

Sunday January 1st 2017
For Jews Request a Sign.....
Part Fifteen

1). Joh 5:5 *Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" 7 The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me." 8 Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." 9 And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.*

We had seen last time that the certain man at the pool of Bethesda who had an infirmity 38 years pictured the spiritual condition of the nation of Israel that existed from the time of the first generation to come out of Egypt at Kadesh Barnea onwards. The 38 years themselves pointed to the time Israel spent in the wilderness following their refusal to go into the land at Kadesh Barnea until the second generation entered the land under Joshua.

a). The condition of the man in the sign then not only points to Israel's condition but also to Israel's healing when the complete period of time God has allocated to deal with the nation has been accomplished - Ho 6:1 ¶ *Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.*

And that complete period of time that God has allocated is, as we know, 490 years as seen in the Book of Daniel - Da 9:25 *"Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even in troublesome times. 26 "And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah shall be cut off, but not for Himself; And the people of the prince who is to come Shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end of it shall be with a flood, And till the end of the war desolations are determined.*

483 of these years were completed we will remember at the crucifixion of Christ, leaving 7 remaining years yet to be completed, Daniel's 70th 'week' – the 7 years of the Tribulation that will come after the resurrection/rapture of the Church; a sequence pictured in foundation by Enoch, the 7th from Adam, being taken alive into heaven before Noah, the 10th from Adam, and his family pass through the worldwide flood.

b). And also implicit in the 38 years of infirmity seen in John, through its connection with that first generation to come out of Egypt, would be that which awaited that generation of eternally saved Jews at Christ's first advent as they filled their cup of iniquity by rejecting their King and the word of His Kingdom – Mt 8:11 *"And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 "But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."*

Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."*

As with that first generation, the generation that rejected their Messiah would all die in the wilderness so to speak – on the right side of the blood, but falling short of their calling.

c). And as we had also seen last time the complete inability of the man at the pool of Bethesda to be healed either by his own efforts or the efforts of others, having no man to put him in the pool, points to Israel's present status – It is God who has brought about Israel's condition in fulfillment of that which He had promised in Leviticus Chapter 26 should they continue in disobedience and it is God alone who can bring an end to that condition following national repentance, just as we have seen in the Hosea verses.

d). The establishment of the Jewish State in 1948 and the subsequent return of many Jews since that time is no more than an attempt to bring an end to Israel's condition, to heal themselves and their land, through their own efforts and then the innumerable Middle East peace plans can be seen as others trying to bring about the same end. But the situation remains as the Lord described it - Mt 12:43 *"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44 "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept,*

and put in order. 45 "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."

All have failed in their attempts to bring healing and will continue to fail until the Lord, as with the man at the pool of Bethesda, tells them to, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'.

e). And just as with the man at the pool of Bethesda this will happen on the Sabbath, the 7th Day, at the beginning of the Millennial Kingdom following national repentance at the end of the 7 years of the Tribulation, when the final 'week' of Daniel's prophecy is completed.

f). And because of what is demonstrated through this sign, as with the other 7 signs, the man at the pool of Bethesda had to be healed on the Sabbath, because there is no other day – the 7th day from Adam or the 3rd day from the crucifixion – on which Israel can be healed – Nu 19:11 ¶ *'He who touches the dead body of anyone shall be unclean seven days. 12 'He shall purify himself with the water on the third day and on the seventh day; then he will be clean. But if he does not purify himself on the third day and on the seventh day, he will not be clean.*

Mr 2:27 *And He said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. 28 "Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath."*

g). The Sabbath, the 7th Day, is the day that all of prophecy points to, from the 7 days at the beginning of Genesis onwards and is the focus of all of scripture; and this day, the Sabbath, was also given to Israel as a sign – Ex 31:13 *"Speak also to the children of Israel, saying: 'Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. 14 'You shall keep the Sabbath, therefore, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. 15 'Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh is the Sabbath of rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. 16 'Therefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. 17 'It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel forever; for in six*

days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed."

The Sabbath is a sign that was to provide a constant affirmation of God's purpose both for the nation and the whole of His creation with a view to the role of His chosen people. And it is within the context of the sign of the Sabbath that the healing of the man at the pool of Bethesda, as with the healing of the nobleman's son, could have been understood by the Jews.

h). But this of course was a spiritual truth that needed to be spiritually discerned, something the religious leaders of Israel could neither see nor hear because of the hardness of their hearts - Mt 13:14 *"And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'*

Because of this hardness of heart the religious leaders could only focus their attention on the letter of the Law instead of the Spirit - Joh 5:10 *The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.".....16 For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. 17 ¶ But Jesus answered them, "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working." 18 Therefore the Jews 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.*

And so here we have the ultimate irony – The Jewish religious leaders now 'sought to kill' Jesus for 'breaking' the Sabbath as He fulfilled in their presence that to which the Sabbath pointed. As Lord of the Sabbath His signs pointed to the fulfillment of the Sabbath, but for the Jews they had turned the Sabbath into a legalistic requirement rejecting the signs and the fulfillment to which they pointed.

i). And following this, the 3rd sign, the 5th Chapter of John ends with a stinging rebuke from the Lord to the religious leaders which reveals both the ridiculousness and the pathos in their situation - Joh 5:37 *"And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at*

any time, nor seen His form. 38 "But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. 39 "You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal [age lasting] life; and these are they which testify of Me. 40 "But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. 41 "I do not receive honor from men. 42 "But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. 43 "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. 44 "How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? 45 "Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you--Moses, in whom you trust. 46 "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 "But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

2). And so the rebuke of Israel's religious leaders leads us into the start of the 6th Chapter of John's Gospel and the 4th sign which Jesus did - Joh 6:1 ¶ *After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. 2 Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. 3 And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. 4 Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. 5 Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, "Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?"*

a). The previous 3 signs that we have seen are unique to John's Gospel, whereas the 4th, which we are about to study, appears in all 4 Gospel accounts.

b). And as we read these opening verses there are several things we will want to draw from them – we will notice firstly that 'a great multitude followed Him, because they saw the signs which He performed on those who were diseased'. Secondly, that Jesus went up 'on the mountain' with His disciples and thirdly, that 'the Passover, a feast of the Jews was near'.

c). As we would anticipate, the entire scene is Jewish having to do with the Jewish people, the Kingdom signified by the mountain and the Passover, the first of the 7 feasts given to Israel that together form a prophetic calendar for the nation.

d). The multitude as we see followed Jesus because they saw His signs and as we would know from comparing scripture with scripture the scribes and the Pharisees and Sadducees followed the multitude; not because they

saw the signs, but to speak against the signs and the One performing them in order to discredit Him so as to turn the multitude away from Christ –
Mt 12:22 ¶ *Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" 24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*

The influence of the scribes and Pharisees upon the multitude can be poignantly seen in these verses from Matthew Chapter 12.

e). The question asked by the amazed multitudes in v23 must be understood in the same way as the question asked by the Samaritan woman in John Chapter 4 - Joh 4:29 *"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"*

The way both questions are written in the original language only allows for a negative conclusion and so the question posed by the multitudes in Matthew 12:23 should be understood as, 'This could possibly be the Son of David? But we really don't think so'.

f). And the reason for this negative outlook can be laid directly at the feet of Israel's religious leaders, the ones who sat in Moses' seat, the teachers of the Law. It was these leaders that the people looked to for spiritual direction and understanding and it was these leaders, after centuries of false teaching and self-seeking, legalistic ritual who turned the people away from the One who is the way, the truth and the life, into a contrary direction.

g). There is an interesting incident near the beginning of the Lord's ministry recorded in Matthew's Gospel that we can look at in connection with this - Mt 9:11 *And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

Jesus reference 'to those who are sick' in v12 is a direct reference to the spiritual condition of the nation exemplified by the Pharisees – the sickness seen through the nobleman's son and the man at the pool of Bethesda in John's Gospel; the sickness we find described at the beginning of Isaiah's

prophecy. And His advice to the Pharisees was to stop undermining and contradicting what they saw, indicative of the spiritual sickness, and instead, 'go and learn what this means' – In other words He directs them to go and study their scriptures so as to work out from the Word of God what was going on and see what was required of them. This of course they didn't do, nor did they ever do during the course of the Lord's earthly ministry or any time since.

h). Had they followed the advice that Jesus gave them the Pharisees could have accompanied the multitude as they followed Jesus and shown them from the scriptures that which they were witnessing through the signs, fulfilling their role as Israel's teachers, but just like the 10 leaders at Kadesh Barnea they gave an evil report of what they saw and heard thereby turning the people from the Light of the world towards the darkness –
Mt 23:13 ¶ "But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

i). And given the work of the leaven in the 3 measures of meal during the course of this dispensation it is not difficult to find a parallel in Christendom today.

j). It is to the scriptures and the scriptures alone that we must go to understand God's dealings with the Church, with Israel and with the Gentile nations, not the news channels. The more we can grasp the reality that Israel is the pupil of God's eye and that all He has done and will yet do is with respect to and through Israel, the only earthly nation in possession of God, the greater the clarity we will have of not only where we are in God's purpose but also of the events unfolding in the world around us. Remove the scriptures and we can only flounder in the abyss of ideology and humanistic endeavor – all of which will come to nothing.

k). But as we see Christ sitting on the mountain, because we have gone to the scriptures, we know that we are dealing with His Kingdom as mountains are used typologically throughout the scriptures from Genesis onwards - *Mic 4:1 ¶ Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His*

paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 3 He shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more. 4 But everyone shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one shall make them afraid; For the mouth of the LORD of hosts has spoken.

l). The Passover 'a feast of the Jews' being near reminds us that this is the first of the 7 feasts given to Israel, and the first which must be fulfilled before the remaining feasts can also be fulfilled, all of which must transpire before that seen in the 4th sign can be brought to pass.

m). At present Israel have slain the Passover Lamb but have not yet appropriated the blood – an appropriation by faith, which awaits the end of the Tribulation when there will be fulfillment of that seen in - Zec 12:10 *"And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

Passover, so to speak, is the key that unlocks all that is to follow and so the placement of the Passover within the context of Chapter 6 of John's Gospel would make clear to John's Jewish readers, the ones for whom the signs were recorded, that supernatural provision as seen in the 4th sign would be contingent upon receiving and accepting the Christ, the Son of God, the Lamb of God.

3). We will remember that as we studied some verses beyond the first Chapter of Isaiah's prophecy where Israel's sickness is described we found that Isaiah also prophesied concerning the healing of the people and the land –
Isa 35:4 *Say to those who are fearful-hearted, "Be strong, do not fear! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, With the recompense of God; He will come and save you." 5 ¶ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. 6 Then the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, And streams in the desert. 7 The parched ground shall become a pool, And the thirsty land springs*

of water; In the habitation of jackals, where each lay, There shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

a). And it will be following the healing of the nation at the end of the Tribulation that Israel will return to a healed land and God will supernaturally provide for them – Am 9:13 *"Behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "When the plowman shall overtake the reaper, And the treader of grapes him who sows seed; The mountains shall drip with sweet wine, And all the hills shall flow with it. 14 I will bring back the captives of My people Israel; They shall build the waste cities and inhabit them; They shall plant vineyards and drink wine from them; They shall also make gardens and eat fruit from them. 15 I will plant them in their land, And no longer shall they be pulled up From the land I have given them," Says the LORD your God.*

And it is the promise of God's supernatural provision for restored Israel that is the subject of the 4th sign - Joh 6:11 *And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted.*

We will continue with this next time though – if the Lord is willing.