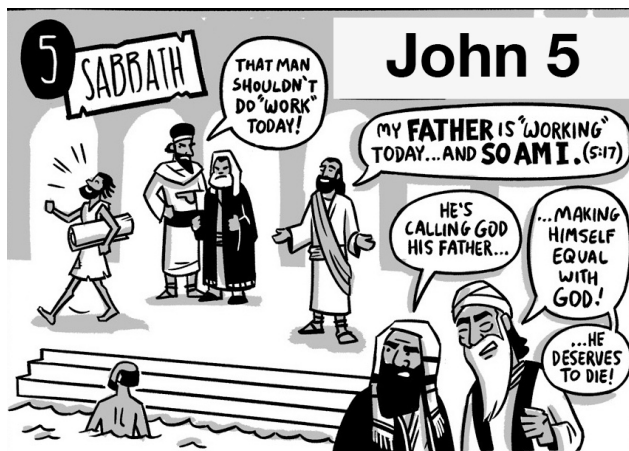


# Gospel of John Study Notes

## John 5a – Jesus Heals On The Sabbath

Chapter 5 marks the beginning of the section in the Gospel of John referred to as the Four Jewish Festivals: Sabbath, Passover, Tabernacles, and Hanukkah.

This chapter focuses on the Sabbath. We'll look at it in two parts, though it really is a complete unit of study. We'll use the NIV Application Commentary's outline as shown below. It provides an interesting perspective about this chapter, especially Jesus is on trial.



- The Crime ([John 5:1-15](#))
- The Decision to Prosecute ([John 5:16-18](#))
- John 5b: Jesus Goes to Trial ([John 5:19-47](#))

While the miracle is astounding, the emphasis on this chapter has less to do with the miracle; instead, the focus is on the miracle worker, Jesus, and the reaction of the Jewish leadership which we discover in the next part (John 5:19-47). Today's focus is on John 5:1-18, the miracle that includes most John's observation about the event.

## The Crime

- A man at Bethesda is healed on the Sabbath
- The man is interrogated
- The criminal [Jesus] is identified
- A few observations:
  - The “missing” verse is discussed on pp 3-4 for your reference (John 5:4)
  - Those with infirmities are not necessarily linked to sin. See John 9:3. Physical suffering is not definitely linked to sin, but in this case, Jesus affirms there is some link.

## The Decision to Prosecute

- First basis: Jesus violates the Sabbath
- Second basis: Jesus is making divine claims

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*... not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. -- John 5:18*

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## John 5:1-18

New International Version

### The Crime – The Healing at the Pool

<sup>5</sup> Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. <sup>2</sup> Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. <sup>3</sup> Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. <sup>[4]</sup> <sup>5</sup> One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. <sup>6</sup> When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, “Do you want to get well?”

<sup>7</sup> “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

<sup>8</sup> Then Jesus said to him, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.” <sup>9</sup> At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, <sup>10</sup> and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

<sup>11</sup> But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ ”

<sup>12</sup> So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

<sup>13</sup> The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

<sup>14</sup> Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” <sup>15</sup> The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

### The Decision to Prosecute – The Authority of the Son

<sup>16</sup> So, because Jesus was doing these things on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to persecute him. <sup>17</sup> In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” <sup>18</sup> For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

## NIV Application Commentary Notes<sup>1</sup>

An outline of the festivals makes John's structure clear.

- The Sabbath Festival in Jerusalem (ch. 5)
- The Passover Festival in Galilee (ch. 6)
- The Tabernacles Festival in Jerusalem (chs. 7–8)
- Case Study: A Blind Man and "Light" (ch. 9)
- The Hanukkah Festival in Jerusalem (ch. 10)

One cannot overestimate the importance of such festivals in first-century Judaism. Leviticus 23 offers a list of these festivals and stresses their importance. The cycle of festivals was old (Purim and Hanukkah were the newest, but centuries-old in Jesus' day) and the liturgies of the temple and the responsibilities of Jewish families well established. Three times each year Jewish families were expected to travel to Jerusalem for worship (Passover in spring, Pentecost seven weeks later, Tabernacles in autumn), thanking God for the harvest of crop and herd and remembering great episodes from Israel's history.

### John 5:4 – Not included in many Bibles<sup>2</sup>

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*For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatever disease he had.*

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One explanation for the crowd at the pool has slipped into the text (5:3b–4), which most of the manuscripts of John leave out (cf. the NIV); it was likely inserted to explain the "stirring of the waters" in 5:7.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wilkins, Michael J.; Garland, David E.; Bock, Darrell L.; Burge, Gary M.; Fernando, Ajith. NIVAC Bundle 6: Gospels, Acts (The NIV Application Commentary). Zondervan Academic. Kindle Edition.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.biblestudymagazine.com/bible-study-magazine-blog/2014/04/who-took-verse-4-out-of-my-bible>

<sup>3</sup> The NIV Application Commentary

## Barnes' Notes on the Bible<sup>4</sup>

An angel - It is not affirmed that the angel did this "visibly," or that they saw him do it. They judged by the "effect," and when they saw the waters agitated, they concluded that they had healing properties, and descended to them. The Jews were in the habit of attributing all favors to the ministry of the angels of God, [Genesis 19:15](#); [Hebrews 1:14](#); [Matthew 4:11](#); [Matthew 18:10](#); [Luke 16:22](#); [Acts 7:53](#); [Galatians 3:19](#); [Acts 12:11](#).

This fountain, it seems, had strong medicinal properties. Like many other waters, it had the property of healing certain diseases that were incurable by any other means. Thus the waters of Bath, of Saratoga, etc., are found to be highly medicinal, and to heal diseases that are otherwise incurable. In the case of the waters of Bethesda there does not appear to have been anything "miraculous," but the waters seem to have been endowed with strong medicinal properties, especially after a periodical agitation. All that is special about them in the record is that this was produced by the ministry of an angel. This was in accordance with the common sentiment of the Jews, the common doctrine of the Bible, and the belief of the sacred writers. Nor can it be shown to be absurd or improbable that such blessings should be imparted to man by the ministry of an angel. There is no more absurdity in the belief that a pure spirit or holy "angel" should aid man, than that a physician or a parent should; and no more absurdity in supposing that the healing properties of such a fountain should be produced by his aid, than that any other blessing should be, [Hebrews 1:12](#). What man can prove that all his temporal blessings do not come to him through the medium of others - of parents, of teachers, of friends, of "angels?" And who can prove that it is unworthy the benevolence of angels to minister to the wants of the poor, the needy, and the afflicted, when "man" does it, and Jesus Christ did it, and God himself does it daily?

## Tim Keller – Work and Rest

- Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath (Luke 6:5)
- <https://player.fm/series/83408/297278876>

## DaveRPhillips.com

- Here's a link to my blog posts on the Gospel of John:  
<https://daverphillips.com/john>
- And a link to the page that has the handouts for this Bible Study:  
<https://daverphillips.com/bible-study-gospel-of-john/>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/barnes/john/5.htm>