

Two Healings on the Sabbath

Explanation

In John 5, at the pool of Bethesda, just north of the temple, Jesus healed a man who had been infirm for thirty-eight years; and in John 9, at the pool of Siloam, south of the temple, he healed a man who had been blind since birth. Chart 8-13 displays the similar conduct of Jesus in both of these cases and at the same time points out the common literary structure of the two accounts.

One may wonder why the two stories are so similar. There may be many reasons. The consistency may well reflect the orderly practice of the Lord, who does not vary unpredictably from one case to the next. These two accounts, typical of other similar doublets in the scriptures, stand as two witnesses of the truth of what they report. In Job 33:14, Elihu says, “For God speaketh once, yea twice,” and yet man still does not understand. Twice-told truths serve as double notice to reinforce their importance in hopes of promoting their acceptance.

Reference

Bruce J. Malina and Richard L. Rohrbaugh, *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 109.

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JOHN 5

1. In Jerusalem for feast (5:1)
2. Sabbath healing (5:10)
3. Old, proven infirmity (5:5)
4. Illness and sin (5:14 “sin no more”)
5. At pool of Bethesda (5:2)
6. Command (“rise, take,” 5:7) obedience/cure (5:9)
7. Court of inquiry (5:9–16) healed man charge: Sabbath violation defense (5:31–47)
8. Question: who is he? (5:12–13)
9. Subsequent meeting Jesus found him (5:14) no Christophany
10. Judgment they judge Jesus (5:9–16) Jesus judges them (5:38–47)

JOHN 9

1. In Jerusalem for Feast of Tabernacles
2. Sabbath healing (9:14)
3. Old, proven infirmity (9:1)
4. Illness and sin (9:2 “who sinned”)
5. At pool of Siloam (9:7)
6. Command (“go, wash,” 9:7) obedience/cure (9:7)
7. Court of inquiry (9:13–34) healed man charge: Sabbath violation defense (9:30–34)
8. Questions: where is he? (9:12) what do you say of him? (9:17)
9. Subsequent meeting Jesus found him (9:35) Christ declares himself (9:35–38)
10. Judgment they judge Jesus (9:13–34) Jesus judges them (9:39–41)