

# The Gospel of John: A Question of Authority

*John 5:1-30*

## Healing at the Pool (v. 1-9a)

- Jesus returns to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish feasts
- Bethesda: “Pool of outpouring”
  - Near the Sheep Gate (NE corner of the Old City)
  - Ill & disabled people gathered there because they thought the pool had healing properties
- Jesus seeks out a man who has been impaired for 38 years, asking if he wants to be healed
  - The man does not think that Jesus can heal him
    - At best, he thinks Jesus may be offering to get him to the pool
  - What Jesus is showing is that He has come to offer something better than superstition
- Jesus commands the man to stand up & carry his mat home, instantly healing him

## Sabbath Breaker? (v. 9b-18)

- When Jesus finds him later, He warns him that something worse (final judgment) will happen if he continues in his sinful lifestyle
  - Illness is not always tied to sin, but in this case, it was
  - The reason Jesus chose him was to offer him more than just physical healing; it was to give him a chance at repentance
    - However, the man goes to tell the Jewish leaders who healed him instead
  - Because it was the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders who saw him carrying his mat were outraged
  - According to them, he was “doing work” on the Sabbath
    - The Scriptures define ‘work’ as one’s regular employment
    - Rabbinic tradition had 39 categories that made up ‘work’, including carrying things from one *domain* to another (Mishnah, *Shabbath* 7:2; 10:5)
      - He was breaking their man-made rules
- He blames the man who healed him to avoid trouble with the leaders
  - He doesn’t even know who Jesus is yet
    - This shows that the purpose of this sign is more significant than just this man
- When the Jewish leadership questions Jesus about His Sabbath activities, He claims that he is only doing what His Father does
  - Jesus claims that God never ceases from His work, and thus neither does He
    - Rabbis taught that God does not break Sabbath because the whole universe is His *domain*
  - They understood that Jesus was claiming to be equal to God, so they were plotting to kill Him

## Authority to Judge (v. 19-30)

- Jesus clarifies that all His actions are done because He is emulating the work of His Father
  - To give life
  - To judge
    - Which the Father has entrusted to the Son
- Because Jesus is both fully God & fully human, He is perfectly suited to act as our:
  - Judge-Advocate: The one who understands our struggles & judges us
  - High Priest: Representative between God & humanity
  - Sacrifice: The one who dies in our place & can offer us eternal life

- Jesus will act as humanity's judge whether we choose Him or not
  - But if we do put our trust/faith in Him, the judgment goes against Jesus' record, not ours
  - He takes the punishment our sins deserve (mercy) & gives us eternal life (grace)
- Even in His divinity/equality to God, Jesus is reliant on His Father (v. 30)
  - This is true of the Holy Spirit also (16:13-15)
  - Tri-unity = Trinity

### **So What?**

- What things do we put our faith in other than Jesus?
- Jesus will judge the world. Have we trusted Him to take our punishment and grant us eternal life?

**Meditation Verse:** John 5:24

**Next Week's Scripture:** John 5:31-47