

THE HEALING AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA
JOHN 5:1-15
Verse by Verse Commentary

By Joseph Edwards II

Updated 02/20/25

INTRODUCTION

The healing of the infirmed man by Christ is a “type” which teaches the pathway to salvation that was established shortly after the death of Paul when the spirit of anti-Christ came into the church and devoured it (**Acts 20:29-31**). After the church became apostate near the end of the 1st century A.D., all the Elect have travelled or will travel this pathway which the “type” presented by the healing of the infirmed man lays out.

Here is a short summary of the pathway:

The pathway to salvation begins for an Elect person when Christ comes to them and gives them the Early Rain of the Spirit. At that time, the Elect person will become a believer (babe) and will enter the church. The Elect believer will then travel along the pathway to the point when Satan comes to them and plants the spirit of anti-Christ within them (Parable of the Wheat and the Tares). After Satan’s spirit indwells the Elect believer, they will be deceived by Satan’s lies (leavened bread, **Mat 13:33**) and will accept his “another gospel” (**2Cor 11:4**). Satan’s false gospel teaches the believer to mix “works” with faith. When a believer mixes the Old Wine with the New Wine, they are committing the sin that leads to death:

Prov 23:26 My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. 27 For a whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit. 28 She also lieth in wait as for a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men. 29 Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? 30 They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. 31 Look not thou upon the wine when it is red (Old Wine**), when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself (**man’s works**) aright. 32 At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.**

Christ describes this spiritual process presented above in Mat 12:43-45. After this spiritual process of devolution is complete, the believer will become “worse than the first” (**Mat 12:43:45**) – a man of sin.

After the Elect believer’s time as a man of sin has fully run its course, Christ will come to the Elect person a second time. When Christ comes to them, He will pour out the Latter Rain of the Spirit. With the Latter Rain of the Spirit, the Elect person will be made “ready” (faithful) for the Day of the Lord/Thousand Years Reign to commence. From this judgment, the spirit of anti-Christ will be removed and destroyed, along with the believer’s marred spirit which has a carnal and religious spiritual nature (the Great Harlot). The Elect believer will then be converted and saved.

VERSE BY VERSE COMMENTARY

John 5:1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

In verse 1, Christ was traveling to attend a Jewish feast in Jerusalem. Though it is not known exactly which feast it was, it makes sense that the feast was the Feast of Passover. If it was, it would make a total of four different Passover feasts which are mentioned during Jesus' earthly ministry. This would make His entire ministry 3 ½ years long. This length of time matches precisely with what Daniel's Seventy Weeks prophecy teaches.

For a detailed teaching on Daniel's prophecy, please read my paper entitled "Daniel's Seventy Weeks Prophecy".

John 5:2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having FIVE porches.

Neh 3:1 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they built the SHEEP GATE; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah, they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

The Sheep Gate is the sanctified entrance to Old Jerusalem because it symbolically leads to salvation. The High Priest who built the Sheep Gate represents Christ who is the ultimate High Priest and the author of our salvation:

Heb 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him; Called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.

Just through the Sheep Gate entrance is a pool of water known as the Pool of Bethesda. The name Bethesda means "House of Grace/Mercy".

The Pool of Bethesda represents the New Covenant of Grace through Faith and the water represents the Holy Spirit. When a person is immersed in the water, it represents them being baptized by the Holy Spirit (the Latter Rain). The healing that the person receives represents their salvation.

The pool also has Five Porches surrounding it. The number FIVE is a spiritual symbol for how a person approaches Christ for salvation. In this case, the Five Porches represents the straight way of faith.

John 5:3 In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

On the five porches is a great multitude of people. They are representative of all mankind (both Jews and Gentiles). The infirmities of the great multitude are understood as follows:

- 1). Being sick represents their sinfulness.
- 2). Being blind represents their spiritual blindness.

- 3). Being lame represents their inability to walk by faith.
- 4). Being withered (dry) represents that they are NOT being governed by the Holy Spirit.

John 5:4 For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

The angel who stirs the waters represents CHRIST. The “certain time” represents this present age of the New Covenant of Grace through Faith. The people who step down into the water first represent the Elect who are the First Fruits of mankind to be harvested into the Kingdom of Heaven and made whole (saved).

John 5:5 Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

The story now focuses on a CERTAIN MAN who represents mankind in their unbelieving & sinful spiritual state.

Verse 5 says the man has been ill for 38 years.

The number 38 is a spiritual symbol which is understood as $3 \times 10 + 8$. The number THREE represents a spiritual process and the number TEN represents completeness. The number EIGHT represents a new spiritual condition. When the symbols are combined into a single number (38), the resulting symbol represents the complete spiritual process which caused the man to become infirm by his sin. This spiritual process made him into a child of the devil.

1John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

John 5:6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?”

When Christ sees the “certain man” lying there, Christ knows that the man has been in his infirmed condition for a long time - since Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden of Eden.

Christ then shows mercy to the man and asks the infirmed man if he wants to be made well.

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.”

The man responds to Christ by saying that he has NO MAN to put him into the pool when the water is stirred up. This represents mankind’s true spiritual condition and shows that mankind has no ability of their own (no “works”) which can save them. The “man” that helps others into the pool represents Christ and His spiritual work that He does to save a person. Those who enter the pool are those who have already been given the Early Rain of the Spirit and have been

waiting for the stirring of the water. In other words, they are waiting for Christ to “come again” and give them the baptism of the Spirit/Latter Rain.

These scriptures apply:

Heb 9:28 So Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation (Latter Rain) to those (babes/Early Rain only) who are waiting for him.

James 5:7 Be patient therefore, brethren (babes/Early Rain only), unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receives the EARLY and LATTER RAIN. **8** Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh (to give the Latter Rain).

1Cor 1:6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you (confession of faith & the Early Rain): **7** So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (to come again and stir the water): **8** Who shall also confirm you unto the end (by Latter Rain), that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

John 5:8 Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.”

Since the infirmed man has not yet received the Early Rain of the Spirit, Christ will not stir the water and carry him into the pool to receive the Latter Rain of the Spirit.

After Christ gives the infirmed man the Early Rain of the Spirit, Christ tells him to “rise, take up your bed and walk”.

John 5:9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

As verse 9 shows, salvation happens suddenly upon receiving the Holy Spirit - even with just the small amount that is given with the Early Rain. It is at this time the infirmed man becomes a SPIRITUAL JEW:

Rom 2:28 For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: **29** But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

Next, the newly healed man rises, takes up his bed and walks.

Since permanent salvation requires BOTH the Early and Latter Rain of the Spirit, Christ tells the man to take his bed with him since he is going to need it again later. The healed man will need it after he falls away and turns to his own works for salvation.

But for now though, the healed man has become a spiritual Jew. And since he is a spiritual Jew who walks by faith, he is spiritually keeping the Sabbath Day and is not violating the Law by carrying his bed. In other words, the healed man has entered into the “rest” of Christ.

Heb 4:10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

John 5:10 The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.”

The Jews in verse 10 are a symbol for fallen away believers (babes) who have become Ministers of Satan (2Cor 11:14-15) in the apostate church. They walk by their flesh and the works of their hands rather than by faith. Their works come from a belief in the Doctrine of Free Will which is at the heart of Satan’s false gospel. Because these fallen away believers follow a doctrine of works (the crooked way), they have fallen from grace and are no longer resting in Christ.

When the Jews see the healed man (who is a faithful believer at this time) carrying his bed, they accuse him of breaking the Sabbath Day law. By doing so, they are saying to the man that he must continue to work (do his part) for his salvation and that he should not completely rely on Christ to do all that is necessary. However, they do not understand that the man is honoring the Sabbath Day law when he rested from his own works and entered into the rest of Christ.

Note: The Old Covenant of Law is based upon the works of man. The New Covenant of Grace through Faith is based upon the works of Christ. When a person is under the Old Covenant, it means that they are working for their salvation. When a believer (babe) realizes that they cannot perfectly keep the law, that realization will lead them to Christ and the New Covenant. Under the New Covenant, the person will rest from their own works and will trust Christ to do all the works that are necessary for their salvation.

John 5:11 He answered them, He who made me well said to me, take up your bed and walk. 12 Then they asked him, who is the man who said to you, take up your bed and walk? 13 But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.

In response to the Jews’ accusation, the healed man tells the Jews that the one who made him well told him to carry his bed. When the Jews ask him who the man was, he does not know.

After a person is given the Early Rain of the Spirit, Christ will not spiritually “appear” to the person. In other words, the new believer (babe) will remain spiritually blind and because of such, Christ remains veiled from their understanding. Like Paul, the new believer hears a “voice” but cannot “see” for himself who the voice is (Acts 9:4-5). For that reason, the healed man does not know who healed him.

John 5:14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.”

In verse 14, Jesus finds the healed man in the Temple and reminds him that he has been made well. This event lets us know that the man has not fallen away yet. However, Christ warns him to “sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you”.

The “worse thing” mentioned by Christ will occur later to the healed man when he comes under Satan’s deceptions (via the spirit of anti-Christ). When he does, he will devolve into a Man of Sin, the son of Perdition. This is when the Abomination of Desolation occurs within God’s temple (the healed man).

John 5:15 The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. 16 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath.

In the final verse of the story, the healed man promptly returns to the Jews and betrays Christ. With this act, the healed man has now become like JUDAS - a Man of Sin, the son of Perdition.

Luke 22:3 Then entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. 4 And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

The “worse thing” has now happened to the healed man just as Christ warned.

Though not shown in the story; for the “type” to be complete, the healed man would then become crippled again and would have to return to his “bed”. He would then join the other fallen away believers who lay next to the Pool of Bethesda waiting for the water to be stirred. If the infirmed man is one of the Elect, Christ will “comes again” to the man and help him into the water where he will be made whole. The Day of the Lord/Thousand Years Regin would then follow to complete the man’s conversion and entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.