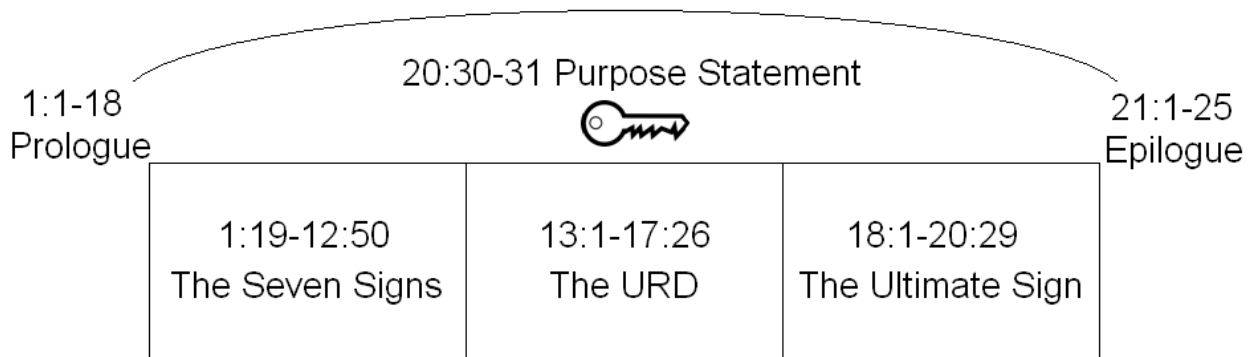


# The Seven Signs of the Gospel of John

## Sign #3: No Good Deed Goes Unpunished

### John 5:1-18



### Q: What are “Signs” in the Gospel of John?

A1: The meaning of the original Greek word (σημειον):

Signs are miracles with a message: think signposts/spotlights; in his Gospel, the Apostle John selected seven specific miracles to confirm who Jesus is and what He taught.

A2: The purpose statement of the book (John 20:30-31):

Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

### Q: What are the Seven Signs of the Gospel of John?

1. Water into Wine (2:1-11)
2. Healing the Royal Official's Son in Capernaum (4:46-54)
- 3. Healing the Paralyzed Man at the Pool of Bethesda (5:1-18)**
4. Feeding the 5000 men and Their Families (6:5-14)
5. Walking on the Sea of Galilee (6:16-24)
6. Healing the Man Born Blind (9:1-7)
7. The Supernatural Resuscitation of Lazarus (11:1-45)

## The Setting 5:1-5

After these things (the Lord Jesus' 2<sup>nd</sup> sign miracle in Galilee), there was a feast of the Jews (probably Tabernacles-and as a Jew under the Mosaic Law) Jesus went up to Jerusalem (Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles were the three required feasts)

Now there **is** in Jerusalem by the sheep gate a pool...

...notice the present tense "is" (εστιν), while Koine Greek does at times use present tense verbs for past realities (this grammatical convention is called the "historical present"), other syntactical factors seem to argue the meaning here is a conventional present tense. That would mean as John wrote his Gospel, the pool was in existence in Jerusalem. That being true, John must have written his Gospel sometime before 70AD when the Roman Army totally destroyed the city.

The words in the last part of verse 3 and all of verse 4 are not found in the Greek manuscript copies of John until the beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD. Dr. Tom Constable (Professor at Dallas Seminary and the author of the content at [soniclight.com](http://soniclight.com)) explains: This section of the text has doubtful authenticity. No Greek manuscript before A.D. 400 contains these words. Evidently scribes added these statements later to explain the troubling of the waters that occurred periodically (v. 7). However, these scribal explanations were probably based on a superstition that was common in Jesus' day. A more probable explanation for the troubling of the water is the presence of springs that occasionally gushed water into the pools below the surface of the water. The (warm?) water had a high mineral content that had medicinal benefits for people suffering from muscle and joint ailments.

A Humanly Hopeless Case: a paralyzed man hoping to be "touched by an angel"

## The Sign 5:6-9

The man thought Jesus was some random "Good Samaritan" offering to move him into the pool if/when an angel "troubled the waters!?!". And yet, in a direct application of his powers as Deity, the Lord instantaneously healed the man's paralysis AND at the same time caused his muscles (dormant for 38 years) to regain their normal tone/function.

This miracle is a good example of "(super) grace for the place" the situation in which the man found himself. We might better call it "mega-mercy." The man didn't ask the Lord to supernaturally heal him, or even believe that He could. He had no idea who Jesus was. Whereas "grace" is a general term for "unmerited favor," mercy more specifically refers to "favor granted in light of the pitiful status of the recipient."

My guess is that the Lord extended mega-mercy to this man at least in part because he had suffered with his ailment longer than the others who were at the pool. We could

call this a RAK (Random Act of Kindness). When as believers we go out of our way to do what we can to bless others in miserable states, who can do nothing for us and who may not even know who we are...we are living out the grace/mercy and generosity of our Lord Jesus. HINT: Make it a point to do 2-3 RAKs a week to the glory of God and you will be surprised at the blessing you can be to others/the joy you can experience.

Verse 9b

“Now it was the Sabbath on that day.” The religious opponents of Jesus (as guardians of a very cushy status quo) now have a “reason” to hate Him.

1: Miracles CAN catalyze saving faith; but it is wrong to presume or demand (specific) miracles before considering the claims of Christ. His Person; Work on the Cross and Resurrection speak for themselves and trump other miracles.

2: Miracles DO NOT automatically lead to saving faith, those who WILL NOT believe can distort the true meaning and source of any/all miracles and/or simply deny them by explaining them away.

## The Scandal 5:10-18

This would be funny if it weren't so seriously wrong (John wouldn't have made this up):

### **1: The Religious Leaders Give the Healee a Formal Legal Warning:**

Hey Bud, it is a serious violation of the Mosaic Law to break the Sabbath and according to the pickier than Scripture application of the Law as coined by the Rabbis, that's exactly what is happening here...so how do you explain yourself?

### **2: The Healee's Response:**

It's not my fault, the guy who healed me from being paralyzed told me to do it!

### **3: The Religious Leaders Try to ID the Criminal Behind This “Horrific” Act**

Who was he?

### **4: The Healee's Response:**

I don't know!

Verse 14

The Bible makes it clear that NOT all personal suffering in this broken/fallen world is always directly related to specific personal sin (the Book of Job)...however in some cases it is! This 58 (!?! a guess) year old Jewish guy (living in Israel under the OT Covenant) had done something(s) very evil when he was 20 years old and had been punished by his physical ailment...so Jesus says to him, “Now that you can function normally again... ..don't sin like you did 38 years ago, or you might end up in even a worse situation.

Verse 15

Instead of thanking Jesus, the Healee goes to the Religious Leaders and “snitches” on Jesus!?! Sad but True: Sometimes people you have real concern for and for whom you do BIG things...will not only not appreciate you, they will do things to hurt you...and leave you with a broken heart. My suggestion is 1: focus on the Lord Jesus as your BFF and 2: accept realistic expectations about people, so while this kind of thing will still sting you, it will not spiritually immobilize you.

Verse 16-18

The Religious Leaders of 1<sup>st</sup> Century Institutional Judaism (with a few individual exceptions, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea John 19:38-41) rather than celebrating Jesus as the Christ, malign Him as a criminal.

What Jesus did/said in this passage DID NOT break the Sabbath, but it did offend the pickier than Scripture/graceless wooden rules of the Religious Leaders.

What Jesus did/said in this passage DID validate His Person as the God-Man-Savior, the Jewish Messiah and the Savior of the World...and yet the very miracles that validated His unique claims were distorted by His enemies and “justified” their seeking to kill Him.

## **Take This To Heart**

Truth IS Stranger Than Fiction: Christ and Christ-Centered Christianity  
Always Has and Always Will Have Both Secular and Religious Opponents  
Because the Good News of Jesus is Gross Nonsense to Many!?!

Those in Christian Circles Who Try to Take the “Scandal” Out of Christianity  
By Becoming “Politically Correct/Culturally Seeker Sensitive” are  
Theologically Incorrect and Repudiating the Example of Jesus Himself