

BIBLE READING DAY 9, MONDAY: MARCH 7

Healing at the Pool of Bethesda

John 5:1–47

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went to Jerusalem. Now at Jerusalem, near the sheep gate, there is a pool with five porches around it which, in the Hebrew, is called Bethesda. In these porches lay a multitude of people who were sick, blind, lame, or paralyzed.

Now there was a certain man there who had been ill thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been in that condition a long time, he said to him, “Would you like to be healed?”

“Sir,” replied the sick man, “I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed, but while I am on the way, someone else steps in ahead of me.”

“Rise, pick up your pallet, and walk,” said Jesus.

The man was immediately healed; and he gathered up his pallet and started walking. Now it was the Sabbath day. Therefore, the Jews said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath! It is not lawful for you to carry your pallet.”

But he replied, “The man who healed me told me, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk.’”

“Who is the man who said to you, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk’?” they asked.

But the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd present in the place. After a time, Jesus found the man in the temple and said to him, “Behold, you are well! Sin no more, lest something worse come upon you.”

Then the man went and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him.

Therefore, the Jews began to persecute Jesus, because he did such things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, “My Father continues working even now, and so do I.”

Then the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God. Then said Jesus, “I tell you truly, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise; for the Father loves the Son and shows him everything that he himself does. And he will show him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and bestows life, so the Son, too, gives life to whom he will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all men may pay homage to the Son even as they do to the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. I tell you truly, he who heeds my word and believes him who sent me has life eternal; he does not face condemnation but has passed out of death into life.

“I tell you truly, the hour is coming—in fact it is already here—when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so has he granted to the Son, too, to have life in himself; and he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not wonder at this, for the hour is coming when all who are in the graves will hear his voice and

“In today’s reading, Jesus gave five testimonies who gave witness that Christ was the Son of God. Jesus (John 5:31–32); John the Baptizer (John 33–35); The works (John 5:36); The Father (John 5:37–38); The Scriptures (John 5:39). John wrote about two other witnesses: The Holy Spirit (John 15:26); The disciples (John 15:27). There is room for one more witness: YOU.”

Timothy C. McKeown,
The Gospel of John, One Day at a Time

come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment and doom.

“I can do nothing of my own accord. As I hear, so do I judge; and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will, but the will of him who sent me. If I bear witness about myself, my testimony is not valid. But there is another who bears witness to me, and I know that his testimony about me is true.

“You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth. Not that I rely on testimony from man; but I remind you of this that you may be saved. John was a burning, shining lamp, and for a while you rejoiced in his light.

“But I have a greater witness than John’s. For the works which the Father gave me to accomplish, the very works which I am doing, bear witness to me that the Father has sent me. And the Father himself, who sent me, has borne witness to me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, and neither do you have his word in your hearts, for you do not believe the one whom he sent.

“You search the scriptures diligently, for you think that by so doing you will gain eternal life. And all the while, the scriptures bear witness to me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life.

“I am not concerned about whether I receive praise from men. But I know you, that you have no real love for God in your hearts. I have come in my Father’s name, and you refuse to receive me; but if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe? —you who seek honor one from another rather than honor from the one who alone is God! Do not suppose that I will accuse you before the Father. You already have an accuser—Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote of me. But if you do not believe his writings, how can you believe my words?”

“A Feast of the Jews...”

The Gospel of John does not describe which feast this is, but if it is taken chronologically in John, this most likely is the Feast of Tabernacles or Booths or possibly the Feast of weeks or Pentecost. But as we will see, John and really all of the gospel writers do not always put things in chronological order (this includes Luke who as a doctor likely wanted things in order, but his priority was more on themes, rather than on a calendar order).

Others have stated that this is the third of four Passovers listed in John. This is what gives many scholars reason to believe that Jesus’s ministry was three and a half years in length. John’s imprisonment and death was early in Jesus’s ministry, and tied to the feeding of the 5,000, and also linked to the Passover.

So, this teaching today could be placed later in Jesus’s ministry. However, this teaching, likely the woman caught in adultery, are both debated as to when they took place. But since it was not important to the writers nor to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, we also should not get distracted from the importance of *what* was said, rather than *when* it was said!

Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry

EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	1 st Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER PENTECOST	1 st Feast of BOOTHS	WINTER	SECOND PASSOVER	SUMMER	2 nd Feast of BOOTHS	WINTER	2 nd Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	3 rd Feast of BOOTHS	WINTER	FINAL PASSOVER
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DEVOTIONAL DAY 9 (MONDAY MARCH 7)

Can I Get a Witness?

Based on John 5:1-47

On January 15, 2001, internet entrepreneurs Jimmy Wales and Larry Sanger launched Wikipedia, an expansive hivemind of knowledge that would become one of the most popular websites in history. Today, Wikipedia represents over 58 million articles written and edited by normal, every-day people like you and me.

Wikipedia doesn't have a lot of fancy guidelines about content, but one of their few do-not-break rules is to never write about yourself. From the site's standpoint, if your accomplishments are worthy of an entry, someone else will write one. Self-evaluation of your own credibility can hardly serve as an unbiased witness.

In today's passage, we see Jesus challenged with a "no good deed goes unpunished" scenario after healing a man who had been lame for thirty-eight years! This is still early on in Jesus's ministry, but already in the Gospel of John Jesus had been publicly baptized, performed a miracle at a wedding feast, and revealed Himself to a Samaritan town. Opposition (read: fear) was beginning to grow.

And so, this opposition had found the benefactor of Jesus's miracle carrying his mat on the Sabbath. An interrogation seasoned with dogma led back to the Healer and Jesus was confronted by the religious establishment. They wanted to know upon what authority He had done such things.

What follows is a long, uninterrupted flow of red letters as John records the Messiah's strong rebuke of the Jewish religious leaders and, more importantly, addressed His own role in the Father's kingdom.

But what good is Jesus's own claim about Himself? How well will Jesus's self-evaluation be received by people that do not accept His title? To be blunt, even Wikipedia's lax infrastructure on user-generated content wouldn't have allowed it! Who will stand and speak for Jesus? Who will assert His claim as legitimate? Can I get a witness?

Jesus decided to cite His sources. John the Baptizer spoke for Him (v. 32-33), but he was rejected. God, the Father, revealed the truth about His Son (v. 37), but His words were not on their hearts. His own miracles and the work He was doing testified to His legitimacy (v. 36), but they couldn't understand them. Even if all human witness was not enough (and I may be permitted to borrow a passage from Luke), the very rocks would cry out to declare it (Luke 19:40).

Jesus said, "Here are my citations! Here are my footnotes!" and yet His message bounced off hearts too hardened to hear it.

Oh, may that not be us, Christians! May we not be hardened to the voice, the move, the work of Jesus Christ because of some preconceived ignorance. He is here calling us to work alongside Him and, as the cross looms closer over the coming weeks, His need for strong witnesses will become even more urgent!

Lord, soften my heart to Your Word! Teach me to hear the voices of Creation which proclaim the legitimacy of Your Son and may I join the song of Your witnesses as I walk toward the cross beside You. Make my life and my testimony a footnote to Your greatness!

--By Rief Kessler

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs)

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