



June 26, 2022

“A Fork in the Road”

SS 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.

News:

Church **Camp** Aug 22-24

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

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JOHN 5:1-18 ~

The Bible is a Book using _____ events to teach us about _____, not a book using _____ to teach us about _____. It is ordered accordingly.

The Pool of Bethesda is just a few yards west of the Sheep Gate and less than 200 yards from the _____. It was comprised of two large pools separated by a dam with _____ porticoes.

Anti-Christians used the _____ of evidence for such a place to dismiss the Gospel until 1964 when it was uncovered. “The Copper Scroll” _____ the Pool of Bethesda.

Unless you have a KJV, you probably _____ have the last bit of verse 3, or any of verse 4, in your Bible.

1) It’s honest...

2) It’s obvious...

3) It’s wonderful...

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

The man was afflicted for 38 years, which shows the indisputable fact that he was an invalid. Jesus never did anything without _____. He picked out this one particular guy and asked him, “Do you wish to get well?”

When God directs us to act and we comply, His _____ are fulfilled. If we are truly connected to Him, our _____ are fulfilled as well, even if it costs us dearly.

In Jerusalem, 200 yards from the Temple, the healing properties of the water were thought to be the result of _____ power. People, regardless of religion, often believe that divine power can be accessed _____ from access to the divinity itself.

Jesus ignored the man’s reply and _____ him to do three specific things.

Only then, does John inform us that it was the _____ (Exodus 20:8-11, Jeremiah 17).

What _____ keeping a day holy? What _____ work?

To avoid trouble for himself, the man quickly threw Jesus under the bus. The Jews _____ the man’s story and exonerate him. The _____ lies with the Healer Who commanded the action, not the healed who merely obeyed.

This has everything to do with the one _____ sin – unbelief, but what about personal sin? Thank God that He loves you enough to discipline you (Revelation 3:19, Hebrews 12:11, I Corinthians 11:32).

Jesus called God “My Father,” and then said, *καὶ γὰρ ἐργάζομαι* (kā-gō ěř-gä-dzö-mī). He was equating His work as _____ to the Father’s work.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____



Lêtheia

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP





the gospel of

JOHN

ΕΝΑΡΧΗ Η ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΚΑΙ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΗΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ
 ΘΝ ΚΑΙ ΘΕ ΤΗ ΝΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΥ ΤΟΣ Η ΝΕΝΑΡΧΗ ΤΙΡΟΣ
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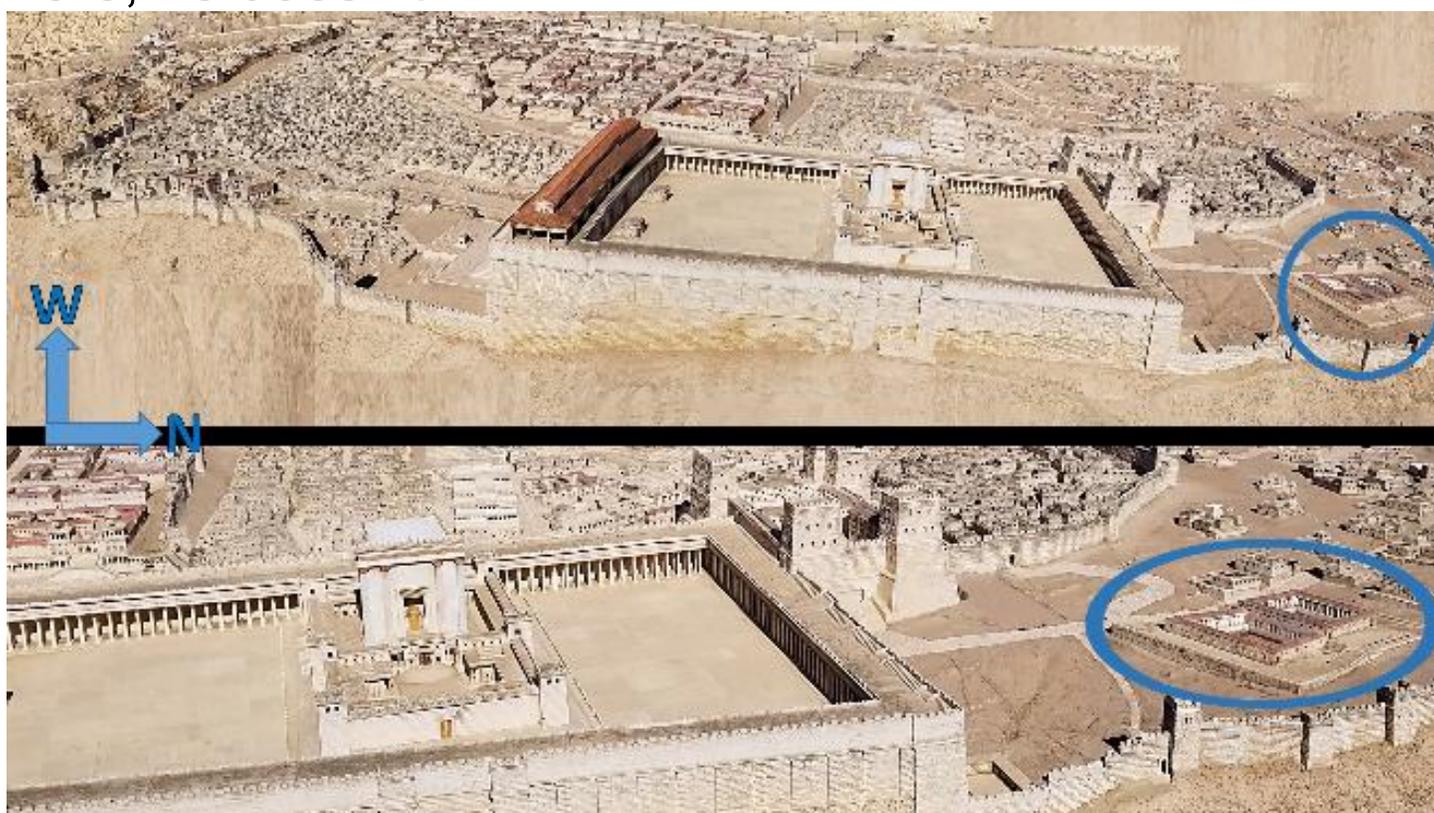
John 5:1–18, 1After these things there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2Now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porticoes. 3In these lay a multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, and withered, waiting for the moving of the waters; 4for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted. 5A man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. 6When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had already been a long time in that condition, He said to him, “Do you wish to get well?” 7The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I am coming, another steps down before me.” 8Jesus said to him, “Get up, pick up your pallet and walk.” 9Immediately the man became well, and picked up his pallet and began to walk. Now it was the Sabbath on that day. 10So the Jews were saying to the man who was cured, “It is the Sabbath, and it is not permissible for you to carry your pallet.” 11But he answered them, “He who made me well was the one who said to me, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk.’ ”

12They asked him, “Who is the man who said to you, ‘Pick up your pallet and walk’?” 13But the man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away while there was a crowd in that place. 14Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, “Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you.” 15The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. 16For this reason the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because He was doing these things on the Sabbath. 17But He answered them, “My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working.” 18For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.

We start off with “After these things.” I just want to point out that for John, that phrase has to do with the order theologically and not necessarily chronologically. The Bible is a Book using historical events to teach us about God, not a book using God to teach us about history. It is ordered accordingly. Many people feel that chapter 5 here should come after chapter 6. Perhaps

chronologically, but not theologically. Not for the purposes of God.

The mention of the feast is irrelevant other than to give us the reason Jesus was back in Jerusalem. When the particular feast is important to the point, John tells us – here, he doesn't.



The city had a number of different defensive walls that were built over time, each redefining and usually expanding the size of the enclosed area. Initially, the walls were only around the ancient Jebusite city on the finger ridge encompassing less than 7 acres. The next wall extended from the eastern Temple wall a bit north

and then swung west. That's where the "Sheep Gate" was located. Traditionally, this was the gate through which the sacrificial lambs were brought into the Temple. The Pool of Bethesda is just a few yards west of the Sheep Gate and less than 200 yards from the Temple.



The pool itself was comprised of two large pools separated by a dam with porticoes, meaning, covered porches, on all four sides with a fifth between the two pools. The existence of this double pool with five porticoes was lost to time and this passage became a major example of the inaccuracy of the Bible.

Anti-Christians used the lack of evidence for such a place to dismiss the entire Gospel as a fanciful reimagining written centuries later. In the late 1800's archeological evidence of a single pool was discovered. While that offered some proof, it certainly wasn't enough to convince the haters.



In an extensive archeological dig at that site conducted in 1964, the entire, double pool, five portico, "Pool of Bethesda" was uncovered and found to be precisely how John described it here in his Gospel.

“The Copper Scroll”



3Q15 Qumran

At about that same time the entire text of, “The Copper Scroll” (part of the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered in 1947 in Qumran) was released. The Scroll dates to the lifetime of Jesus and describes the Pool of Bethesda in detail.

^{3b}waiting for the moving of the waters; ⁴for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool and stirred up the water; whoever then first, after the stirring up of the water, stepped in was made well from whatever disease with which he was afflicted.



Unless you have a KJV, you probably don't have the last bit of verse 3, or any of verse 4, in your Bible. Even if you have that verse and a half, it's likely bracketed off and accompanied by a note. It is the explanation of why the sick people were at the pool and what the man's answer to Jesus meant.

When the KJV was translated 400+ years ago, they had far fewer ancient manuscripts of the Bible than we do now. None of the oldest and best ancient papyri contain those words. Then when the explanation starts appearing in manuscripts the verbiage varies greatly. Basically, all scholars agree that the explanation was

not original, but was added later to explain to readers what the original recipients would have known.

I bring it up for three reasons. First, it's honest – I'm not about to distort or ignore the facts from the pulpit of God. Second, you have your Bible and can plainly see that something's amiss. There is either a numbering problem going from verse 3 to verse 5, or that there is a bracket around the information, or a note. Third, it's not just okay, it's actually wonderful.

Why is it wonderful? We now have almost 6,000 ancient manuscripts of the Bible and we know that the Bible we have today is indeed what was written 19 ½ centuries ago. Beyond that, what we have discovered is that the Bible used over the millennia, was completely accurate as to the Theology taught.

In other words, the explanation is almost certainly true, and it does not change a thing doctrinally, or theologically whether it is in your Bible or not. Never once in 2,000 years, have we discovered something that changes anything of importance in the Bible. God has preserved His Word to be not only accurate in the big picture, but to be precisely what He wanted each

generation to have, and for which, He will hold each generation accountable.



The man was afflicted for 38 years. That's to show the indisputable fact that the man was an invalid. No one is faking something like that for 38 years. Some try to tie the number to the Exodus, or to other things. Here's a freebee Biblical interpretation tip. If the author doesn't make a connection clear, then you shouldn't make it clear in your interpretation.

Doing that is one of the most common ways that even well-intentioned people distort the meaning of God's Word.

Note, once again, Jesus never did anything without purpose. He picked out this one particular guy from what must have been a great multitude of candidates. Jesus approached him and asked him a very pointed question. “Do you wish to get well?” Jesus knew that the guy was lame and that he had been that way for a very long time. Well, most anyone paying attention to the details could have deduced as much just observing the guy.



What Jesus knew that was truly divine was that the man needed to be healed of something far worse than his physical issue. Beyond that Jesus knew that the

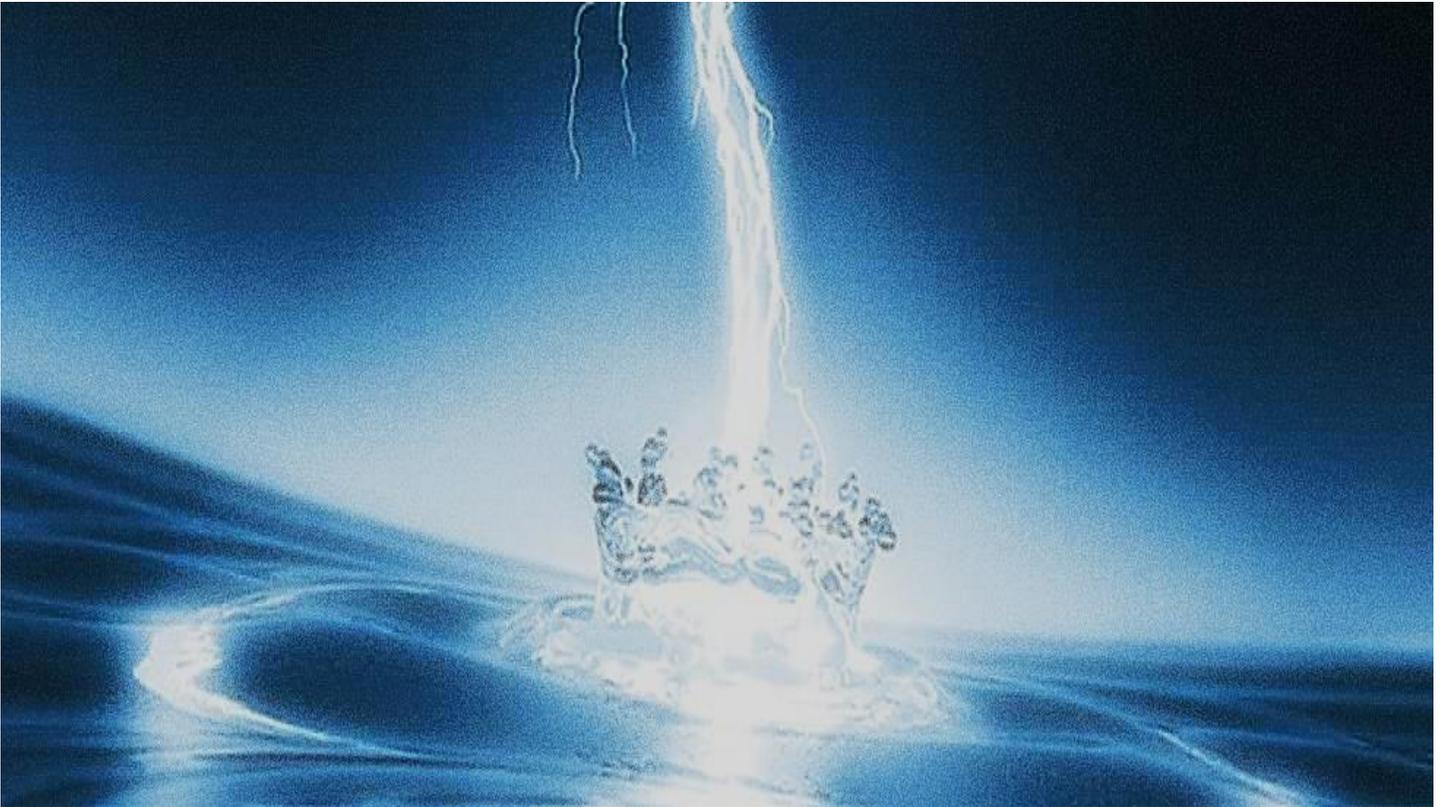
Father was directing him to that person for the Father's purposes to unfold. Since Jesus was one with the Father, then it was Jesus' purposes as well.

My friends, that is how we are to be. When God directs us to act, and we comply, and His purposes are fulfilled, then, if we are truly connected to Him, our purposes are fulfilled as well, even if it costs us dearly.

I don't pray that I build and then deliver a great sermon each week. I pray that the Lord would use me for His purposes each week even if His purposes are to make me look foolish, or to irritate you to the point you don't like me. Because His purposes are my purposes no matter what it costs me personally. That was Christ's attitude while walking on the earth and it must be ours as well.



The man's response to the question gives us our first insight into his character. It may not seem obvious in English, but the man, like the Woman at the Well, was a snot. The "Sir," bit is sarcastic, then he went on to essentially say, "Are you stupid?" "I'm here at the pool, obviously I want to be healed. I've been doing this for a very long time, and someone always beats me to the punch." That last bit was a bitter complaint about how unlucky, and how unloved, he was.



His comment about the water being stirred occasionally is what later translators thought needed some clarification. In the Greco-Roman world, many thousands of baths, pools, and springs were thought to have healing powers. In general, the idea was that a god, or a lesser supernatural entity, would stir the waters and the first person in would be healed.

Here, in Jerusalem, 200 yards from the Jewish Temple, instead of a pagan power, it would, of course, thought to be God's power, through His agent, like an angel. What's incredibly common among people, regardless of religion, is the belief that divine power can be

accessed apart from access to the divinity itself. Say the right incantation, mix a potion with the correct roots, herbs, and eye of newt, light a candle, sit in a circle, and you access power without the messiness of relationship, or tediousness of obedience.

In Judaism then and in Christianity today there are many who operate as though there are rules that God is forced to obey or at least that God's power is forced to obey. One of the things that wiggled out Mariah while we were in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, was the people rubbing their Rosaries and other objects on the Stone of Preparation to imbue them with holy power.

Many people claiming to be Christians believe that if you say the right prayers, or give enough money, or see the right minister, or do the right things that God is somehow forced to grant your wishes. In simple terms, trying to get your will done in Heaven instead of God's will done on earth is witchcraft.

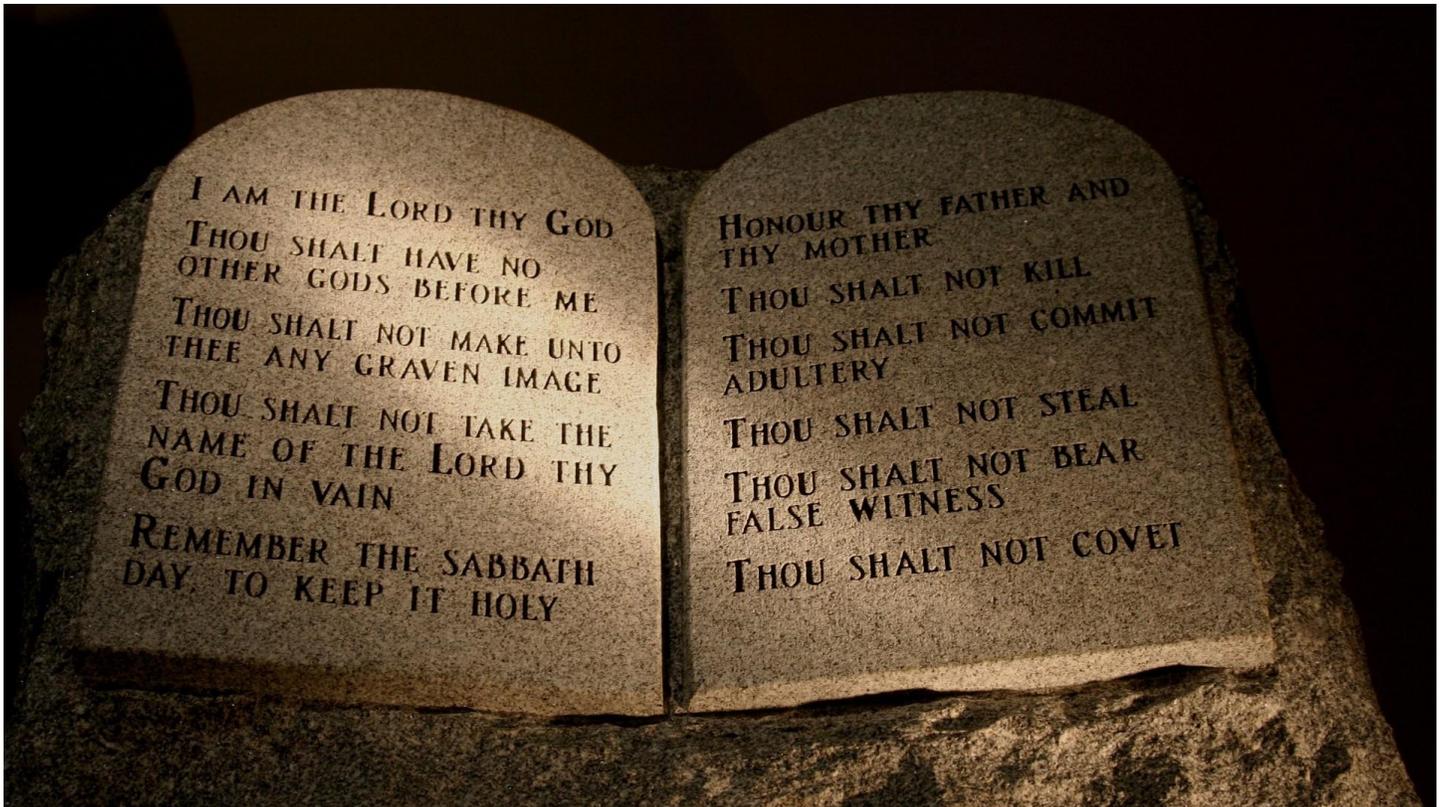
Not only is seeking the gift over the Giver a grievous sin, but it is also really foolish. I say really foolish because it is the idea that you can bypass an interactive exchange with God Himself, and instead

have an interactive exchange with a pool, or a stone slab, or something else, and receive God's power.

Not only is it witchcraft, not only does it make no sense, but it is also idolatry. In a moment you'll see that it wasn't just this crippled man who had that attitude.



Jesus ignored the man's reply and commanded him to do three specific things, "Get up, pick up your pallet and walk." Without delay, the man obeyed. Carrying his mat was a sign that true and full supernatural healing had taken place. The dude didn't just limp off on his crutches, He got up off the floor, picked up the mat that he was lying on, and walked.



Only then, does John inform us that it was the Sabbath. “Houston, we have a problem.” There are 613 Laws in the Old Testament and “Keeping the Sabbath holy,” is a big one. As you know, it is one of the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20:8-11,

8“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9“Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. 11“For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh

day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

Jeremiah chapter 17 talks about it and not only does it confirm that “You shall do no work,” it specifically states that “You shall not carry a load.”

What constitutes keeping a day holy? What constitutes work? What constitutes carrying a load? These are questions that the Pharisees codified into 39 different classes, or categories of prohibited work. Carrying your bed mat on the Sabbath was a clear violation of the Pharisee’s interpretation of Scripture.



It didn't take long for some uptight legalistic tattletale to report the violation. There are always plenty of people who, to receive favor from the authorities, or to feel superior to others, or to satisfy a spiteful nature, are eager to inform on their fellows. The man was likely brought to the Temple to explain himself.

The Jews were no doubt hostile and threatening. To them, his breaking of the law was punishable by death because it showed a disregard for God's authority. In practice the Jews wouldn't kill the man for carrying his mat, but it was a far more serious crime than we realize.



He was in deep kimchee. To avoid their further ire, he quickly threw Jesus under the bus. Basically, “I would never dream of breaking the law, but the man who healed me ordered me to do it and I felt that I had to obey because He obviously exercised God’s power.”

Guess what? The Jews instantly accept the man’s story and exonerate him. Their actions clear the man of all wrongdoing – they believed that his logic was sound. A man able to heal him did have the power of God and should have been obeyed – the fault lies with the Healer, not the healed.



Notice the heart and the thinking of the Jewish leaders. They believed that the Healer wielded the power to heal the man – they didn't dispute that. In addition, they generally assumed that such power could only come from God – God's healing power flowed through the Healer.

This is where it gets ironic and why I said that we would soon meet others who, like the healed man, thought that God and His power were two separate things. They conclude that the healing is of no real importance because, of course, God's power can heal. They focus on the one using God's power wrongly, sinfully, illegally.

It never occurred to them that if a man had God's power, he would also have God's approval. Nope, ordering someone to violate the Sabbath was proof that man brandishing God's power, did not have God's approval and so it was up to them to fix it.

Who was this man, they demand to know? The healed dude was so self-absorbed he didn't have a clue. He was so caught up in rudely answering what he thought was a dumb question from Jesus, followed by being so

amazed that he was healed, that he never paid attention to Jesus Himself.

Many people are like that today – they disparage God, but when they really need something for themselves, they are happy to take it, but they don't really want anything to do with the God who gave it to them.

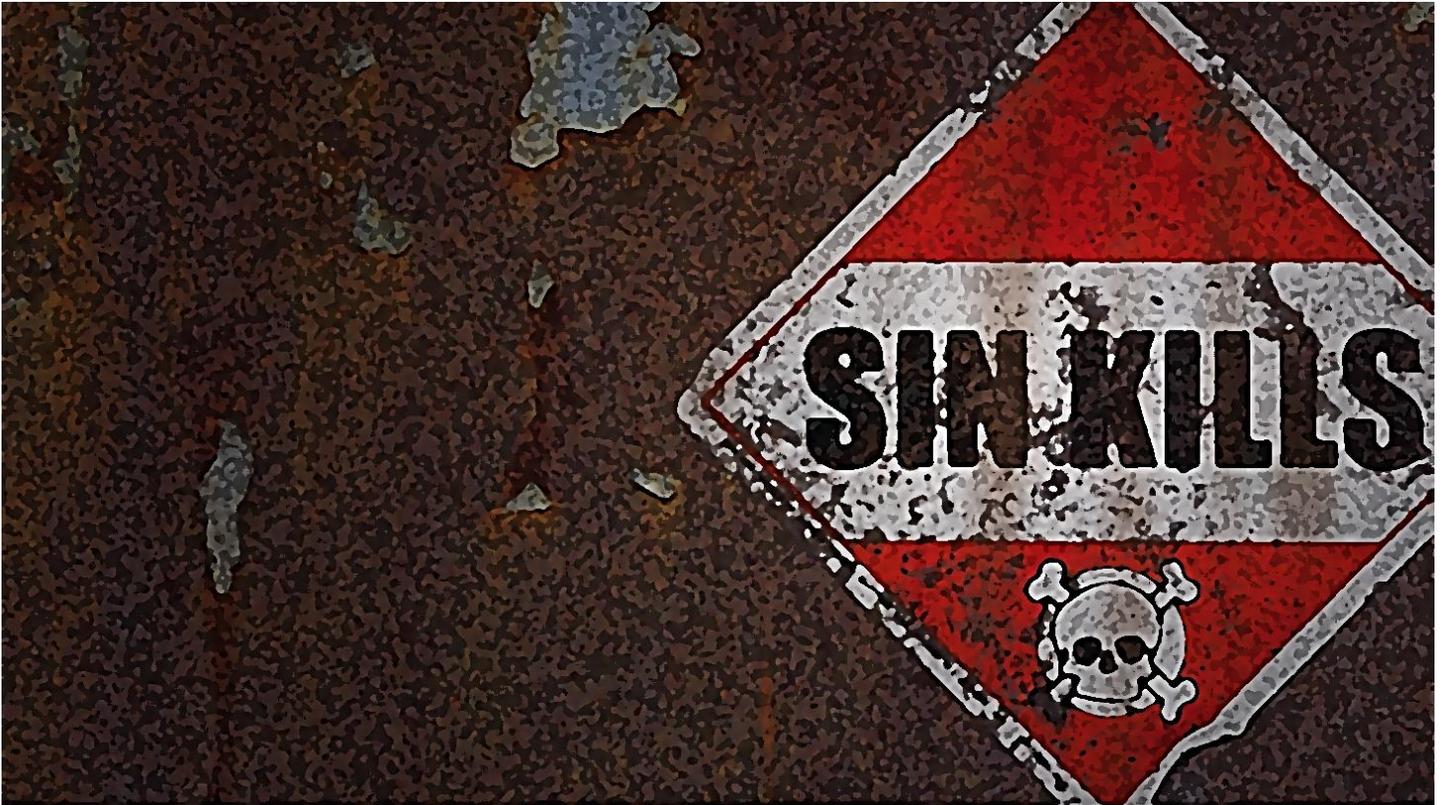
The man didn't know so, that's the end of the story then. Except that God's purposes in the incident are not yet complete. Jesus found the guy in the Temple and confronted him saying "Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you." That is another very forceful command. "Look dude, you are physically well, stop sinning! If you don't, something far worse will happen."



The line, “When you come to a fork in the road, take it” – Yogi Berra, makes more sense now, right? This confrontation is the kind of thing that forces a response. Jesus continually pushes people until they come to a fork in the road – or a crossroad like this. At this point the man had two clear choices. Obey Jesus again, and truly be healed for eternity, or betray Jesus just like Judas will, just like everyone who rejects Jesus does and be consigned to the Lake of Fire.



This has everything to do with the one unforgivable sin – the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, which is rejection of Jesus. The man wasn't born crippled and yet had been crippled for 38 years. He was very likely in his 40's or 50's and back then people generally didn't live much past that. He had physical healing that might enjoy for a year or two, perhaps even a decade or two, but what good is that if afterwards there was nothing but pain for eternity? "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" (Matthew 16:26a)



Beyond that there is the question of personal sin and physical health. We see several indications in the Bible that due to Original Sin the world is corrupted with death. Where there is death there is decay, degeneration, and depravity. In a general sense all the evils of this world including all physical disease, deterioration, and decline is the result of Original Sin.

In addition, though, the Bible also talks a lot about individual sin and its physical ramifications on the person. What we can conclude is that not all problems in a person's life are directly caused by their individual sin, but that in some cases it absolutely is. John Calvin

realized the difficulty in determining whether a problem was caused by personal sin, or by Original Sin, and he understood the folly and danger of trying to figure it out, especially when judging others.

He decided that the proper course of action was to look only at yourself and recognize that everything that happens to you is a blessing from God and that one of the greatest blessings was that God would love you so much that He would discipline you.

Calvin knew that no one was without sin, and he knew that everyone suffers from one thing or another. It was his practice to take every negative thing and assume that it was at least partially due to his personal sin and to take it as an instruction, or correction from the Lord to help him confess and repent – to address and eliminate – sin in his own life. That is a worthwhile practice.



I'm undergoing a trial, whether I'm innocent or guilty, I know that I'm never truly innocent. Let me take the hardship, the tribulation, as another opportunity to examine my life in Christ, my walk as His disciple. Let me use it as a chastisement to be more devoted to God and to the work that He has for me. Let me see His hand in it and let me rejoice in the love He pours out to me in the midst of my struggle. Let me not waste trying things but use them to draw closer to my Lord.

I've had some serious issues in airplanes recently and I take that as a sign from God to completely abandon work not directly related to the ministry to which He has

called me. I was flying professionally because I trying to make more money, I was trying to feel better about myself, and I was trying to keep a door open for other opportunities in my quickly advancing years.

The Hope of Discipline

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Well, trying to make more money was driven by a frustration with my pay which is ultimately a frustration with what God provided. Trying to get more appreciation from others through flying, was about stroking my ego. Trying to keep the door open to other opportunities is a failure to trust in God's future providence. I have experienced some real stress, some financial setbacks, and some disillusionment, due to my personal sin.

I take the negative things as opportunities to confess and repent – to address and eliminate. I thank God that He loves me enough to discipline me. Jesus said in Revelation 3:19, “Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; therefore, be zealous and repent.” Hebrews 12:11, tells us “No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.”

The Apostle Paul informs us in I Corinthians 11:32 that we are disciplined so that we will not be condemned. What that healed man should have known, and what we should always remember, is that the Bible declares that there are two reactions to God’s discipline. You either accept it as a reproof and conform, or you faint and fall away.



Our guy chose the latter and immediately went back to the Jewish leaders and betrayed Jesus. He chose to appease leaders who had moments before reviled him by handing over the one who had healed him.

Now, they persecute Jesus and by way of explanation He tells them something remarkable. Jesus could have gotten into a no-win argument over the actual Scriptures related to the Sabbath and the Jewish extrapolated interpretation, but He went to an argument that is profound. He said, "My Father is working until now, and I Myself am working."



IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED
THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH.

Earlier, I read the actual commandment, which includes a rationale for the command. God created in six days, and He rested on the seventh – the Sabbath. The Jews fully understood that God did not fully rest. God didn't just wind up the world and let it go like Deists think, the world requires continuous action on God's part. He holds the entire universe together, moment, by moment, with the Word of His power. They well knew that God was always working – that God Himself was excused from the prohibition of work on the Sabbath.

Jesus pointed out that fully recognized fact by calling God explicitly "My Father." Jews understood God as

their Father, but no one would have dreamed of personalizing it in such a way. Jesus was claiming something in His relationship with God that no good Jew would ever claim.

More than that though, Jesus then said only two words, $\kappa\acute{\alpha}\gamma\omega\ \acute{\epsilon}\rho\gamma\acute{\alpha}\zeta\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$ (kă-gō ěř-gă-dzǒ-mī). Essentially, “And I am working.” It is as unmistakable as anything can be – there is no way around Jesus’ claim and therefore no way around His argument. He was equating His work as identical to the Father’s work. The Father violates your understanding of the Sabbath every week and I am no different than Him.

As I say, the claim is that Jesus has the same privilege as God and if that’s true then He cannot possibly be in violation. Obviously for the Jews this is outrageous

blasphemy hence the next verse.



18For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God. Choices.