

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

John: Believing On The Christ, The Son Of God, For Eternal Life

Part XV: Believing On Christ Due To His Opposing Man's Falsehoods With God's Truth (John 5:1-16)

I. Introduction

- A. Part of John's thesis in presenting Jesus Christ to his readers is that He was not only full of God's **grace**, a fact shown in His John 4 interaction with the Samaritans, but that He was also full of God's **truth**, John 1:14, 17.
- B. John 5:1-16 exposes Christ's clear exhibition of God's **truth** against the backdrop of man's falsehoods that countered or misrepresented that truth, and we view the passage for its edifying insight to us (as follows):

II. Believing On Christ Due To His Opposing Man's Falsehoods With God's Truth, John 5:1-16.

- A. Jesus countered **false folk superstition** with **God's truth** in healing a man at the pool of Bethesda, John 5:1-9b:
 - 1. When Jesus attended a Jerusalem feast, He went by the pool of Bethesda with its five "roofed colonnades" for sheltering those who wanted to be healed, John 5:1-3 ESV; Ryrie St. Bib., KJV, 1978, fn. to John 5:2.
 - 2. The John 5:3b-4 claim that these folk waited for an angel to stir the water so the first to enter it would then be healed does not appear in any Greek manuscript before A. D. 400, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 289.
 - 3. John, then, did not write John 5:3b-4 that appears to promote the belief about the angel and the pool! This was thus a false superstitious belief that arose due to the presence of an agitated spring there that, to this day, "intermittently" flows with a "ruddy color" (Zon. Pic. Enc. Bib., v. One, p. 551), which belief is errant as also seen in the cruel contest contrary to God's grace or truth that would be involved were God to call handicapped people to try to outrace each other to enter the pool to be healed! (Ibid., B. K. C., N. T.)
 - 4. Jesus came to one infirmed man who for thirty-eight years had been afflicted and unable to be healed in his thinking due to his inability to be the first to dip in the pool after it was allegedly stirred, John 5:5-7.
 - 5. When He asked him if he wanted to be healed, and the man explained his predicament due to his belief in the folk superstition about the pool, Jesus merely told him to rise, take up his bed, and walk, John 5:6-8.
 - 6. In faith, the man obeyed, and was at once healed, an event showing Jesus was the Messiah Who would miraculously heal the lame according to God's **true Scripture** revelation in Isaiah 35:4-6. (John 5:9a,b)
- B. Jesus countered the **religious leaders' false legalism** with **God's truth** in healing on the Sabbath, John 5:9c-16:
 - 1. Jesus had told the healed man to carry his bed on the Sabbath (John 5:9c), an act in violation of a legalistic view the rabbis had of the Law's prohibition against working on the Sabbath, Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to John 5:10.
 - 2. Actually, the Sabbath law was made to nurture man, not to enslave him (Mark 2:27) as testified in history:
 - a. Ancient pagan man held the seventh day to be unlucky, that he needed to shun indulging in pleasures and not do important work lest it be unprofitable, Bruce K. Waltke, Creation and Chaos, 1974, p. 47, 57.
 - b. Similarly, pagan man was a slave to his despotic gods, duty bound to appease them, Ibid., p. 65.
 - c. In **contrast**, to show His **GRACE opposite pagan man's despotic gods, Israel's God** had made the **seventh** day a time of **nurturing REST** for His servant Israel, Ibid.; Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11.
 - d. However, Israel's **legalistic** leaders in Jesus' era had **returned** to **distorting God's grace** akin to the **despotism** in ancient **paganism**, so Jesus was seeking to **COUNTER** it once again by **God's GRACE!**
 - 3. Well, seeing the man carry his bed in violation of their oppressive, legalistic rule, the religious rulers critiqued him, and he explained that the One who healed him had told him to carry his bed, John 5:10-11.
 - 4. The religious leaders then wanted to know who had told this man to carry his bed, but the healed man could not identify Jesus, for He had slipped away from the multitude that had gathered there, John 5:12-13.
 - 5. Later, seeking to make Himself known to foster a Sabbath day conflict with the religious leaders, Jesus met the healed man in the temple, and there told him to sin no more lest a worse calamity come upon him, John 5:14. This admonition fit the **Biblical** Mosaic Covenant directive in Deuteronomy 28:15-22.
 - 6. The healed man then reported to the Jewish religious authorities that Jesus was the One Who had made him whole, that He was the One Who had told him to take up his bed and walk on the Sabbath, John 5:15.
 - 7. Thus, the Jewish rulers persecuted Jesus, seeking to kill Him for violating their legalistic rule, John 5:16.

Lesson: Jesus Christ **OPENLY COUNTERED** the peoples' false superstition taught about the pool of Bethesda and the religious leaders' false, legalistic interpretation of the Sabbath prohibition in the Fourth Commandment.

Application: (1) May we trust in Christ for eternal life. (2) May we like Him live free of man's errant beliefs, be they folk superstitions or religious leaders' false legalisms that are **NOT** part of the truth of God's written Word.