

Sunday Morning Message

May 22, 2022

The Healing at the Pool of Bethesda (Part One)

The Gospel According to John

Text – John 5:1 - 17

Congregational Reading – John 5:1 - 9

Introduction (vs. 1 – 2)

The story that we are dealing with in chapter five is once again in Jerusalem at “a feast.” The feast that John is referring to is not mentioned here. It could have been another Passover, or it could have been at Pentecost, or at the Feast of Tabernacles.

"Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. 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:) 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. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD." (Exodus 23:14-17)

John specifically mentions Jesus being at the Passover in John 2:13; 6:4; and 11:55. John also mentions Jesus being at the Feast of Tabernacles in John 7:2. John also mentions another feast, which was not dealt with at all in the Old Testament, which is the Feast of Dedication, or Hannukah, in 10:22. Hannukah was a celebration of the victory of the Jewish people over Antiochus Epiphanes in 170 BC. This was during the so-called silent years, in-between the Old and New Testament periods.

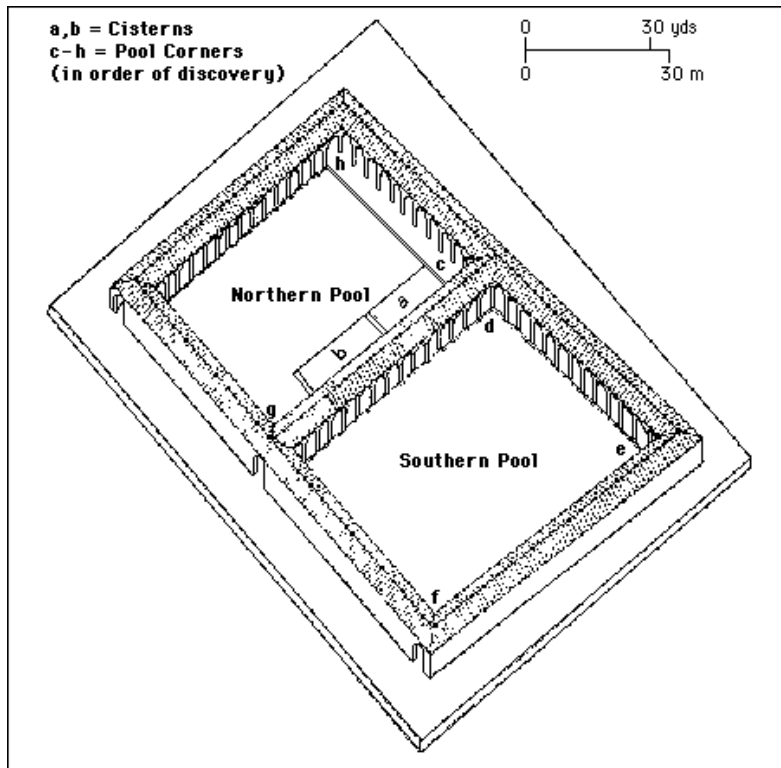
There is another Jewish feast that is not specifically mentioned by John, which is Purim, which celebrated God’s deliverance of the Jewish people from the genocide attempted on them by Haman during the time of Queen Esther. This feast was in March.

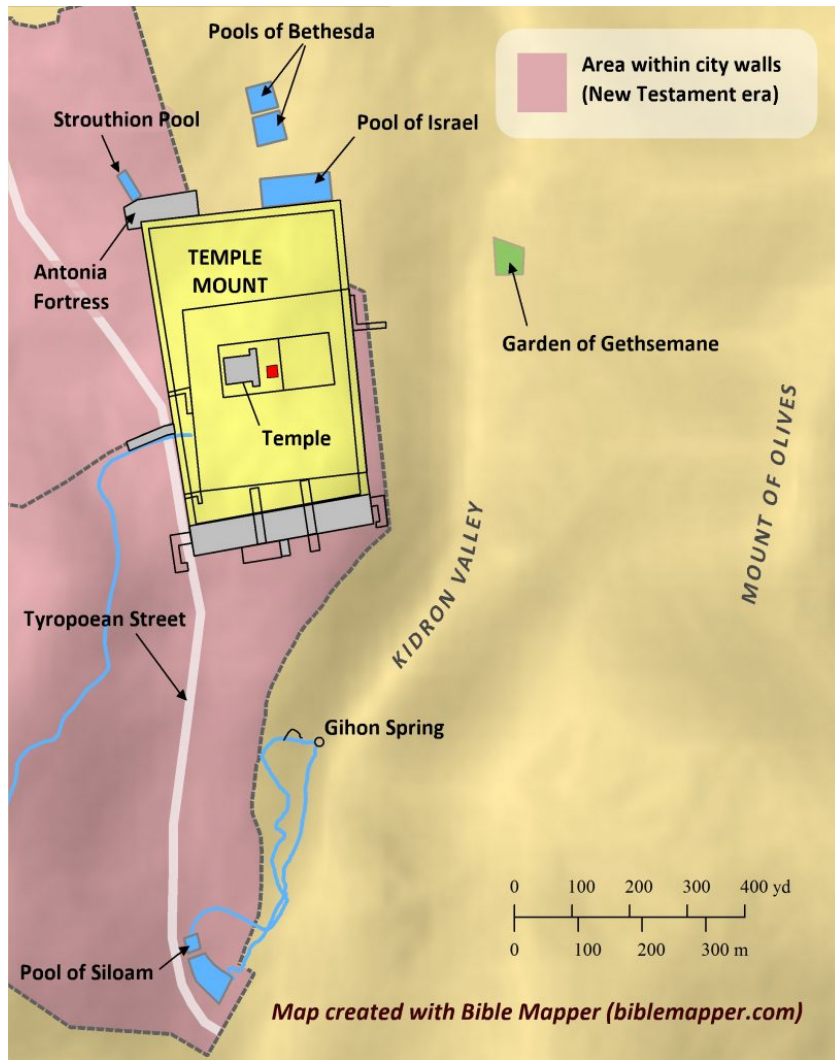
The Passover and Pentecost both take place later in the spring, Tabernacles is in the fall, and Hannukah is in the winter.

John’s gospel makes no attempt to give an exhaustive list of events in chronological order. John tends to focus mostly on what takes place in Jerusalem, at least more so than the other gospel writers. There are several other events, included by the other gospel writers, which John omits.

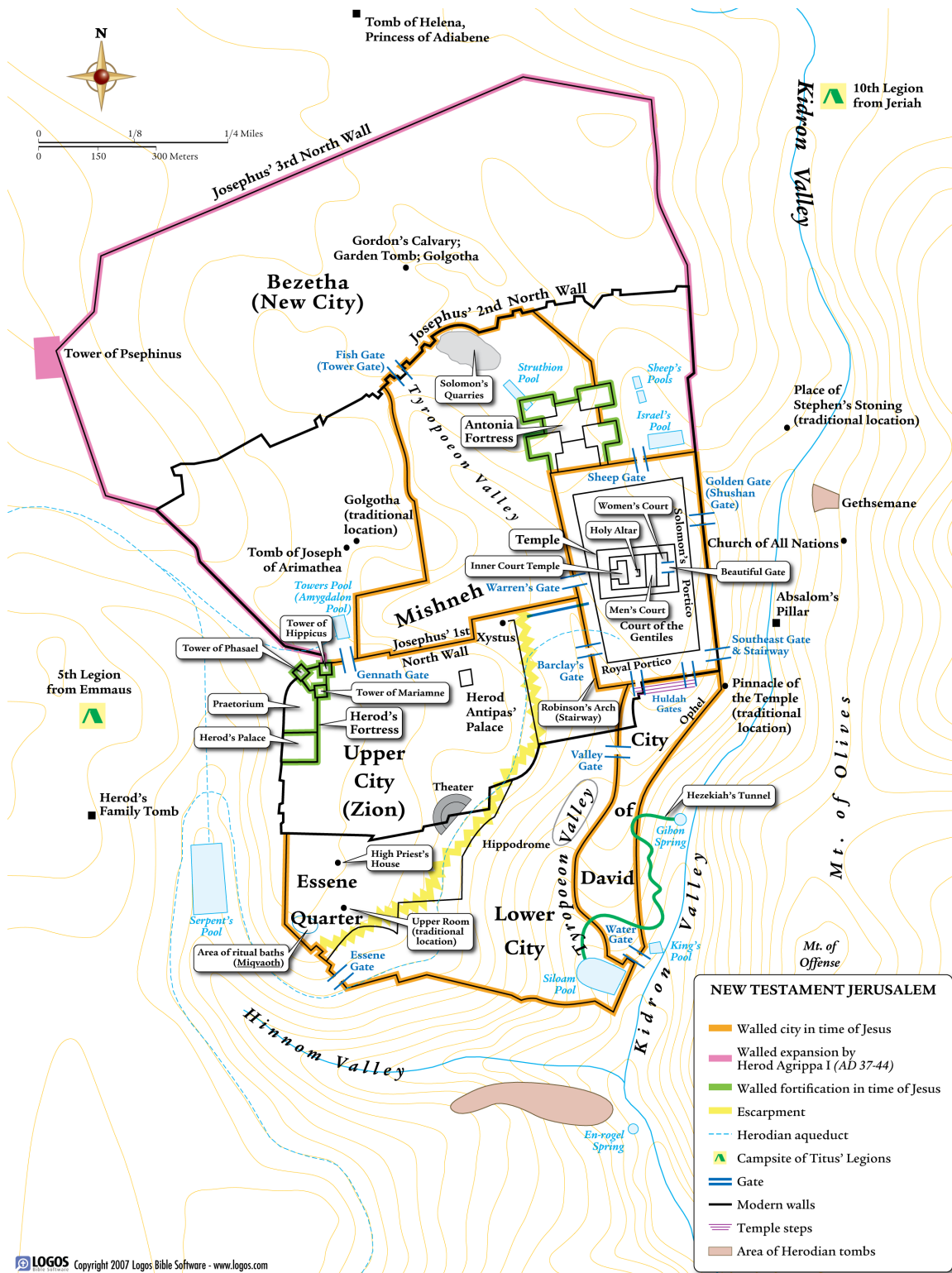
Again, there is no indication here in John 5 as to which of these feasts Jesus was in Jerusalem for. We know the main reason that He was there was to help this man at the Pool.

The Pool where this event takes place is the Pool of Bethesda, which is described as having five porches. Until the late 1800's critics were skeptical that this pool ever existed, but in the 1890's, it was discovered, exactly where the Bible said it was, and precisely as the Bible described.





The only other thing mentioned in verse two is the “sheep market,” which is likely a reference to the sheep gate. (Nehemiah 3:1; 32; 12:39). Wiersbe points out: “Perhaps John saw some spiritual significance to this location, for he had already told his readers that Jesus Christ is “the Lamb of God” (John 1:29).”¹



¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 304.

All these details are given to us by John for clarity, but the important thing about this story is not where it happened, but that Jesus cared enough about this one man to go to where he was and meet his need. This third miracle that John records reveals once again Jesus' love for people. Jesus performed miracles for a variety of reasons. They fulfilled prophecy and they proved that He was whom He claimed to be, but the main reason that Jesus healed people was because He loved them.

We will cover this event in two parts: first, we look at the event itself, and second, we will examine the problems that resulted from the event. The religious leaders were not at all happy about what Jesus was doing.

I. The Mystery Surrounding the Pool (vs. 3 – 4)

According to our text, there was an angel who would come to this pool periodically and would “trouble” or stir up the water, and apparently the first person who got into the water after it was stirred would be healed of whatever disease or infirmity that he had. Many sick and crippled folk hung around this pool hoping that they would be there at precisely the right time and get in the water before anybody else. What a sad state to be in. Sitting there day after day, week after week, year after year, just hoping that something might happen.

Phillips states:

That multitude represented humankind. There the sufferers lay, waiting, believing, despairing. There they were brought, there they were left—lying at the gates of a dead religion, so to speak—hoping against hope, bolstering flagging beliefs, passed by priest and people alike, longing for some kind of a miracle, perhaps fearful lest their religion prove powerless to meet their greatest need.²

II. The Man Specifically Targeted by the Lord (vs. 5 – 9)

This man was in a bad way for a long time. Somehow, he heard about this pool, and the miracles that allegedly took place there. He probably spent a great deal of his time there just hoping that he would be there at the right time, and that he would be there in time, before anybody else got into the water.

² John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary*, The John Phillips Commentary Series (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Jn 5:1–4.

Jesus targets this one man. Remember, there are multitudes of people there and they all had problems. Why did Jesus target this particular man – why not the others. It was probably because this man was the only one that had the faith to believe.

When Jesus told this man to “Rise, take up thy bed, and walk,” he immediately was made whole and obeyed the Lord.

III. The Misguided Men Surveilling the Miracle (vs. 10 – 13)

Notice the last phrase in v. 9 – “and on the same day was the sabbath.” These religious leaders from Jerusalem saw this man walking around, carrying his bed, which was unlawful for him to do on the Sabbath. Isn’t it amazing that these religious people were more concerned about a violation of a Sabbath rule, then they were about the fact that this man who was paralyzed for thirty-eight years was healed?

There first concern was with the man, but as we will learn, their bigger concern will be with the One who healed him.

IV. The Meeting with Jesus, which Set in Motion the Fate of Jesus (vs. 14 – 17)

Notice that their beef with Jesus was that He healed this man on the Sabbath, and as a result they sought to kill Him.

Jesus would level His strongest rebuke at these religious leaders. (Read Matthew 23)

"Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel." (Matthew 23:23-24)

Conclusion

There are several practical applications that we can glean from this passage. We will discuss just a few of them here at the conclusion of this message:

1. Jesus loves people and wants to help them.

This man had been in a bad way for thirty-eight years. He had his infirmity longer than Jesus had physically been on the earth. But, as God, Jesus knew this man before the man had the disease; He knew Him before He was even born, and He loved Him. Can you imagine what may have been going through the mind of the Lord, even before He came

to the earth; and then when He was young boy in Bethlehem. He was anticipating the day that He would come to Jerusalem, to this pool to love and heal this man.

Think about this – Jesus was thinking about you, and He was thinking about me long before He saved us. He was anticipating that day when you would call upon Him in faith for salvation. He looked forward to that day.

Just as Jesus loved and healed this man of his physical disease, He loved and healed you of your spiritual disease, which is sin. You only needed to have faith to believe in Him.

2. You and I ought to love people and want to help them.

The results of sin are everywhere around us. People are struggling. There are all kinds of discouraging and devastating problems in people's lives. Some are suffering physically; some are struggling financially; and still others have very difficult situations going on within their family. Many people are hurting. It is our job as God's ambassadors to help people.

We help them by communicating the gospel to them.

We help them by instructing them from the word of God. There are principles in this Book which will help them with their problems.

We can help them by providing assistance to them – physical needs.

We help them by encouraging them in will of God.

We help them by praying for them.

Jesus is not physically here on the earth to go to places like the Pool of Bethesda to minister to people, but you are. I am. We can be the hands, feet, and mouth of the Lord while we are still here on this earth.

3. Not everyone will be happy about what God is doing in your life.

Immediately after this man was healed, the critics came around to find fault with what Jesus did. When you were saved, you entered into a spiritual battle. The devil has you on his radar screen. He hates you because you remind him of God. He hates you because you once belonged to him, and now you have chosen to follow Christ. There are a lot of people out there who still belong to him, and he will use them to try to discourage you; he will use them to try to distract you; he will use them to try to divert you off of the path

that God has not planned for your life. Don't let him or the people he sends get to you. Stay around people who are going to encourage you and support you in the will of God.

4. Be careful as you grow, that you don't lose sight of the "Big Picture."

You were a lost sinner deserving of Hell, and God save you. Your job is to reach other lost sinners deserving of Hell with the gospel of Christ. And just because God has cleaned you up a little, don't look down your nose at lost people, thinking you are somehow better than they are; and, don't be critical of believers who have not yet learned and applied what you have learned.

Don't get too upset about small things. Be excited about the big things that God is doing.