
THE GOSPEL
OF JOHN


THE GOSPEL
OF JOHN
Chapter 5

John Chapter 5

- Regarded by some as the most significant chapter in the gospel of John
- We see the healing of the man at Bethesda v1-18
  - Question: do we really want Jesus to change our lives?
    - Are we ready for the consequences?
- Then: "Let the battle commence!" v19-47
  - Jesus launches four salvos against the 'Jews' to prove His Deity
  - He calls four witnesses to testify
  - He pronounces His verdict on the 'Jews'

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

John 5:1

- Gr. Meta tauta – 'After these things'
- This is the second feast John records Jesus attending; the first being the Passover where He made a cord and drove out the money changers
  - as we saw in John 2:13-17.
- We are not specifically told which feast this was, but it would seem most likely that it was the 2nd of four Passover's recorded by John which span Jesus' three-and-a-half-year ministry
  - see John 2:13 / 5:1 / 6:4 / 12:1.

14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.
15 Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)
16 And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.

Exodus 23:14-16

17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

Exodus 23:17

- Three main feast periods to mark the beginning, middle and end of the harvest.
- The ‘Festival’ of Unleavened Bread
  - Starting 14 Nisan & associated with the barley harvest
  - Encompassing Passover, Unleavened Bread & Firstfruits
- Feast of Harvest
  - Pentecost (50 days after Firstfruits) the wheat harvest
- The Ingathering
  - Trumpets, Atonement & Tabernacles
  - fruit/grape/olive harvest

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

John 5:1

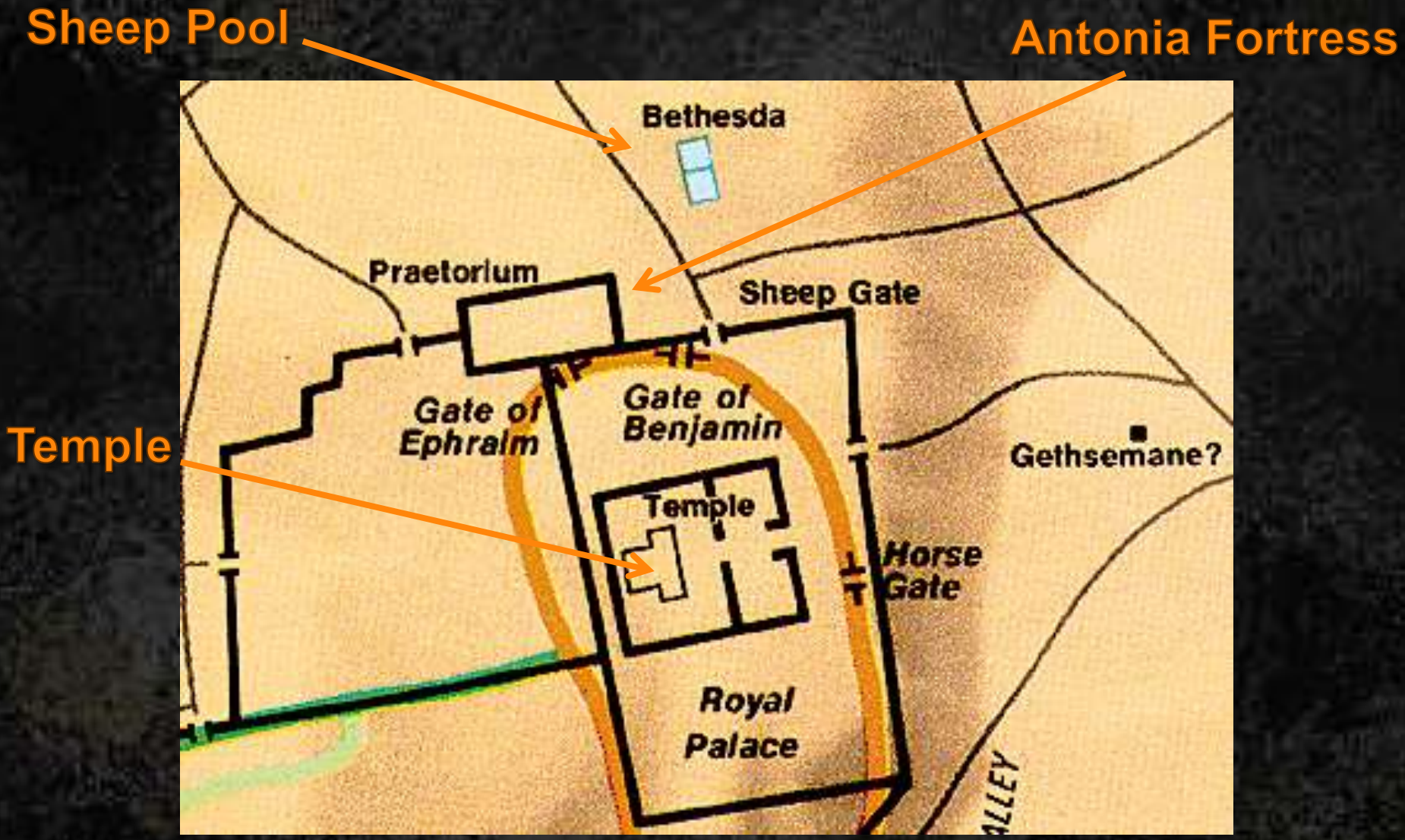
- In obedience to the Law, Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to celebrate this feast; something He had done since childhood:
  - *"Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast"* (Luke 2:41-42)

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool,
which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda,
having five porches.

John 5:2

- Sheep market: To allow pilgrims to purchase a sheep to be offered as a sacrifice
- 'Bethesda' means 'House of mercy'
- No meaningless details in the Bible!
- John specifically tells us there were 5 porches
  - Throughout the Bible 5 is associated with Grace & Mercy
- The pool was to wash the sheep prior to sacrifice

Pool of Bethesda



Pool of Bethesda



- a "porch" (stoa) was an open-sided, roofed walkway supported by rows of stone columns.

Pool of Bethesda

- This sheep market was adjacent to the ‘back entrance’ to the Temple area
- It was the place where the lambs were washed prior to being offered for sacrifice
  - according to the Law of Moses (Exodus 12) the offering had to be ‘without blemish’
- The fact that Jesus intentionally chooses to come to this pool, tells of His grace and mercy, coming to meet us where we are, in our situation, in our predicament.
- As we will see with this miracle (the third of seven that John records), Jesus knows our need and our inability to help ourselves.

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

John 5:3

- This whole multitude were gathered under these five porches, in the ‘house of mercy’
- No doubt to avoid the heat of the day,
- Desperately hoping for a better life, waiting for something to change.
- The world is full of spiritually ‘impotent folk’, ‘blind’, ‘halt’ and ‘withered’, just waiting for their circumstances to change.
- So much time is wasted ‘waiting for the moving of the water’.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

John 5:4

- Some argue this verse is not in the *'original manuscripts'*
  - By that they erroneously refer to Sinaiticus and Vaticanus
- There is plenty of sources that attest to its rightful inclusion.
- The context alone necessitates this verse being here or verse 3 & 7 make no sense!
  - Why would all these people be gathered at this pool without the explanation John gives us in this verse?

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

John 5:4

- No other record of an angel performing miracles in scripture - but we are not given enough information to reach any solid conclusions regarding this 'angelic visitation'
- Was this angel a 'good angel' or one of Satan's?
- Satan does appear as an angel of light (2 Cor 11:14), and would like nothing better than to create a diversion with the appearance of the miraculous to keep people from the truth.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years.

John 5:5

- There are no meaningless details in the Bible.
- 38 years was the exact duration the children of Israel needlessly wandered in the wilderness, when all the time the Promised Land was so close.
- For 38 years this man had been staring at the sacrificial lambs, never understanding why.
- He did not realise they spoke of One who would take all our sin and sickness upon Himself so that we could walk again!

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

John 5:6

- Jesus had sought this man, He knew exactly where to find him. *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10)
- Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown comment: "As He [Jesus] doubtless visited the spot just to perform this cure, so He knew where to find His patient, and the whole previous history of His case.
- What comfort there is that Jesus 'sees' and 'knows'.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole?

John 5:6

- Are you ready for what it will cost you?
- *"There are many who do not wish to be saved from sin, though they would gladly be saved from hell. To be made whole means to leave the old habits, the old excuses, and the begging-mat behind. Christ never forces His grace upon an unwilling soul; He asks first, 'Wilt thou be made whole?"*

  - Charles Spurgeon

Do You Want To Be Whole?

- Many choose to remain ‘impotent’ rather than receive a new life through Christ.
- Do you want to change?
- Do you want to live a life wherein you bring glory to Jesus Christ?
- Are you prepared to give up the only life you have known?
- Have you grown so accustomed to your spiritual disability that you would rather not have to face the interrogation from family, friends and colleagues that will inevitably come with being made whole?
- That’s why Jesus asks this question.

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.

John 5:7

- This man had already reached the place where he knew he was powerless to effect, or even assist in his own healing.
- It takes a great deal of humility to acknowledge our need of others.
- The question could be asked, ‘why then, did this man stay at this place if all hope of healing was gone?’ The truth is, until we meet Jesus, we will hang on to any glimmer of hope the world may afford us of a better life, regardless of the odds.

8 Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

John 5:8

- There was no need to cut through a religious façade
  - as there had been with Nicodemus
- Nor to let this man see himself as he really was
  - as with the woman at the well
- Just the incredible grace and mercy (‘Bethesda’) of the Saviour meeting a man where he was!
- Note: the faith of the man is incidental; those who claim that you can be healed if you have enough faith should take note!
- The quality of your faith does not count.
- The quality of your Saviour does!

9 And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

John 5:9

- It is not until verse 14 that Jesus will later introduce Himself to this man, so this healing wasn't a case of 'I'll heal you if you believe in me', there were no conditions attached.
- As well as being an act of grace, it seems that Jesus intentionally chooses to heal this man on a Sabbath day, no doubt knowing what would happen as a result…

10 The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed.

John 5:10

- Law vs. Grace
- Law says ‘you can’t’
- Grace says ‘you can’
- The Law cannot show mercy
- What the Law could not do… Grace did!

11 He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk.

John 5:11

- For 38 years he has been in his predicament, unable to get up and carry his bed.
  - There is a certain irony here in that the one day he is finally healed he is questioned as to why he is walking and carrying his bed!
- How incredible that the Jewish leaders, who must have known of this man prior to the event, do not so much as comment on his miraculous healing!
- Note also: This man finds his refuge from the harsh demands of the Law in the words spoken to him by Christ.

12 Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk?

13 And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place.

John 5:12-13

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. John 5:14

- The fact that Jesus finds this man in the Temple would suggest this man had chosen to bring an offering out of gratitude to God.
- It could have been a sin or trespass offering (Lev 5-7) in acknowledgement of his violation of the Sabbath Law, and/or because of his inability to do this before now.
- It could have been that for years he had seen others trust their atonement to the Passover lambs that were washed before his eyes… now it was his turn!

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

John 5:14

- Jesus now finds him, (lit. ‘sought him out’), and says in effect ‘continue in sin no more’.
- This man has been made free from his infirmity, free from the demands of the Law, and free from sin, but the onus is now on him to make moment-by-moment choices to live righteously.
- The New Testament tells us that this ‘walk’ is not to be done through our own strength, but by the working of the Holy Spirit within us when we submit to Him.

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

John 5:14

- This is not to imply his sickness was itself a result of his own personal sin
  - although all sickness is a direct result of sin and the effect of the Fall
- Nor is Jesus saying *'one mistake and your back where you started',*
- Paul tells us: *"the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable"* (Rom 11:29)
- Jesus wasn't going to take this miracle back if this man messed up.
- The 'worse thing' Jesus spoke of was something

14 Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

John 5:14

- The ‘worse thing’ Jesus spoke of was something He reiterated throughout His ministry…
- What could be worse than the physical condition this man had had to endure for 38 years?
- Answer: To be in a spiritual condition, separated from God, devoid of any hope for all eternity.
- There will be no stirring of the waters there!

15 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

John 5:15-16

- The penalty for violation of the Sabbath was stoning – that was what the Jews had in mind

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh
hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him,
because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said
also that God was his Father, making himself equal
with God.

John 5:17-18

- It is so easy for us to read over these statements and miss the earth-shaking significance of what is being said:
- Jesus here claims equality with God by calling Him ‘My Father’.

I And The Father Are One

- Jesus' justification for His 'working' on the Sabbath is that *"God never stops working, and (as God in the flesh) neither do I".*
- Whenever we are in danger of missing the significance of a statement like this, the Jewish leaders come to our rescue and leave us in no doubt as to the implications!

Let the battle commence!

- Jesus launches 4 salvos against the ‘Jews’
- …The Jewish leaders
- …which must have left them stunned, exasperated, and somewhat intimidated.
- Because of what follows here, some commentators regard this chapter as the key chapter in the entire gospel, and a defining moment in the life of Jesus.
- In these verses we will see some of the clearest and most compelling arguments for the Deity of Christ.
- Jesus begins His first three points with ‘verily, verily, I say unto you’.

Let the battle commence!

- Jesus launches 4 salvos against the ‘Jews’
- Verse 19-23 – The relationship between the Father & Son
- Verse 24 – The mission of the Son
- Verse 25-29 – The authority of the Son
- Verse 30-39 – Four witnesses are called
- Verse 40-47 – The verdict is pronounced!


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To be continued…

Calvary Chapel Portsmouth

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