

A Study of John's Gospel

Lesson 6: Clash with the Jewish Authorities (5:1-47)

January 8, 2012

“Do you want to be made well?” (5:1-18)

Jesus returns to Jerusalem for a Jewish feast. We picture Him wandering through an area of the city that represents the most wretched, vulnerable of mankind, searching for one through whom He can best demonstrate His gospel message and most effectively teach the multitudes surrounding Him. He fixes His eyes upon a helpless 38-year old lame man yearning to be superstitiously healed in the pool of Bethesda. It appears that this man had been disappointed many times in the past witnessing others being “cured” by the bubbling springs. Upon Jesus’ command, the lame man was immediately “made well” physically. It was a Sabbath day. This was the beginning of the great doctrinal clash between Jesus and the Jewish leaders. From this point forward, they “sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God” (5:18).

“He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father” (5:19-29)

He could not have been clearer; Jesus states He is God’s Son. From His commissioned ministry on this earth to the judgment He will administer upon His return, Jesus has been given all authority from His Father. Those who believe His words will have everlasting life; those who do not believe will be eternally condemned.

“I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” (5:30-40)

The Jews recognize the importance of having witnesses to an individual’s claim. Jesus mentions three powerful witnesses to substantiate His message, all of which are recognized by the Jews as authoritative. The first two are John the Baptist and the Old Testament Scriptures. The third witness is the greatest; it is Jehovah God, His Father.

“If you believed Moses, you would believe Me” (5:41-47)

The Jew’s real problem is now exposed. They have an evil heart of unbelief (Heb 3:12). Jesus was not going to publically accuse them; they were already accused by the very writings of their scriptures. Moses, the great Law Giver, testified of Jesus’ coming, yet they will not believe.

Questions:

1. What did the lame man say when Jesus asked him, “Do you want to be made well” (6)? Jesus asked someone who was obviously searching for hope. Is there an application for us today?
2. The same Greek word (translated “made well” in the NKJV) is used in verses 6, 9 and 14 describing the condition of the lame man. What did Jesus mean when He asked if the lame man wanted to be “made well”?
3. What is the relationship of Jesus with God? What authority has God given to Jesus (24-29)?
4. Describe how Jesus explained all three witnesses of His message (32-39).
5. Who did Jesus say was the Jewish leaders’ accuser (45)? How does he accuse them (46-47)?