

Lesson 5
John 5:1 – 54
THE MAN WHO WAS EQUAL WITH GOD

Memory verse: “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.” (John 5:24 NIV).

In chapters 1 to 4 the subject is described from the standpoint of a spectator, *ab extra*, and we are thus enabled to see something of the impression created on others by our Lord as He deals with individuals in Jerusalem, Samaria, and Galilee. When, however, we turn to chapters 5 to 10, we cannot but be conscious of a change of standpoint, for we see Christ as it were from within, from His own point of view, in all the glory of His self-conscious personal revelation. In each chapter He is seen to concentrate attention on Himself in various aspects, and men are enabled to see something of what He claims to be in relation to God and man.

Our Lord's first two miracles recorded by John were somewhat private in nature. The servants and the disciples knew that He transformed the water into wine, and the servants and the royal official's family knew that He had healed the sick son. The miracle recorded in John 5 was not only public, but it was performed on the Sabbath day and incited the opposition of the religious leaders. We see here the beginning of “official persecution” against the Saviour. The healing of the paralytic is the third sign in John's Gospel to signal Jesus' identity and created controversies that followed.

.When you visit St. Anne's Church in Jerusalem, they will show you the deep excavation that has revealed the ancient Pool of Bethesda. There is historical and archaeological evidence that two adjacent pools of water served this area in ancient times. The pool is situated near the northeast corner of the Old City, close to the Sheep Gate. The Sheep Gate was evidently a gate in the north part of Jerusalem's wall, just west of its northeast corner (cf. Neh. 3:1, 32; 12:39). Many disabled people used to lie closet to the pool because of the healing properties in the water.

Why would anybody, especially the man in this chapter, sicken for so many years, remain in one place if nothing special were occurring? You would think that after years of nothing happening to anybody, the man would go elsewhere and stop hoping! It seems wisest for us to accept the fact that something extraordinary kept all these handicapped people at this pool, hoping for a cure.

As the guardians of the faith, the members of the Jewish Sanhedrin (the religious ruling council) had listed thirty nine tasks that were prohibited on the Sabbath, and carrying a burden was one of them. Jesus was therefore found working when He healed the man. The Jewish leaders did not prosecute the man who was healed, even though he had broken the law for carrying his bed upon being healed, but they did begin to persecute the Lord Jesus instead. Ironically, they created a controversy themselves. The religious leaders were further infuriated when confronted with Jesus' claims – equality with God and Sonship.

Scripture Reading: John 5: 16 -30

To learn in this lesson: 1) Jesus' grace and mercy 2) Jesus is equal with God 3) Jesus' claims of Sonship

Discussion Questions:

- 1) What can we learn from the miracle performed by Jesus when he cured the paralytic man in John 5:1-15?

- 2) What was the controversy in verses 16 to 18?

- 3) How did Jesus in verses 19 to 47 responded to the accusations of blasphemy and breaching the Sabbath law as purported by the religious leaders of His day?