

The Ministry of Christ, Part 6

The second year of Jesus' ministry was a year of popularity. When we closed the last session, Jesus had gone to Jerusalem for His second Passover.

Man at the Pool of Bethesda Healed – John 5:2-9

Jesus told John the Baptist that one of the proofs of His being the Messiah was that the lame would walk. The man at the pool of Bethesda is the third miracle of Jesus that John recorded. Isaiah prophesied about this ministry.

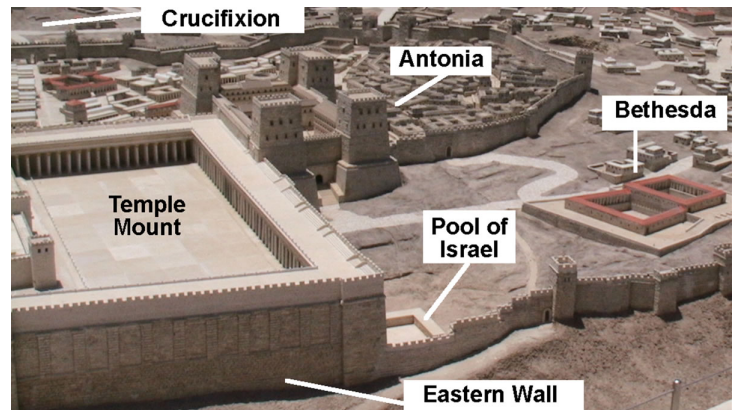
Isaiah 35:5–6 NKJV Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert.

In Jerusalem, there was a pool by the Sheep Gate, which is called Bethesda.

Bethesda or Bethzatha means the house of the olive. In Aramaic it refers to the pool as the “house of mercy.” The Pool of Bethesda was a double pool that was surrounded by four colonnades and a fifth colonnade that separated the two pools. The colonnades were covered walkways with a roof that was supported by columns. A multitude of hurting and desperate people came to the pool looking for anything that would resolve their illness or problems. A popular fable was circulated that an angel stirred the waters and the first into the water would be healed. The best manuscripts omit the last phrase of verse 3 and all of verse 4 which refer to the moving or stirring of the water that occurred once a year. According to the fable, only one person would be healed when the water stirred, so the atmosphere around the pool was desperation, anxiety and anticipation. The man Jesus met at the Pool of Bethesda had been an invalid for thirty-eight years.

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

This question draws the man's attention away from the pool to look



upon Jesus. All Jesus asked him was “*Do you want to be healed?*”

Jesus had the power to do the work.

John 5:7 ESV The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me.”

Notice that Jesus totally bypassed the supposed curative powers of the pool. He did not tell the man, “*Let me help you get into the pool.*” Jesus is greater than any fable or shrine.

John 5:8–9 ESV Jesus said to him, “Get up, take up your bed, and walk.” And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath.

Notice how quickly the man was made well. According to the text, the man did not know that it was Jesus who healed him. It is also important to note that Jesus healed the man on the Sabbath. When Jesus healed the man, He told him to “Take up your bed, and walk.” (John 5:11) When the Jews saw him carrying his bed, they told him it was not lawful for him to take up his bed. Did Jesus have the man do something that was against the law of God when He healed him on the Sabbath? Several complex rules (Shabbat) had been established to define what constituted “work.” These rules were intended to give clarity to promote the observance of the Sabbath. The Jews persecuted Jesus because he did these things on the Sabbath. Later, Jesus said the Sabbath was for man, not man for the Sabbath. (Mark 2:27) It was a day to relieve burdens not to add more burdens.

Discourse on His Divinity John 5:17-47

This began His discourse on His divinity.

There are seven significant points to this discourse.

First, Jesus is equal with God in nature and character, John 5:18.

John 5:17 ESV But Jesus answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I am working.”

John 5:17 AMP But Jesus answered them, My Father has worked [even] until now, [He has never ceased working; He is still working] and I, too, must be at [divine] work.

What is Jesus saying? (Look at verse 18)

John 5:18 ESV This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

Is it wrong for Jesus to say that He is equal with God the Father? Jesus is indeed the Son of God and shares in the nature and character of God.

Second, Jesus has equal power with God the Father, John 5:19-21.

John 5:19 NKJV Then Jesus answered and said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

John 5:20–21 NKJV For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things 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 gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.

Jesus’ power to do miracles, raise the dead and give life to them is equal to the power of God the Father.

Third, Jesus has equal authority with God, John 5:22-30.

John 5:22-23 NKJV For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

Jesus is claiming equal authority with God. From verse 24 through 30, Jesus defines His authority.

John 5:24 NKJV “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”

Jesus is telling them that His word is authoritative and that He is the giver of life and yet, He is showing that He never works independently of the Father.

John 5:25–29 NKJV Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live.

John 5:26–27 NKJV For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man.

Consider what kind of authority it is that calls the dead out of the grave.

The depth of the power and authority that has been given to Christ by the Father is seen in the strongest affirmation of “most assuredly.” “Most assuredly” is an ‘indeclinable particle’ that indicates absolute affirmation.

John 5:28–29 NKJV Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.

It is important for us to see that this authority was already present in

Christ Jesus before His resurrection. He had the power to give life to the dead during His ministry.

Fourth, Jesus had the witness of John the Baptist, John 5:31-35.

According to the law, anyone who testifies about himself needs supporting evidence. Deuteronomy 17:6 indicates that every word must be established on the witness of two or three.

John 5:31 NKJV If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.

Jesus said John the Baptist was a reliable witness.

John 5:33-35 NKJV You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

John the Baptist had a reputation among them. John was called and sent to be a witness and forerunner of Jesus Christ. Jesus said “*John was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light,*” (John 5:35).

Fifth, Jesus had the witness of His works, John 5:36.

John 5:36 AMP But I have as My witness something greater (weightier, higher, better) than that of John; for the works that the Father has appointed Me to accomplish and finish, the very same works that I am now doing, are a witness and proof that the Father has sent Me.

Jesus is referring to the kind of works that we have seen thus far.

Consider His miracles at the wedding feast, in Jerusalem and with the multitudes throughout the region. Consider His healings and power over demons. These things testify of His authority, power and person.

Sixth, Jesus has the witness of the Father, John 5:37-38.

John 5:37-38 NKJV And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.

How did the Father testify of Jesus? The miracles, teachings, scriptures and prophecies of Jesus were a witness of the Father. At the baptism by John, the voice of the Father had been clearly heard that Jesus was the beloved Son of God. According to this verse, those He was speaking to had not heard the Father’s voice at any time. Why did they not have the Father’s word abiding in them? They had the law of Moses and their traditions, but they refused Christ and His word and anything that was written about Him.

Seventh, Jesus has the witness of the scriptures, John 5:39-47.

John 5:39–40 NKJV You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

Studying the sacred text was a central part of Judaism. They carefully copied and developed detailed interpretations of the scriptures. It is amazing that they could miss Jesus when the prophecies so clearly defined Who He is. Jesus told them that He would not accuse them before the Father for their refusal to accept Him. Then He said, “The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you trust.” (John 5:45-46)

John 5:46–47 NKJV For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?”

Discourse on the Sabbath – Matthew 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-5

One of the interesting components of Christ’s ministry is seen in what He did on the Sabbath. We started this session with Jesus healing the man at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath. The Jews were appalled that Jesus would do that and tell the man to take up his bed and walk on the Sabbath. In this discourse, Jesus revealed that He is the Lord of the Sabbath. Watch what happens next on the Sabbath.

Mark 2:23–24 NKJV Now it happened that He went through the grainfields on the Sabbath; and as they went His disciples began to pluck the heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to Him, “Look, why do they do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?”

Was there anything wrong with them plucking grain on the Sabbath? (Exodus 20:10; 31:15) The Pharisees payed more attention to their interpretation of the law than the spirit of the law. Our interpretation of God’s Word must be correct. For this reason, we must study to show ourselves to be approved unto God. Jesus referred to David and his men who ate the showbread which was not lawful for them to eat. The showbread was only for Aaron and his sons to eat in the holy place. Then Jesus said “the priests carried out the work of their ministry on the Sabbath, thus profaning the Sabbath.” God allowed their official service to have priority over the normal Sabbath observance.

Matthew 12:6–8 NKJV Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple. But if you had known what this means, ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”

Mark 2:27 NKJV And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

What does that mean, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath?” God rested on the seventh day and gave provision for man to have a day of rest. This day of rest ultimately was confirmed by the Law and God gave commands so that they would know what they should do on the Sabbath Day. The law of the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. “After saying these things Jesus was in their synagogue and taught, a man was present whose right hand was withered.” (Luke 6:6)

Healing the Withered Hand Matthew 12:9-13; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-10

The scribes and Pharisees kept watching Jesus to see whether He would actually heal on the Sabbath. They were not interested in the man’s suffering. They were looking for some ground to bring additional accusation against Him.

Matthew 12:11NKJV Then He said to them, “What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out?

Matthew 12:12–13 NKJV Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” Then He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.

Jesus’ action demonstrates that He is Lord and that He has the right and authority. It is always appropriate and lawful to do good.