

The Gospel of John John 5

Memory Verse: *“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life”* (John 5:24 ESV).

Background Helps:

In John 5 Jesus is once again in Jerusalem (see earlier, John 2:13–3:21). (Keep your class geographically oriented week by week.) Here Christ performs another miracle (sign)—the healing of the invalid—and follows his miracle with a long discourse. The chapter might be outlined like this:

1. Jesus’ miracle (sign): Healing the invalid (5:1-18)
 - a. The miracle itself (5:1-9b)
 - b. Controversy stirred up by the miracle (5:9b-18)
2. Jesus’ discourse (5:19-47)
 - a. Jesus’ relationship to the Father (5:19-30)
 - b. Various witnesses to the Son (5:31-47)

The Pool of Bethesda, where this miracle occurred, is one of the archaeological sites in Jerusalem that has been definitely identified. You could look up this information online and even show pictures to your students. The events in Scripture happened in space-time history!

Lesson Helps:

In children’s classes, the emphasis should probably be on the story of the miracle. A possible aim: My students will learn about Jesus’ healing of the invalid, so that they will believe that Jesus is the Son of God. This aim combines a focus on the miracle story with the main point of Jesus’ discourse (and of the whole Gospel of John): that Jesus is God’s Son (John 20:31). This story would be easy to dramatize. Turn all your students into sick people lying by the Pool of Bethesda! Have Jesus come by and pick out one of them for healing.

Be sure to include the memory verse, John 5:24. Notice that whoever hears Jesus’ word and believes in the one who sent him (1) has (in the present) eternal life, (2) does not come into judgment (in the future), but has passed (in the past) from death to life.

In teen and adult classes, the aim could be similar: My students will learn about Jesus’ healing of the invalid and his subsequent discourse, so that they will believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Notice that the miracle in John 5 occurred on a Sabbath, which resulted in a controversy with the Jews. Jesus claims equal right to work on the Sabbath (!) as his Father (5:17), and he is persecuted for breaking the Sabbath and calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God (5:18). In the discourse that follows, how does Jesus show that he is indeed equal to the

Father (vv. 19-30)? What witnesses does Jesus call on to defend this claim (vv. 31-47)? What response does Jesus call on us to make to this claim (vv. 24, 38, 40, 43, 46-47)?

Home Assignment:

 Read: John 6

 Memorize: John 6:35

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