







Jesus Returns to Jerusalem and Heals a Lame Man

Here is the **Full Breakdown** of **John 5:1–15** – Jesus returns to Jerusalem and heals a lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. This passage introduces growing tension between Jesus and the Jewish leaders over the Sabbath and authority to heal.



SCRIPTURE PASSAGE OVERVIEW

 Gospel	 Passage	 Context Setting	 Main Characters
John (💜)	5:1–15	Jesus returns to Jerusalem for an unnamed feast	Jesus, lame man (38 years infirm), Jewish leaders

HISTORICAL, CULTURAL, AND GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT



 Aspect	 Explanation
Feast	John doesn't specify which feast it is. Scholars debate between Passover , Pentecost , or Feast of Purim . If it's Passover, this is one of 3 Passovers in John, helping frame the timeline of Jesus' ministry.
Bethesda	Name possibly means “house of mercy” or “house of flowing water.” A pool near the Sheep Gate with five porticoes (porches). Archaeological remains confirm its likely location near the northeast corner of the Temple Mount.
Healing Water Tradition	Verse 4 (which appears in later manuscripts only) refers to an angel stirring the waters and the first one in being healed. This reflects a common folk belief , not necessarily affirmed by the text.
Sabbath Controversy	Jesus heals on the Sabbath, a direct challenge to rabbinic interpretations of “work.” Carrying a mat was considered a Sabbath violation (Jeremiah 17:21–22).
38 Years Infirm	Nearly a lifetime—symbolizing both chronic helplessness and perhaps Israel's 38 years wandering in the wilderness (Deut 2:14). A hint of spiritual parallel.

STRUCTURE OF THE PASSAGE



 Section	 Summary
5:1–3a	Jesus arrives at a feast in Jerusalem and comes to the pool of Bethesda.
5:3b–4	[Omitted in earliest manuscripts] Tradition about an angel stirring the waters.
5:5–7	Jesus speaks to the man who had been disabled for 38 years. The man expresses helplessness.
5:8–9	Jesus commands him to rise, pick up his mat, and walk. He is immediately healed.
5:10–13	The Jews confront the man for carrying his mat on the Sabbath. He doesn't know who healed him.
5:14–15	Jesus finds him later and warns him, “Stop sinning, or something worse may happen.” The man reports to the Jews it was Jesus.

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KEY GREEK WORDS

Word	 Greek	 Meaning & Significance
Healing	ὅγιος (hugiēs)	"Whole" or "healthy" (v. 6, 9). Used to describe full restoration, not partial recovery.
Sin no more	μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε (mēketi hamartane)	Imperative: "Stop sinning." Indicates a moral dimension to his condition or future warning.
Made well	ἰάομαι (iaomai) vs. θεραπεύω (therapeuō)	Used differently in Gospels. "Iomai" often implies divine healing , while "therapeuō" can refer to ongoing care.
Sabbath	σάββατον (sabbaton)	Day of rest and worship. Jewish oral traditions built "fence laws" to avoid even coming close to violating it. Jesus regularly challenges these extra layers.

MESSIANIC IMPLICATIONS

 Theme	 Messianic Fulfillment or Controversy
Healing on Sabbath	Prophets like Isaiah foretold a time when the lame would walk (Isaiah 35:6). Jesus fulfills this—but does so in a deliberately provocative way , signaling His authority over the Sabbath (cf. John 5:17–18).
Authority to Heal	Jewish teaching held that only God could forgive sins or heal directly. Jesus acts on His own authority, foreshadowing the deeper confrontation that follows in the next section (John 5:16–47).
Spiritual Paralysis	The healing of the man's physical lameness points to Jesus' mission to heal spiritual brokenness —but the man's later actions (reporting Jesus) raise questions about his internal response.

THEOLOGICAL THEMES

 Theme	 Description
Jesus Initiates	The man didn't ask to be healed. Jesus chooses him. This emphasizes grace —God's initiative in healing and salvation.
Authority over Sabbath	Jesus does not break the Torah but challenges legalistic interpretations . He reclaims the Sabbath as a day for doing good (cf. Luke 6:9).
Healing and Holiness	Jesus links healing to moral renewal —"stop sinning." Not all suffering is due to sin, but here Jesus calls for repentance (cf. John 9:3 for a contrast).
Religious Blindness	The Jewish leaders focus more on the mat than the miracle —showing how rules can blind us to God's work.