

Life & Judgement

Revelation 20:11-15 John 5:1-29

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Think about the last **38 years** of your life. How old were you 38 years ago? What have you all seen and done and experienced in those 38 years? For some of you, you're not even 38 years old yet, so think about your entire lifetime. 38 years¹ is how long the man in the gospel story had been laying on his mat. The Bible doesn't say if he was born paralyzed or if he had an accident of some sort and became paralyzed. It just says he was an invalid for 38 years.

But one day, Jesus finds him. “**Do you want to be made whole?**” Jesus asked. Of course the man does, but he thinks his only hope rests in a legend about the stirring of the Bethesda pool. With simply the power of His Word, Jesus tells the man to “**get up, take up your bed, and walk!**” Immediately the man gets up, he walks, and he is *made whole*.

Jesus once again has worked a miracle that proves that He is the Christ, the Son of God, so that people will put their faith in Him and trust His words.

In the Gospel of John, the miracles are followed by Jesus’ teaching which is based on the miracle. The same thing happens here with a man who is *made whole* after 38 years.

¹ This man can be seen as representing the Old Testament, and it's inability to ‘make men whole’ (= eternal salvation). In Deuteronomy 2:14, 38 years is the time of Israel's wandering in the wilderness because of their disobedience. This man, who has been paralyzed for 38 years, is now set free by the Messiah. The Lame Man is ‘New Israel’ who hears and believes (obeys) the Word of God unlike ‘Old Israel’; he is a ‘New Creation’ made whole and restored by Jesus, through whom all things were made. In sin, we are like this man, unable to make ourselves “whole”; but Jesus finds us and with His Word, makes us whole!

The Jews, of course, objected to Jesus' healing this man because it happened on a Sabbath. They accuse Jesus of being a *lawbreaker*, because according to them, He broke the Third Commandment of God's Law by healing the man on the Sabbath Day. In addition they accuse Jesus of *blasphemy*, because Jesus said that He was the Son of God, making Himself equal to God the Father. Because of these things, they were intent on killing Jesus. Their rage had blinded them to the Messiah, and the miracle had no impact on them.

But Jesus uses all of this to teach about Himself and His work of salvation. Jesus points to the miracle and reaffirms that He is the Son of God; and that He will do even a **greater works** than making a man whole by healing him. Jesus teaches that He has the **POWER** and the **authority** to *give eternal life* and He has the **POWER** and the **authority** to *Judge the world*.

[Jesus said,] "*greater works* than these will [the Father] show [the Son], so that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also *the Son gives life* to whom He will. The Father judges no one, but has given all *judgment to the Son*" John 5:20b-22

Be sure to think through what Jesus is saying here. Jesus is True God and True Man; He is God on earth. Jesus is also True Man, born in a Manger in Bethlehem. Jesus the Man has been given the **POWER** and the **authority** to give eternal life and to raise the dead. These are much greater works than simply healing a lame man.

Jesus' **POWER** and the **authority** is seen most clearly in His own resurrection from the dead on the Third Day. Jesus faced death for us when He died on the cross. He was buried, and on the Third Day He rose from the dead. Jesus has destroyed death; He has conquered the devil who held the power of death; and He sets you free from death. He does that in two ways.

First, He gives you *spiritual life*; that is, faith in Christ. *Spiritual life* means that you have eternal life right now ... in fact you have had it since your Baptism!

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has crossed over from death to life. John 5:24

Spiritual life is faith in Christ! The Lord worked a great miracle in your life through the water and the word; and you crossed over from death to life **already!** you have eternal life right now! physical death cannot interrupt the eternal life Christ has already given to you! Spiritual life is faith in Christ!

The second way that Jesus gives you life will be on the last day when he raises your body from the dead.

Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear His voice and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. John 5:28-29

Those who have “done good” or “done evil” have shown by their lives the fruits of either faith or lack of faith. We are looking forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting. Eternal life in heaven in a glorified body is our sure and certain hope. Just as Jesus rose from the dead on Easter, so too you will rise from the dead on the Last Day. The only reason we have this hope is because Jesus has risen from the dead and has been given the **POWER** and the **authority** to raise our bodies from the dead!

In addition to giving eternal life, Jesus has also been given the power and authority to judge the world. on the Last Day, on Judgment Day, when Jesus returns with great power and with all the Holy Angels, you will stand before Him. On that day, you will be standing in front of a **man**; *but not just any man*, He is also the one, true, and only God. Jesus highlights this by referring to Himself as the “Son of Man”.

[God the Father] has given [the Son] authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. John 5:27

On Judgment Day, you will be standing in front of a Man named Jesus, the Son of Man who is also the Son of God. And on that day the only thing that is going to matter is if you trust in Him and His Word during your lifetime. The only thing that's going to matter is if you have faith or not. **Did you believe Him when you said that you are “Not Guilty!” of your sins because of His death and resurrection?** The only thing that's going to matter is if you have faith or not. Your good works will not save you. Your works simply reveal what was in your heart. Your good intentions will not save you. The only thing Jesus is going to be looking for is faith, did you trust in Him and believe His Word?

The signs of the fast approaching Judgment Day are everywhere, all the time. Just about every news story is one of the Signs of the End. Now is the time to repent of your sin and trust in Christ as your Savior! Do not delay! Do not procrastinate! Now is the time to repent of your sin and trust in Christ as your Savior!

Jesus the Man has been given the **POWER** and the **authority** to judge you. He alone will decide if you died in the guilt of your sin, or if you died trusting His promise of forgiveness. He alone decides your eternity. He has been given this **POWER** and **authority** to judge you from God the Father. He promises that those who trust in him and his word have already crossed over from death to life. Only by faith in Christ will you survive death and escape the final judgment.

Giving eternal life and *judging the living and the dead* are there **greater works** that God the Father has given His Son to do. Healing a man lame for 38 years is a mighty miracle and a great blessing for that man; but Jesus is the Savior of the world, and because of His death and resurrection, he has been given the **POWER** and the **authority** to give you *eternal life*; and to *judge you* on the Last Day.

Amen!

Lord Jesus, Son of Man and Son of God, we rejoice that you have been given the power and authority to give us Eternal Life and be our Judge. We thank you that you have revealed your love, grace, and mercy to us; and have given us faith to believe it. Keep us strong in our faith so that we will survive death and escape the final judgment. Keep our hearts soft and repentant, and lead us each day in holy living. Amen

John 5:1-29

1 After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. 2 Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, in Aramaic called Bethesda, which has five roofed colonnades. 3 In these lay a multitude of invalids--blind, lame, and paralyzed. 5 One man was there who had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there a long time, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" 7 The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I am going another steps down before me." 8 Jesus said to him, "Get up, take up your bed, and walk." 9 And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked. Now that day was the Sabbath. 10 So the Jews said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to take up your bed." 11 But he answered them, "The man who healed me, that man said to me, 'Take up your bed, and walk.'" 12 They asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" 13 Now the man who had been healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, as there was a crowd in the place. 14 Afterward Jesus found him in the temple and said to him, "See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you." 15 The man went away and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. 16 And this was why the Jews were persecuting Jesus, because he was doing these things on the Sabbath. 17 But Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."

18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

19 So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing. And greater works than these will he show him, so that you may marvel. 21 For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whom he will. 22 The Father judges no one, but has given all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. 24 Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life. 25 "Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself. 27 And he has given him authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of Man. 28 Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice 29 and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.

Revelation 20:11-15

Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. 13 And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. 14 Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.