

John 14 – House of God's Mercy Rejected

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John 5:1-18

Context, Context, Context

- Before discussing this healing we must understand the context less we misunderstand the conclusion
 - The details John gives are illustrative, pointing to the truth that he designed this vignette to reveal
 - We must have some understanding of Hebrew, Law, Judaism, Biblical numerology and Talmudic *wisdom*
 - Otherwise, the finale of this vignette is incoherent

Feast of the Jews

- This vague label, written after Temple sacrifices ended and the church began, reveals mainly Gentile audience
 - The specific feast is unimportant; what is important is that all the feasts pointed to the Messiah as the merciful sacrifice of God for man's sin - this shows God's mercy
 - Thus, there is tension between what God had provided, mercy, and what morphed into a religion of rules devoid of mercy - merciless

Sheep's Gate

- Gate to Temple for the animal sacrifices
- Messiah (Lamb of God) as sin sacrifice for all peoples
- Sin {merciless} reigns over all people who need the mercy of God {Christ}



Bethesda

- House of Mercy
 - Beth (בֵּית) - House
 - Hese (חֶסֶד) - Mercy
- Five Colonnade Porches
 - Five represents Grace
 - 4(Justice)+1(God)=Mercy



Bethesda Pool

- Contained water is a metaphor for demonic spiritual forces but running water is a metaphor for Holy Spirit
 - God assigned the seas their limits (Jv 8:29)
 - Four Gentile Kingdoms of Daniel's dream arise from the raging seas (Dn 7:1-8)
 - Antichrist arises out of the sea in response to dragon (Rc 13:10)
- *House of Mercy* is a pool of mercilessness - Contrasts

Jerusalem – City of Peace, Not

- Finally, Jerusalem (City of Peace) contained God's Temple which the Jews, His people, were to show the nations the mercy of God through the sacrifices (Isa 4:21-26)
- The *peace* (mercy) God desired to show the nations was morphed by His people into a merciless system of works that sought to lord itself over all others – Lucifer (Isa 14:12-14; Ec 28:11-29)

Worshippers went up in elevation to earthly Jerusalem (Law) (pointing to)
New Jerusalem which is also above (Grace) (Re 21:1-2)
(Palms of [Angels](#) 120-134)

Summary of Contrasts

Messiah

Current Jewish Worship

- | | |
|--|--|
| ○ Jerusalem – <i>City of Peace</i> | ○ City of No Peace – Law |
| ○ Bethesda – <i>House of Mercy</i> | ○ Pool of Merciless – Sin |
| ○ Sheep Gate – Sacrifice | ○ Rejected Messiah sacrifice |
| ○ Five Porch Colonnades signifying God's mercy | ○ Pool circled by those who seek mercy but find none |

Textual Discussion

- Many older Bibles included text that has not been verified in older, but more newly discovered, texts
 - No evidence that such a belief existed about “angels stirring the waters” which would have made God a party to the mercilessness rampant in ancient Jerusalem
 - When the springs feeding the pool “agitated,” the water was felt to have healing powers (Many still believe in the healing properties of “mineral” springs)

...waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and stirred the water; whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was healed of whatever disease he had. ([John 5:1-9](#))

Sin/Disease - Spirit/Body Link

- Of the tens if not hundreds of invalids surrounding the Pool of Mercy, waiting for waters to move supposedly releasing its *healing* powers, Christ picks one man
 - Obviously a nod to election - Man did not pick Christ
- Astheneia (ἀσθένεια) - Weakness of body &/or spirit
 - Occasionally used of physical weakness - Disease
 - Often used of spiritual weakness - Sin @ 5:13-15

Man's Weakness of Mobility

- While the exact nature of this man's infirmity is not named, it is linked to his mobility though it may not necessarily be paralysis as some translations state
- Jesus knew the man had been there nearly forty years
- Jesus asked the man, "Do you want to be healed?"

Christ Offers Mercy - Man Speaks Works

- The man, rather than accepting mercy, complains that he cannot help himself nor would anyone help him
 - Sin offers no mercy and by works one cannot gain mercy
 - Expecting mercy from sinners is an oxymoron
- Christ in grace tells him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." Christ heals the man for a purpose.

Sabbath – Cessation of Works

- Sabbath is not rest but means cessation from work(s)
 - God ceased from His work of Creation (Gn 2:1-2)
 - We are to cease from works for righteousness (Ro 4:1-12; Ti 3:5-7)
- God gave Sabbath to man in grace for man to learn of God's mercy; however, man turned it into a merciless system of works, even today

Jews Accosted Man

- Jews accused the man of breaking the Sabbath by carrying his pallet, as Jesus commanded
 - The man said that One who healed him commanded him to do so
 - Jews demanded to know who the *healer* was
 - Man did not know that it was Messiah
- Must have been Sabbath *police* enforcing Sabbath laws

Jesus Reveals Himself

- Jesus encounters the healed man at the Temple
 - Jesus links the infirmity with the man's sin
 - Tells the man to sin no more (That particular sin)
 - Man learns the identity of his *healer*, Jesus
- The man tells the authorities who healed him and told him to take up his bed on the Sabbath

Healed Man Rejects Mercy

- Healed man, though told to sin no more less a worse fate befall him, chose to side with those who had shown him no mercy the nearly forty years he suffered
 - He chose the traditions and customs of the religious Jews rather than God's grace which gave him mercy - healing him (Pt 16:11)
- After he told the authorities they began persecuting Christ (Lo-ruhama; no mercy) (Pt. 16: 2:1)

Christ Declares Himself Equal With God

- John's purpose in this vignette was the declaration of Christ that He and the Father were working, even now
 - Man's works accomplish only weakness - sin evidenced by spiritual degradation and infirmaries (Ro 1:28-32)
 - God never rested, He only ceased the work of creation but continued to work toward creating a people in His image, and continues to work until completed (Ro 21:5)

Religious Man Hates God

- Religious Jews sought to kill Christ Who made Himself equal with God and broke their Sabbath laws (Jn 1:18)
 - John explains this as the basis for the stauos from the Jews perspective - He violated their works-based religion
 - The invalid shown mercy chose Lo-ruhama because he remained in his sin and chose to abide with sinners (Ro 1:32; 5:12-18)
 - This supports Opening Hymn - His own rejected Him (Jo 1:11)

Demonstrates Power of Sin

- This vignette shows the unremitting power of sin and the weakness (astheneia) of man to free himself (Jn 1:45)
 - Christ is the Light of God
 - Sinful man, with Lucifer, is the darkness of sin
- Since sinful man cannot eliminate the Light they seek to suppress it continuing to live in spiritual darkness

Reason Christ Chose This Man

- Christ chose this man to illustrate difference of mercy
 - His sin had somehow invalidated him - direct link
 - Man released from weakness but chose to remain weak
 - Man tattled on Christ setting the Jews on Him while ingratiating himself into the Jewish community
- This man rejected light leaving himself hopeless (Jn 6:46)

All Religions Hate God's Light

- All religions hate God's mercy, enslaving man in sin
 - Christendom
 - Islam
 - Judaism
 - Gnosticism
- All religions seek the ultimate prophet against Light (Re 13:11-18)