

JOHN 5 vs 1

This is the third miracle of seven... John recorded in his gospel.

¹ **After this was the Feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem** / if this was the Feast of Purim... commemorating the deliverance of the Jewish people in ancient Persia -- then we read about it in the book of Esther. And that feast is celebrated sometime in February or March.

² **Now there is at Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate, a sheep pool / a pool for washing the sheep, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches** / 1 of the 12 gates around the city, this one with 5 entryways; just imagine, this is probably the center of activity for old Jerusalem where every day... of every week... of every month... of every year... **where more than 700 sheep**... every day -- were prepared for daily sacrifice; for washing and inspection; and only the diseased free and unblemished were acceptable. If nothing was happening in the rest of the city, there was always activity by this Sheep Gate at this sheep pool called Bethesda.

In 1888, north of the Temple area, archaeologists discovered twin rectangular pools; each measuring 150 by 300 feet! That is the size of TWO football fields placed side-by-side.

And John writes about the five entryways,

³ **In these lay a great crowd of impotent folk** / a massive amount of powerless people gathered, **blind, crippled and withered** / people with every kind of physical impairment; and we know how they are marginalized and abused and neglected in every culture.

It was not until the early 1970s here in America... when curbs were cut away... allowing freer mobility and increased access for many people. Thankfully, for those that made that happen included a longtime friend: **Dr. Thomas Klein**, a great man of faith... who lived his life in a wheelchair.

And these powerless people gathered; spending their lives broken and bored; like the skid row crowd. And John writes about a hopeless disabled and powerlessness man. And like so many who congregate and perpetuate traditions, and superstitions; pooling their ignorance while sharing their boredom; on-lookers not really participating in life. There are a lot of impotent church people today, uncreative on-lookers.

waiting for the water to be stirred people sitting in darkness.



a great crowd waiting for the water to be stirred / so they are just sitting there having made their daily pilgrimage; taken by family and friends to this supposed sacred place... in this busiest part of town... waiting to win big.

Now, some scholars tell us: verse 4 does not exist in some manuscripts, though it exists in the Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Aramaic and Ethiopic manuscripts; so let's hear what these people were thinking as they were waiting: probably much like those who said, John the Baptist, who wasn't part of **the eat, drink and be merry crowd**, who they said he had a demon; though they knew John was not crazy, but he was disturbing their comfort zone; or those who said, **Jesus was a winebibber and a glutton**; disturbing their worldview, they knew He wasn't, but Jesus didn't fit their hocus pocus agendas.

Remember: it was **a feast of the Jews**; so was it like Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day; or Father's Day? all created to generate \$\$\$ from the gullible. Definitely, it was **NOT** one of the **7 great feast Days of the Lord** Moses told the people to keep; shadows of things to come.

4 For an angel of the Lord went down in the pool, at certain times, stirring up the water; whoever then first stepped in after the stirring of the water, was made well from whatever disease he had at the time / did this really happen on some unidentified feast day? Or was it just the prevailing thought of the superstitious? We don't know. It certainly is uncharacteristic of what we know from scripture about the citizens of eternity. It does sound more like the hocus pocus people, doesn't it?

Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission, had the following words on the Shanghai office wall:
The sun stood still; the iron did swim; this God is our God; forever and ever!

Do miracles still happen? Yes! Were miracles happening in this sheep pool at this time? Probably not; which is why Jesus went there... the greatest fisher of men; He found the one catch needed to work the works of His Father who sent him. and describing this powerless, disabled crowd, John writes:

5 And there was a certain man, who had an infirmity thirty-eight years / can you imagine? 38 years! That is almost as long as they wandered in the wilderness. It is longer than Jesus had lived on earth; and from a child... HE was about His Father's business.

And for 38 years, this man with this infirmity; just sat down there! Now, that is someone who has lost faith!

6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew he had already been there a long time. He asked him,

Do you want to get well? / Jesus forced this man to use his mind... in order to reconsider and change his thinking about the facts of his situation; hopefully this certain man was thinking clearly. Notice, Jesus did not ask the man: **How are you feeling today?** Jesus knew our feelings, our strong desires, like unruly children, clamor for our attention every day; and daily presume their rights, **and usually insist: why not?**

Dr. Dallas Willard says, Unlike our thoughts which invite the question: why? The term: **feeling**... indicates a touch, a powerful, blind though alluring or sometimes revolting connection; what feelings are is uncertain...

as well as why they can remain obscure. We can be mastered by our feelings: our anger, fear, malice, sexual attraction, desire for food, etc.: all the residue of wounded hearts. Typically, those who believe their feelings must be satisfied; selectively resist their feelings instead of not having them, or change and replace them; something not done directly... since feelings accompany thoughts.

Do you want to get well? About this verse, Dr. Willard says, Jesus was not just being polite passing the time. If this man is made whole, he would have to deal with a career change of immense proportions. To all of his relatives and acquaintances he would no longer be: the one who we take to the pool every day to wait for the angel. How would he identify himself? How would he now relate to others, and they to him?

He might even have to get a job. Doing what? He will not be spending hours fantasizing over emotions, feelings and desires he learned in the home, at school, and on the playground. He will not have time to fixate on sensual indulgences, or revenge, or how to dominate and injure others with a word or action; No wonder he has no real idea of who he will be. Dr. Willard says, As an apprentice of Jesus, he has a starting point from which his new identity will emerge. And Jesus asked this man:

Do you want to get well?

⁷ The impotent man answered Him, Sir, I have no one, when the water is stirred, to put me in the pool / and quite honestly Jesus asked him a simple question, so was that: a yes? or a no? Notice, Jesus gets an excuse-making response:

I have no one, when the water is stirred, to put me in the pool: but while I am coming, another steps in before me / can you imagine? For 38 years, this guy thought he was going to get healed in this diseased and very dirty pool where the sheep dip... and do other things!

⁸ Jesus said to this man, Get up, take up your mat, and go / notice, Jesus, full of grace and truth, and lots of compassion, too; Jesus didn't have a public-address system; no music playing... no worship team performing. He is walking through this very busy area... full of much activity and inactivity. Jesus wasn't a loud-mouth; and like Isaiah said, His voice was not even heard in the streets. He whispered to this guy... and continued walking by...

⁹ And at once, the man was well, and took up his mat, and went: and that day / Oops! it was the Sabbath!

¹⁰ So the Jewish leaders said to him who was cured / the angry, heartless... faithless... lovers of their traditions, being annoyed, they spoke in their finest, most sanctimonious, religious sounding tones, and they said – most likely being irked, very LOUD,

It is the Sabbath day:

and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.

11 But he answered them, He who made me whole, was the one who told me, to take up my mat, and go / was he to some extent fearful of these supposed pious leaders? this man cautiously answered, the One who healed me.

12 Then they asked him / like affronted roman inquisitors, **Who is the one who told you, to take up your mat, and go?**

13 But he who was healed did not know who it was: for Jesus slipped away, through the massive crowd in that place / Jesus just kept walking, probably with the biggest grin on His face... knowing what commotion would follow among the people and the religious leaders; as he dodged the crowd.

14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him / Jesus is the good Pastor isn't He? The healed man went to offer thanks to God. Huh? Now days he'd be on all the church TV: Talk Shows.

Pay attention, You are made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come to you / now what does that mean? Honestly... I've never met a person in this very imperfect, broken world who... sinned no more! Have you? And yet, Jesus said...for 38 years, that man had showed... NO faith. And the book of Hebrews reminds us, without faith... it's impossible to please God. Paul reminds us: Whatever is not of faith... is sin. He also said: All the promises of God, in Christ Jesus are Yes! and Amen... to the one who takes God's word to heart. What is Jesus saying? Get some faith in your life!

15 The man departed, and said to the Jewish leaders it was Jesus, who had made him whole.

16 So the Jewish leaders persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him because He did these things on the Sabbath day / they wanted to kill him, right then and there; and which day were they going to do what Jesus was doing? heal the sick? strengthen the faith? Oh! That's right! They weren't.

17 But He answered them My Father is working even now / notice, Jesus isn't intimidated; He is **What?** Jesus said: GOD our Father... **WORKS ON THE SABBATH DAY?!!!** But, but... I thought....

My Father works even now, and I must work.

18 The Jewish leaders sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also said that God was His own Father making Himself equal with God / for some reason, they were horrified by the claims of Jesus; yet they didn't know their own scriptures.

This is My Father's World

| SALVATION

| JESUS it is YOU

The ministry of Nick Vujicic | Life without Limbs |

Surely, you know His name, And His Son's Name