (vv. 31-36).
- b. Works (v. 36).
- c. The Father (vv. 37-38).
- d. Scriptures (v. 39).
 - (1) Prophets.
 - (2) Writings.
- e. Moses (vv. 45-47).
 - (1) Direct prophecies.
 - (2) Typical prophecies.
- f. All five of these witnesses were ones the Jewish leaders respected. Nevertheless, they do not believe.

- 5. The Ten Negatives of the Jewish Leaders (Jn 5:37-47).** The Jewish leaders:
- a. Never heard the Father's voice (37).
 - b. Never saw the Father's form (37).
 - c. Didn't have God's word (λόγος) abiding in them (38).
 - d. Didn't believe the one the Father sent (38).
 - e. Refused to come to Jesus for life (40).
 - f. Didn't have the love fo God within them (42).
 - g. Didn't receive Jesus (43).
 - h. Didn't seek the glory that comes from the only God (44).
 - i. Didn't believe Moses' writings (47).
 - j. Didn't believe Jesus' words (47).
- 6. The Ideal Father-Son Relationship.**
- a. Like the Father, we should:
 - (1) Work hard consistently (17).
 - (2) Love our sons (20).
 - (3) Show our sons the works we are doing (20).
 - (4) Give authority to our sons (22, 27).
 - (5) Share honour with our sons (23).
 - (6) Give our sons works to accomplish (36).
 - (7) Testify about our sons (37).
 - b. Like the Son, we should:
 - (1) Work when our father is working (17).
 - (2) Work alongside our father (17).
 - (3) Do what we see our father doing (19).
 - (4) Share honour with our father (23).
 - (5) Do nothing on our own (30).
 - (6) Judge as we hear from our father (30).
 - (7) Seek the desire of our father (30).
 - (8) Do the works our father has give us to accomplish (36).
 - (9) Come in our father's name (43).
 - (10) Seek the glory that comes from our father (44).
- 7. Application.**
- a. Come to Jesus and believe in him (vv. 24, 38, 44, 46-47).
 - b. Believe the testimony of the six witnesses (vv. 31-47).
 - c. If you are a parent or a child, imitate the relationship the Father has with the Son.
 - (1) Be a father like the Father.
 - (2) Be a son like the Son.