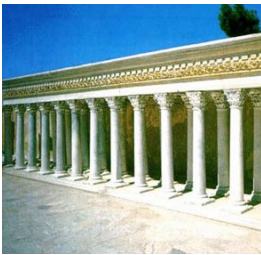


III. The Controversy Regarding Jesus Christ. (5:1 - 12:50)

A. At a Feast in Jerusalem (5:1-47)

1. The healing of the lame man - Sign # 3 (5:1-9)

a. (5:1) **Jesus attended a feast** in Jerusalem. 2nd. Passover or Purim?



b. (5:2) **The pool in Jerusalem.** "Bethesda." This word means "house of grace or mercy." The sheep gate is located on the northeast section of the wall going around Jerusalem. These porches were covered arcades, colonnades, or verandas, open at one side but enclosed on the other side which provided protection against the sun or rain overhead.

c. (5:3) **A miserable and helpless crowd** was laying in the porches waiting for the stirring of the water when one could be healed. They may picture the spiritual condition of the multitude of the sinners in the world.

d. (5:4) **See lesson 23 a**, supplement by Albert Barnes.

e. (5:5) **The man was lame for 38 years.** Impotent, without strength. Some find it analogous that Israel wandered in the wilderness for 38 years. (Deut. 2:14)

f. (5:6) **Jesus' question: Do you want to be healed?** Christ chose this man. Some ask critically, Why did Christ not heal all the needy at the pool? But that is the wrong question. The right question is, "Why did Christ heal anyone at the pool?" In Matthew 12:15 Christ healed them all.

The question implies a doubt. The man responded in a negative manner reflecting only on the hopelessness of his case. He did not enthusiastically respond in the affirmative. (Mt. 9:27- two blind men: "Son of David, have mercy on us," and Mt. 15:22 – a woman of Canaan, whose daughter was vexed by demons) There are many who are not anxious for health with all the demands it makes upon the life, with its requirement of self-sacrifice and personal temperance. It seems easier to keep up with the bad (sinful habits) and accept the ill consequences, rather than change the behavior, get healthy and jump into the flow of life. People do not want to give up bad habits.

g. (5:7) **No one to help.** The human drama. We need one another. Even the most seemingly independent person will come to the end of the rope, and it is at this point in time that the realization of mutual dependence is learned.

h. (5:8) “Rise, take up your mattress **and walk.”** There is no indication of faith by the man. He addresses Jesus as “SIR.” Later, in verse 13 he stated that he did not know who the man was who healed him. **Jesus SPOKE!**

i. (5:9a) Wholeness and strength flowed through the man. He picked up his prison (bed) and walked. Quite different than today’s pseudo healing services.

j. (5:9b) It was the Sabbath. A festival Sabbath! This statement by the Apostle John is keynote upon which the following DISCOURSE of Jesus Christ rests. Many of his mighty works were done on the Sabbath to teach a lesson about the relationship of Christ and the Sabbath. John later recorded the cure of a blind man on the Sabbath (chap. 9).

Other Sabbath Works by Jesus

- i. The grain-picking (Mark 2:23-28),
- ii. The healing of a shriveled hand (Mark 3:1-5),
- iii. Curing a woman who had been crippled for 18 years (Luke 13:10-17)
- iv. Healing a man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-6)

The Culture of the Traditions of the Elders (Mat. 15:2) had so bound up Sabbath keeping with external knots that the Jews overlooked the Mercy and Grace applied by Jesus to this suffering man. Instead, they focused on the ritual aspects rather than the substance of showing justice and kindness. The “Establishment System” at work! Do not rock the boat!

2. **The reaction of the Jews (5:10-16)**

a. (5:10) Rabbinic Restrictions re.: Sabbath. You cannot carry your bed! Never mind the miraculous healing of his ailment!

b. (5:11) The man’s Response. The man who healed him told him to take up the bed roll and walk. Surely, if this “MAN” had the power to heal, his command to take up your “bed” and walk must be valid.

c. (5:12) The inquiry, WHO IS THE MAN? The “Jews” ignore the work of mercy and healing and focus on their man-made artificial tradition. The helpless multitudes remain in their state of hopelessness, while priests and Levites revel in their tradition. Here is ONE, Who reached down and lifted a man up from the mire. That is unacceptable to the status quo. These “Jews” knew Who it was. They were from Jerusalem and followed Jesus, hoping to trap Him.