

## I. John 5:1-47 – Hated for Good

### A. John 5:1-16 – The third sign miracle: healing a lame man

1. John 5:1 – *After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem* . It is interesting that John organized this part of his Gospel (chapters 5-11) around several Jewish **feasts** the Lord attended.
  - a. The Mosaic Law commanded the Israelites to **celebrate** three feasts: Passover, the Feast of Weeks (later known as Pentecost) and the Feast of Booths, or Tabernacles. The Jews still celebrated a semblance of these feasts, but it is unclear which one Jesus attended here. Deuteronomy 16:1-16
  - b. Although this chapter begins with a festival in Jerusalem, Jesus challenged manmade Sabbath traditions throughout the entire chapter. To the religious legalist of the day it may have seemed Jesus was opposed to the Law of Moses, but this was not so. Jesus was opposed, however, to manmade laws and **religious** tradition. Matthew 5:17
  - c. Sabbath keeping focused people’s eyes on religion rather than on their actual need for redemption. Due to their obsession with rule keeping, the people of Israel were going to **miss** the Messiah. The Sabbath was not given to be a burden to Israel but rather a gift: a day when they could get some much-needed rest. Mark 2:27, Romans 10:1-4
2. John 5:2 – *Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes* . Interestingly, the Lamb of God likely entered the pool of Bethesda via the **sheep** gate. Bethesda means house of mercy or kindness. Jesus, the Lamb of God, was about to show unelicited kindness to an undeserving paralytic.
3. John 5:3 – *In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, [waiting for the moving of the waters ...]* The hopelessness of this mass of sick individuals reminds us of the hopeless, sin-sick condition of all humanity. These people needed physical help. Similarly, **all** people need spiritual help. God alone provides.
4. John 5:4 – [*..for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted .]* John explained a common belief surrounding the moving of the waters at the **pool**.
  - a. John did not comment on the **validity** of this belief; he simply stated what was alleged to occur. It is totally possible that the water was occasionally agitated by an angel and that this was not just a local myth.
  - b. In view of the **large** number of suffering people lying near the pool in hopeful expectancy, it seems possible that people were occasionally healed of diseases.
5. John 5:5 – *A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years*. Notice the long span of time this man had been crippled. God purposefully had John include this significant **detail** in the narrative. 2 Timothy 3:16-17
6. John 5:6 – *When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, “Do you wish to get well?”* Jesus purposely **chose** this man because of how long he had been crippled. If this man were healed, it would be an obvious miracle only God could do. John 11:4
7. John 5:7 – *The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”* Instead of simply answering Jesus’ question, the man explained his predicament. After unsuccessfully waiting so long, his situation must have begun to feel somewhat **hopeless**.
8. John 5:8 – *Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.”* Even though this man had been crippled most of his life, Jesus audaciously gave him three impossible **commands**: get up, pick up, and walk. Discernibly, in his own strength, the man was powerless to do what Jesus said.
9. John 5:9 – *Immediately the man became well and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day* . Christ instantaneously and completely restored this man to health. Only an all-powerful **Creator** God could bring about such an incredible miracle! Here are some thoughts to be gleaned from this event. Colossians 1:15-17, 2:9
  - a. First, just like this man by human **willpower** alone could not fulfill Jesus’ command to get up and walk, no one can walk in obedience to Christ apart from His enabling power. John 15:4-5
  - b. Second, God always gives the **grace** needed to do whatever He asks. In this verse, He graciously provided the man everything necessary to obey His orders. 1 Corinthians 10:13, 12:9; 2 Corinthians 3:4; Ephesians 3:16, 6:10; Philippians 4:13; Colossians 1:11
  - c. Third, Jesus was **intentional** in all He did. He deliberately chose a man who had been ill for a long time. He intentionally healed the man on the Sabbath, and He knowingly told him to carry his bed.

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10. John 5:10 – *So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.”* Jesus healed the man and intentionally told him to carry his bed on the Sabbath day. This was to confront the **false** religious system of the Jews. The traditions of the religious leaders had wrongfully replaced the truth.
11. John 5:11 – *But he answered them, “He who made me well was the one who said to me, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk.’”* The healed man answered his questioners in a way that avoided personal responsibility. It was the healer’s **fault**, not his.
12. John 5:12 – *They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk?’”* The Pharisees’ question showed they were more interested in finding a **law** breaker than in meeting an amazing miracle worker. They were bitter, not joyful. This attitude is characteristic of all legalists. Matthew 12:7, 15:3-9
13. John 5:13 – *But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place .* This man did not know who had healed him because Jesus had quietly disappeared into the **crowd**. Mark 7:9
14. John 5:14 – *Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.”* From Jesus’ statement, it is clear that this man had, prior to his illness, committed some sin. The fact that Jesus found him in the **temple** may have been an indication of a changed heart.
  - a. From Genesis 3:16-19, we know that ultimately all sickness is connected back to the original sin of **Adam** and is the result of the curse God placed on creation. At the same time, many illnesses have nothing to do with an individual’s personal sins.
  - b. In this instance, however, Jesus’ statement shows that this man’s illness **was** directly related to a former sin. Jesus warned him not to return to his sin so that something worse would not happen to him.
15. John 5:15 – *The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well .* It is interesting that scripture does not record this man expressing any **thanks** to Jesus. On the contrary, upon learning that it was Jesus who healed him, he quickly conveyed this information to the “Sabbath police,” the religious Jews.
16. John 5:16 – *For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath .* Because they held their traditions above the **word** of God, these religious leaders missed a perfect opportunity to meet and welcome their Messiah. Instead of embracing Jesus, they began to persecute Him. Religion always rejects truth.

## B. John 5:17-19 – The Son is God

1. John 5:17 – *But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.”* Jesus’ statement was an obvious **claim** to deity as shown in the negative reaction of the religious elite. This event marked a turning point in Christ’s relationship with the religious leaders of the day. From this point onward they wanted him dead.
2. John 5:18 – *For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.* Amazingly, the religious leaders, those whose job was to promote impartiality and justice, wanted to **kill** Jesus.
  - a. They correctly understood that Jesus had indeed claimed **equality** with God when he called God his own Father. Also, He had deliberately defied their legalism by breaking their manmade Sabbath rules.
  - b. Jesus’ healing on the Sabbath and His claims to deity put these false religious leaders on the offensive. He was now considered a threat to their **power** and influence over Israel.

## C. John 5:19-21 – The Son is omnipotent

1. John 5:19 – Jesus did not **deny** the charge that He claimed equality with God. Instead He sought to prove His claims with verifiable evidence.
  - a. John 5:19a – *Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing... Jesus said that His actions as the **Son** were in total harmony with the Father. He only did what He viewed the Father doing, nothing more.*
  - b. John 5:19b – *... for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner .* Anything the Father could do, Jesus said He could also do in the **exact** same manner. With this statement, Jesus communicated that He was coequal with the Father in **power** and ability. This was an open claim to deity.
2. John 5:20a – *“ For the Father loves the Son and shows Him all things that He Himself is doing ...”* Jesus was in perfect fellowship with His Father every day of His life. Jesus said that the Father had an intimate **love**

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PHILEO for Him as His Son. The Father showed Jesus everything He was doing. No ordinary human could make such claims. Matthew 3:17

3. John 5:20b – “... *and the Father will show Him greater works than these, so that you will marvel.*” Jesus said the Father was going to show the Son greater works than the miracle of raising a bedridden man. When the Father did these greater **works** by means of the Son, Israel would be astonished at His amazing power. John 3:35
4. John 5:21 – “*For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes.*” Jesus would raise the dead. They would be witnesses of this fact. The Son of God has the same authority and power to impart life as the Father. Jesus had given life to the dead legs of a bedridden man. Later He would give **life** to dead people.

## D. John 5:22-23 – The Son is judge

1. John 5:22 – “*For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.*” The fact that the Father gave the Son authority to **judge**, proves the Son is equal with the Father. Whatever the Father can do, the Son can equally do. Jesus has been entrusted by the Father with the full authority to pass judgement.
2. John 5:23 – *So that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father.* He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Having been granted absolute authority as judge, Jesus merited the same **honor** and reverence as the Father. This statement was yet another direct claim by Jesus Christ to deity.
  - a. In the mind of the average Israelite, if a person made a claim of equality with God, He was blasphemous and worthy of **death**. However, Jesus was God. He was the promised Messiah and Immanuel, God with us. All of Israel ought to have fully revered the Son just as they revered the Father who sent Him. Psalm 2:12
  - b. It is never considered to be a good thing to cross a judge. Israel’s religious leaders were playing with fire when they blatantly defied and challenged Christ’s **authority**. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10

## E. John 5:24-30 – The Son is life

1. John 5:24 – “*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*” Jesus immediately followed up His strong, but **true**, statements about His right to judge and condemn, with a way of escape.
  - a. Whenever Jesus Christ said, “Truly, truly,” you can be **certain** beyond a shadow of doubt that what He said was both of utmost importance and undeniably truthful.
  - b. Jesus promised that whoever hears His word and believes the Father will **escape** condemnation. This is a promise you can rely on. The moment an unbeliever trusts in Christ alone for salvation, he or she instantly possesses eternal life. Acts 16:31, 1 John 5:12
  - c. Jesus graciously showed these malicious religious leaders how they could escape judgment and obtain eternal **life**. This was good news, but most of them rejected what He said.
  - d. In relation to His future judgement of the world, Jesus taught about two resurrections: a resurrection to life for those who believe and a resurrection to death for those who **reject** Him.
2. John 5:25 – *Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.* Jesus not only raised the dead when was here (now is), He also promised a future **resurrection** for all those who believe in Him (is coming). John 11:25, Colossians 3:4, 1 Corinthians 15:20-24, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17
3. John 5:26 – *For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself.* This is an amazing statement. Life begins and ends with **God**. Humans don’t give life, not physical temporal life or eternal life. We don’t have life in ourselves; it is given to us by God. Genesis 2:7; John 1:4, 11:25, 14:6; 1 John 1:2, 5:11
4. John 5:27 – ... *and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man.* Because Jesus is the Son of Man (see Daniel 7:13-14) God gave Him authority to judge humanity. Christ now possesses the **authority** that Adam foolishly surrendered at the fall. Genesis 1:26-28, Hebrews 2:6-8, Revelation 1:13
5. John 5:28-29a – “*Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice ...and will come forth.*” Jesus prophesied that **He** would one day initiate the resurrection of the dead. He told his hearers not to be surprised at this fact. The dead of the earth (those in tombs), would hear His voice and come to life.
6. John 5:29b – “...*those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life...*” **Both** believers and unbelievers will one day be resurrected, but only those “*who did the good deeds*” will be resurrected to life. What does this mean?

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- a. We know from passages like Isaiah 64:6 that the natural man is incapable of doing truly **good** deeds. Romans 3:10 says “ *there is none righteous, not even one.*” The ones referred to here as doing good deeds are the redeemed sons and daughters of God. Only the righteous are able to do good deeds. Romans 6:20, 7:18
  - b. Christ’s righteousness in a person’s life is the only **source** of good deeds. At the moment of salvation, God declares a believer righteous. Only after salvation is a person capable of doing good. Therefore, the resurrection to life for “ *those who did the good deeds*” refers exclusively to believers. 2 Corinthians 5:21, Galatians 5:16-25
7. John 5:29 – “ *...those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment...*” The unsaved are resurrected to face judgment. Those who *committed the evil deeds* as spoken of here characterizes all the unrighteous who failed to trust in Christ. An unrighteous person can only produce **evil** deeds. 1 John 3:10, Revelation 20:11-15
8. John 5:30 – “ *I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*” Before advancing, Jesus summarized the evidence of His deity. He reminded His audience that He did not say these things on his **own** authority or initiative. He was following the Father’s will.
- a. Jesus was indeed **Messiah**. The religious leaders should have recognized this truth.

Jesus was now going to call witnesses to the stand to **testify** to the truth of His claims.