

John 5: A Lame Man Walks **03-06-16**

When the Messiah was spoken of in the Old Testament, there are certain miracles identified with Him. Specifically, that the lame should walk, the blind should see, and the dead should be raised. Matthew's Gospel makes it clear that these specific works were identifiable with the Messiah

Matthew 11:5 "The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Isaiah 35:5-6 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.

The pool of Bethesda was discovered by archeologists in the 19th century. When excavated, it was located near the Sheep Gate, with five porticos. The movement of the waters by an angel is unknown to us except by John's account. This is the third of seven miracles Jesus performs, and the third of seven times water is referenced in this Gospel.

Jesus' question to the man is of significance: *"Do you want to be healed?"* We might consider at first, who does not? But if physical healing is a metaphor for the cleansing of sin, as suggested in places such as Matthew 9:4-6, then the question has more significance. John's Gospel will make it clear that many people, or more accurately most people, do not wish to be healed of that ultimate sickness, sin.

Why don't people want to be healed? First, many cannot see that they are sick (John 9:39-41). In a like manner, they cannot see that their sickness is a bondage to sin (John 8:33-35). Some cannot see that the fate of the sickness of sin is being lost forever (Luke 12:19-20). As Jesus said, some are sick with sin but because of their unawareness, they cannot be healed (Matthew 9:11-13).

Some people do not want to be healed because they are content with their spiritual illness, and resist the changes that a spiritual health restoration would involve. The prophet Isaiah saw this problem, and Jesus points it out in Matthew 13:14-15. They refuse to turn and be healed.

Finally, some people falsely believe that they were healed. They believe that they are right with God, either because of their own false beliefs or the things they are taught. Jesus said that the Pharisees and Jews were whitewashed tombs; they were clean on the outside, but filthy on the inside (Matthew 23:27-28). Jesus and His disciples made it clear; to be righteous one must practice righteousness (1 John 2:29).

These characteristics are not unique to the world; Christians too struggle with the question "do you want to be healed". Sin is a disease that can return; like the patient whose sickness is removed, we must be constant in our self-examinations to ascertain that it has not (2 Corinthians 13:5, 1 Corinthians 11:28). Too, like some in the world, a Christian can become content with spiritual sickness, particularly when our spiritual health must be maintained (study – 2 Tim. 2:15, works – Phil. 2:12, endurance – 2 Tim 2:12). Finally, some people may be in the church falsely believing they were healed. We must have the right baptism (Acts 19:4-5), and the right works (Matthew 7:22-23) to be right before God.