

The Paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda

Lesson # 37: (Jn. 5; 7:21-24; Lk. 13:10-17; Mk. 3:1-6; DA 201-213)

In the present lesson we will study the story of the healing of the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda. Our study will reveal that the central lesson of this miracle has little to do with physical healing from paralysis. In fact, we will find that the physical miracle merely provided Jesus with a springboard from which to teach profound spiritual lessons about redemption from the paralysis of sin. The miracle itself is recorded in John 5:1-9. The rest of the chapter provides an extended explanation of the reason for the miracle. Let's begin our study with the miracle itself.

Jesus Heals the Paralytic

1. **Thought Question:** Do you think the common belief of the people (Jn. 5:4) was based on fact or superstition? (**Hint:** Would God promote a practice where only the swiftest could be healed? Would God employ a method which promoted such human selfishness?) If an angel did indeed descend, do you think he was sent by God? "At certain seasons the waters of this pool were agitated, and it was commonly _____ that this was the result of _____ power, and that whoever _____ after the troubling of the pool stepped into the waters, would be healed of whatever disease he had." (DA 201)
2. How does Ellen White describe the tragic scene beside the pool? "Hundreds of sufferers visited the place; but so great was the _____ when the water was troubled that they rushed forward, _____ underfoot men, women, and children, weaker than themselves." (DA 201)
3. Why did Jesus pick this particular case? "But the Savior saw one case of _____ wretchedness. It was that of a man who had been a helpless _____ for thirty-eight years." (DA 202)
4. What was the cause of this man's paralysis? "His disease was in a great degree the result of his _____ sin, and was looked upon as a judgment from God." (DA 202)

Note: Ellen White's view is corroborated by the words of Jesus to the paralytic: "Behold, thou art made whole: **sin no more**, lest a worse thing come unto thee." (Jn. 5:14)

5. What was the paralytic's state of mind before Jesus healed him? "_____ and friendless, feeling that he was _____ out from God's mercy, the sufferer had passed long years of _____." (DA 202).
6. How did this man reveal his faith? "Jesus had given him no _____ of divine help. The man might have stopped to _____, and lost his one chance of healing. But he believed Christ's word, and in _____ upon it he received strength." (DA 203)

7. How does Ellen White describe the man's physical healing? "Every nerve and muscle thrills with new _____, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs." (DA 203)
8. What important role did this man's will play as he responded to Christ's word? Without question he sets his _____ to obey the command of Christ, and all his muscles _____ to his will. Springing to his feet, he finds himself an active man." (DA 203)

Spiritual Lessons

1. In what way is our spiritual condition similar to that of the paralytic? "By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are _____. Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a _____ life than was the impotent man capable of walking." (DA 203)
2. What must we realize before Jesus can help us? "There are many who realize their _____, and who _____ for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God; they are _____ striving to obtain it." (DA 203)
3. What does Jesus offer to those who are struggling with sin? "The Savior is _____ over the purchase of His blood, saying with inexpressible _____ and pity, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He bids _____ arise in health and peace." (DA 203)
4. How must our will respond to the call of Christ? "Do not _____ to feel that you are made whole. _____ His word, and it will be fulfilled. Put your _____ on the side of Christ. Will to serve Him, and in acting upon His word you will receive strength." (DA 203)
5. What will Jesus do with those who respond to His call? "He will impart _____ to the soul that is "dead in trespasses." Eph. 2:1. He will set _____ the captive that is held by weakness and misfortune and the _____ of sin." (DA 203)
6. On which day of the week did Jesus choose to deliver this man from his paralysis? "And immediately the man was made _____, and took up his bed, and walked and on the same day was the _____." (Jn. 5:9)

Reaction of the Pharisees

1. How did the Pharisees react to this man's healing? "He was surprised at the _____ with which they listened to his story. With lowering _____ they interrupted him, asking why he was carrying his bed on the _____ day." (DA 203)
2. According to the Pharisees, which two sins did Jesus commit when He healed the paralytic? "In their judgment He had not only broken the law in _____ the sick man on the Sabbath, but had committed sacrilege in bidding him bear away his _____." (DA 204)

3. How had the rabbis distorted the meaning of the Sabbath? “The Jews had so perverted the law that they made it a _____ of bondage. . . . The scribes and Pharisees had made its observance an _____ burden.” (DA 204)

Note: The fundamental reason why the Christian world today rejects the Bible Sabbath as a yoke of bondage is because they see the Sabbath through the eyes of the Pharisees. But the perverted sabbath of the Pharisees was not the blessed Sabbath of the Lord!!

4. While Jesus relieved the sick on Sabbath, what were the religious leaders planning to do? “Therefore did the Jews _____ Jesus, and sought to _____ Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day.” (Jn. 5:16)

Note: Irony of ironies, Jesus was condemned for healing on the Sabbath while the Pharisees were plotting to kill Him!

5. What prevented the religious leaders from slaying Jesus on the Sabbath? “Had the Jews at this time been an _____ nation, such a charge would have served their purpose for putting Him to death. This their subjection to the _____ prevented.” (DA 204)

6. How did the character of Jesus differ from that of the Pharisees? “He spoke of God, not as an avenging _____, but as a tender _____, and He revealed the image of God as mirrored in Himself. His words were like _____ to the wounded spirit. Both by His words and by His works of mercy He was breaking the oppressive power of the old _____ and man-made commandments, and presenting the _____ of God in its exhaustless fullness.” (DA 204)

7. What would have happened with the Jewish nation if the religious leaders had not interposed between Jesus and the people? “If the priests and rabbis had not interposed, His _____ would have wrought such a _____ as this world has never witnessed.” (DA 205)

8. Who’s idea was it to arraign Jesus before the Jewish Sanhedrin? “But the plans which these rabbis were working so zealously to fulfill originated in another _____ than that of the Sanhedrin. After _____ had failed to overcome Christ in the wilderness, he combined his forces to _____ Him in His ministry, and if possible to thwart His work.” (DA 206)

Note: Each and every event in the earthly life of Jesus must be understood in the light of the great controversy. No occurrence in the life of Jesus had mere human causes. The visible events of his life are to be explained as consequences of invisible forces at work. For example, Herod’s attempt to kill Jesus, the storm on the lake, the repeated attempts to stone Jesus and the attempt to throw Jesus off a cliff in Nazareth must all be understood as acts of Satan.

9. What strategy did Satan develop and implement when he was unable to fell Jesus in the wilderness? “No sooner had he withdrawn from the conflict in the wilderness than in council with his _____ angels he matured his plans for still further _____ the

minds of the Jewish people, that they might not recognize their Redeemer. He planned to work through his _____ agencies in the religious world, by imbuing them with his own _____ against the champion of truth.” (DA 206)

Note: Here we have the explanation for the extreme hardheartedness of the Jewish leaders toward Jesus. By this means Satan intended to discourage Jesus in His mission.

Conflict Over the Sabbath

1. According to the prophet Isaiah, what was one of the purposes for the coming of the Messiah? “The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness' sake; he will _____ the law, and make it _____.”(Isa. 42:21)

Note: Examples of this magnification of the law can be found in Jesus’ definition of adultery and murder (Mt. 5:21-22, 27-28). Jesus did not come to abolish the Sabbath but rather to magnify its meaning and make it honorable.

2. What did Jesus come to do with the Sabbath? He had come to _____ the Sabbath from those _____ requirements that had made it a _____ instead of a blessing.” (DA 206)

Note: Jesus not only came to deliver His creatures from their bondage to sin. He also came to emancipate His Sabbath which the Pharisees had converted into a day of slavery. Jesus did not come to abolish the Sabbath but rather to do away with the traditions of the rabbis which had converted the Sabbath into an intolerable burden.

3. **Thought Question:** Why did Jesus add insult to injury by telling this man to carry his bed on the Sabbath? “This would raise the _____ of what it was lawful to do on the Sabbath, and would open the _____ for Him to denounce the restrictions of the Jews in regard to the Lord's day, and to declare their _____ void. A wise purpose underlay _____ act of Christ's life on earth. Everything He did was _____ in itself and in its teaching.” (DA 206)

4. What did Jesus mean when he spoke the words: “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” (Jn. 5:17)? “All _____ are God's, in which to carry out His plans for the human race. If the Jews' interpretation of the law was correct, then Jehovah was at _____, whose work has quickened and upheld every living thing since _____ He laid the foundations of the earth; then He who pronounced His work good, and instituted the Sabbath to commemorate its completion, must put a _____ to His labor, and _____ the never-ending routine of the universe.” (DA 206)

5. Do human beings have a work to perform on the Sabbath? “And man also has a _____ to perform on this day. The _____ of life must be attended to, the sick must be cared for, the wants of the _____ must be supplied. He will not be held guiltless who neglects to relieve _____ on the Sabbath.” (DA 207)

6. Does God work even more on the Sabbath than any other day? “The demands upon God are even _____ upon the Sabbath than upon other days. His people then leave their usual employment, and spend the time in meditation and worship. They _____ more favors of Him on the Sabbath than upon other days. They demand His _____ attention. They crave His choicest blessings. God does not _____ for the Sabbath to pass before He grants these requests. Heaven's work _____ ceases, and men should never rest from doing good.” (DA 207)

7. What ritual example did Jesus give to prove that charitable work is proper on the Sabbath? “I have done one work, and ye marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you _____, (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers) and ye on the Sabbath day circumcise a man. If a man on the _____ day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry at me, because I have made a man every whit _____ on the Sabbath day?” (Jn. 7:21-23)

8. Did Jesus ever break the Sabbath He created? The work of Christ in healing the sick was in perfect _____ with the law. It _____ the Sabbath.” (DA 207)

Note: If Jesus broke the Sabbath, as many Christians today believe, then the Pharisees were right and Jesus was wrong! The fact is that Jesus did not break the Bible Sabbath but rather the rabbinical Sabbath!

9. **Thought Questions:** Read Luke 13:10-17 and Mark 3:1-6. Did Jesus break the Bible Sabbath on these occasions? What was more important to the Pharisees than people?

Further Conflicts

1. What other declaration of Jesus further incensed the Pharisees against Him? “He had not only broken the law, according to _____ understanding, but in calling God "His own Father" had declared Himself _____ with God.” (DA 207)

2. Where did Jesus get His arguments and where did the Pharisees get theirs? “They could only cite their _____ and traditions, and these seemed weak and _____ when compared with the arguments Jesus had drawn from the _____ of God and the unceasing round of _____.” (DA 208)

3. What would have happened if the leaders had not feared the people? “Had they not feared the people, the priests and rabbis would have _____ Jesus on the spot. But the popular sentiment in His _____ was strong. “ (DA 208)

4. With what words did Jesus justify this act of healing on the Sabbath? "The Son can do nothing of _____, but what He seeth the _____ do."? (Jn. 5:19)

Note: As the Father was busy in heaven blessing the universe on the Sabbath, Jesus, in parallel fashion, was blessing the life of the paralytic. The work of Jesus on the Sabbath was in perfect harmony with that of His Father.

5. How dependent was Jesus upon His Father? "So _____ was Christ emptied of self that He made no _____ for Himself. He _____ God's plans for Him, and day by day the Father _____ His plans." (DA 208)
6. Can we be as depended upon the Father as Jesus was? "So should _____ depend upon God, that our lives may be the simple _____ of His will." (DA 208)

Jesus' Unanswerable Arguments

1. In the context of His discussion with the Pharisees, why did Jesus say that the Father had committed all judgment unto Him? "The priests and rulers had set themselves up as _____ to condemn Christ's work, but He declared Himself their _____, and the judge of all the earth." (DA 210)
2. Why is Jesus the only one who is qualified to serve as the judge of the human race? "Because He has _____ the very dregs of human affliction and temptation, and _____ the frailties and sins of men; because in our behalf He has _____ withstood the temptations of Satan, and will deal _____ and _____ with the souls that His own blood has been poured out to save,--because of this, the Son of man is appointed to execute the judgment." (DA 210)
3. What further awesome statement was made by Jesus to the Pharisees and why? "What things soever He [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. . . . As the Father _____ up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son _____ whom He will." (Jn. 5:19, 20)

Note: What Jesus was saying is that He not only could restore this man's limbs on the Sabbath and be in harmony with His Father's work. He could do even more. He could not only restore dead limbs but also resurrect a dead person!! Later in the chapter (verses 28 and 29) Jesus will amplify this point.

4. What did Jesus say concerning His relationship with the Sabbath? "The sabbath was _____ for man, and not man for the Sabbath: Therefore the Son of man is _____ also of the Sabbath." (Mk. 2:27).

Note: The irony of the situation is that these religious leaders were questioning the manner of Sabbath observance of the Creator of the Sabbath!! As Ellen White well expresses it: "The Lord of the Sabbath was arraigned before an earthly tribunal to answer the charge of breaking the

Sabbath law.” (DA 211) If Jesus made the Sabbath at creation, would He not be the best qualified to explain how it was to be kept?

5. What strategy did Jesus employ at the end of His defense before the Sanhedrin? “Instead of _____ for the act of which they complained, or explaining His purpose in doing it, Jesus turned upon the rulers, and the accused became the _____.” (DA 211)
6. How much of the Old Testament points to Jesus? “In _____ page, whether history, or precept, or prophecy, the Old Testament Scriptures are _____ with the glory of the Son of God. So far as it was of divine institution, the _____ system of Judaism was a compacted prophecy of the gospel. To Christ "give all the prophets witness." Acts 10:43.” (DA 212)
7. What mistake did the Jews commit as they studied the Old Testament Scriptures? “The Jews had the Scriptures in their possession, and supposed that in their mere _____ knowledge of the word they had eternal life. But Jesus said, ‘Ye have not His word _____ in you.’ Having rejected _____ in His word, they rejected Him in person. ‘Ye will not come to Me,’ He said, ‘that ye might have life.’” (DA 212)
8. Why do so many people go wrong in their study of Scripture? “The Jewish leaders had studied the teachings of the prophets concerning the kingdom of the Messiah; but they had done this, not with a _____ desire to know the truth, but with the purpose of finding evidence to _____ their ambitious hopes.” (DA 212)

Note: The reason why there are so many churches in the world today is because people go to the Bible to prove what they already believe rather than going to the Bible to find what God wants them to believe.

7. What did Jesus mean when He said: "I receive not honor from men."? “It was not the influence of the _____, it was not their sanction He desired. He could receive no _____ from their approbation.” (DA 212)
8. Why did Jesus say: “I am coming in my Father’s name and ye receive me not, if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.”? “They would receive the false teacher because he _____ their pride by sanctioning their _____ opinions and traditions. But the teaching of Christ did not coincide with their ideas. It was spiritual, and demanded the sacrifice of _____; therefore they would not receive it. Because he who is seeking his own glory appeals to the desire for _____ in others. To such appeals the Jews could respond.” (DA 212-213)
9. What effect did the arguments of Jesus have upon the Pharisees as this episode came to an end? “They were _____ to take His life. They sent messengers all over the country to _____ the people against Jesus as an impostor. _____ were sent to watch Him, and report what He said and did. The precious Savior was now most surely standing under the _____ of the cross.” (DA 213)

