

Signs

Healing by the Pool

John 5:1-9

July 23, 2017 pm

HDBC

John's purpose in writing his gospel is stated in John 20:30-31

Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that, believing you may have life in His name.

Signs are designed to point us in the right direction. In his gospel, John records seven miracles performed by Jesus. These point to His divine nature. John wrote his account of the life of Christ, including those miracles, to clearly point out that Jesus is the divine Son of God. **John's desire** was that the readers of his gospel would believe that Jesus is the Christ and through that belief would have eternal life.

Only God can do miracles. Jesus did miracles. Therefore, Jesus must be God.

Jesus turned water into wine during a wedding in Cana.

Jesus healed a man's son who was sick with a serious fever.

Once again we find Jesus doing the supernatural. John 5:1-9

This is one of the most intriguing stories in the New Testament. In it we will see a man who has been crippled for 38 years. He is waiting and hoping for a miracle. A guy whose hope has faded, leading him to a sense of despair and desperation. After all that time, his miracle comes in the person of Jesus.

Read the Text John 5:1-9 (part of verse 3 and all of verse 4 missing)

In NIV, ESV and some other translations you will note that verse 4 is missing. In other translations, after the word **paralyzed** you would find the following words.

waiting for the moving of the water; ⁴for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred the water: whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had.

Why is it not in ESV and some other translations?

Ten statements:

1. **We do not have the original documents**
2. **The English translations do not come from a single document.**
We have multiple copies of the various texts of the books of the Bible.
3. **The originals were copied by hand, over and over.**
4. **The copies are from a wide range of dates.**
5. **There is incredible consistency in almost every part of Bible.**
6. **There are a few places where there are variations among the copies**
7. **Where there are variations, the goal is to determine the original.**
8. **It is more likely that a phrase was added than that a phrase was deleted.**
9. **The older manuscripts are typically considered to be more accurate.**
10. **In this case there are words in these phrases that are not used by John anywhere else.**

These words have not been found in the oldest and most reliable manuscripts of Scripture and there is great doubt as to whether or not they should be included. If they were not part of the original, how did they get there?

They would have probably been added by someone copying the scripture who added a note of his own, trying to explain the text. Apparently there was superstitious belief that this was actually happening. A scribe simply inserted that explanation, probably as a note to the text. Then a later scribe assumed it was part of the original.

The stirring of the water could have come from movements from the underground spring that fed this pool or from minor movements in the earth's underground plates.

1. **The Setting (1-2)**

A. **The Time**

In the city of Jerusalem during **a feast of the Jews**. Do not know which feast. Not important. Whichever one it was, it would mean an increase in the population of the city. In other words, the city would be buzzing with activity.

B. The Place

Pool of Bethesda. Greek translation of Hebrew word that means "**house of mercy.**" Pool located near the sheep gate along the northern wall of the old city of Jerusalem. Apparently it was through that gate that the sheep were brought in for sacrifice. This pool was near it.

Today they know where it was. Located just north of the Temple Mount. Found the pools. Text says there were five roofed colonnades that provided shade. Found those five porches. Also found many small idols of the rod and snake, the symbol of the god of healing. Still the symbol of medicine today.

2. The People (3)

This place filled with people. **Like a giant hospital ward**, the place around the pool was filled with people who had all kinds of physical problems.

Came there not to socialize, but to receive healing. There was the belief that when the waters were stirred or moved in a special way that healing could be secured by the first one into the water.

The point of the passage is that these are people who are hurting, discouraged, and helpless. They are in need of something outside of their control. This was a place of suffering, despair and desperation.

3. The Man (5)

The passage quickly **focuses on one particular man** who has all but lost hope. Note some things about this man. He is disabled and desperate.

Been sick for thirty-eight years. That is a long time. He has been sick for longer than Jesus has been on the earth. The word that is translated "ill" refers to some kind of physical malady that prevented him from being able to walk.

He had no way of getting his body into the water in an attempt to be healed. He probably had come to the point where he did not expect to be healed. He may have been there simply because there was no other place to go and no other thing to do.

4. The Miracle (6-9)

When a man comes to the end of himself and comes to realize that he is **totally hopeless**, he is often most ready for the Lord to step into his life and perform a miracle. **Miracles most often show up when the situation is hopeless.**

Notice some details about Jesus as he encountered this man.

A. The Eyes of Jesus (6a)

Our Lord has great vision. There were many people there that day. It was a busy place. Most of us would simply have seen a crowd. **But the Lord chose to focus on a person instead of a group.** That is the way He works.

He loves to work with individual hearts. Even when many are saved and touched at the same time, God does His work with each person individually. He was touched by this man's condition and wanted to do something about it. He was moved to act.

I have read that the first time Abe Lincoln saw a living slave being offered on the slave block, he recoiled within. He said “There was a rising hatred inside of me against slavery, and I swore if someday I could do something about it I would do something about it.”

Like Lincoln, Jesus was moved by the human condition and moved not simply to feel, but to act. Jesus saw Him and He sees you.

B. The Question of Jesus

Do you wish to get well?

Interesting question. No idle chit-chat here. Jesus already knew the facts. But wants to probe a little, for the man's benefit. Every question asked of Jesus was either rhetorical or for the benefit of others. It was never to seek information for Himself

He wanted the man to be confronted with the possibilities that were now before him. Jesus was offering this man the very thing for which he had lost hope. This man had been sick for a long time, and Jesus was offering to make him whole, well. **He was stirring this man out of his apathy**, and offering to make a change. But the choice would belong to the man.

He also wanted the man to acknowledge his helpless condition. For 38 years he has been unable to make it to the water, because he had no one to help him. He was helpless to heal himself.

C. The Command of Jesus

Simple command that would require faith on the part of the man. **Similar to Jesus' request for Peter to step out of the boat and walk on water.** Not much different for this man. A call to act in faith.

And the man does. He stood up on those weak legs and immediately they were filled with strength. His balance was supernaturally restored and he saw the world once more from the perspective of the physically upright. He walked.

5. Lessons from the Passage

A. Illustrates the Condition of Mankind

This man's sickness stands as a clear illustration of the condition of all men without Christ.

Jeremiah says “the heart is deceitful above all else and is terminally sick.”

Paul says we have been born in sin and were dead. The real problem in the world is not greed, pornography, alcohol, etc. They are only symptoms.

The real problem is sin. And because of our sin we are hopeless separated from God. Like this man, we cannot save ourselves. It takes a savior to step in and make us whole.

B. Illustrates the Compassion of the Savior

Notice that Jesus sought out this man. He came to him first. He desired to do this work of healing. It is that way with salvation, also. None would be saved, unless God first initiates the process of salvation.

C. Illustrates the Choice that is Offered

This man had to answer the question . . . ***Do you wish to be made well?***

God will not force His grace on anyone. It is simply and lovingly offered.

This is ultimately a story of Grace. Amazing Grace. Amazing Grace that can change your situation, regardless of how hopeless.