

"Lord of the Sabbath"
The Gospel of John Chapter 5: 1-18

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem to attend an unspecified feast after He heals the nobleman's son. The Israelites were required to keep three feasts (Deut. 16:1-17). Through the sheep gate were brought the animals for sacrifice in the temple (Nehemiah 3: 1). Bethesda means *house of mercy* or in Aramaic *house of the olive tree*. The latter part of verse three and all of verse four are not found in the oldest and best manuscripts.

Jesus knew by Divine knowledge or by some ordinary means this certain man was lame for 38 years. The purpose of Jesus' question was to bring the man into knowledge of God through Him. The man needs a personal Savior but he desires healing through circumstances with which he is familiar. Do we not do the same, often going to God only after exhausting all that we can do?

Christ gives the man three commands (all imperatives in the Greek). The miracle is astounding! Instantaneous healing that results in works (Eph. 2:10). Likewise, the spiritual healing of the *new birth* (Jhn. 3:3-8) should result in a lifelong walk in the Lord (Rom. 8:4; Eph. 5:8).

The Jewish religious leaders were not interested in the great miracle of compassion, mercy and healing (Matt. 12:1-4). Their traditions, not God's Law, were of utmost importance to them (Mk. 7:1-16). The Sabbath laws were very specific, but they had added their own (Ex. 16:23-29, 31: 14-16; Lev. 23:16-39). Sabbath means rest. Christ fulfilled the Sabbath, as He is our rest (Matt. 11:28-30). God rested on the 7th day after completing the work of creation (Gen. 2:1-3). But He is always working, upholding the worlds by the power of His Word (Heb. 1:3). Do not let anyone judge you regarding the Sabbath or any religious observance (Col. 2:16-17).

Jesus later finds the man in the temple (Heb. 10:25). Jesus' command to sin no more does not mean that the man's infirmity was directly caused by his own sin (Jhn. 9:1-5). But now that he is healed, he must believe in Christ and be careful of temptations that were previously unavailable to him.

The Jewish persecution of Jesus escalates to the climax of planning His death because He called God His own Father, The Jews rightly discerned that Jesus was claiming Deity with His statement (Phil. 2:5-8). The miracle of healing had originated not in Christ only, but in His Father (Jhn. 8:27-30, 54-55). Jesus always did His Father's will (Jhn. 8:29).