

Worksheet #6: John 5:1-47

Summary: Chapter five begins a new major section called the “Festival Cycle” (chs. 5–10). Each event in this section occurs around the time of a Jewish festival. A recurring theme here is the intensifying conflict between Jesus and “the Jews.” Usually, this controversy erupts after one of Jesus’ miraculous “signs” or his public teaching.

Here in chapter five, we see Jesus heal a lame man at an unnamed feast in the city of Jerusalem. Controversy with “the Jews” ensues, beginning in 5:16–18. Then in the following action (5:19–47), Jesus gives an extended discourse where he asserts his identity as the Son of God. He backs up this bold assertion with the external testimony of John the Baptist (5:31–35), his miraculous works (5:36), and the affirmations of the Father in Scripture (5:37–39).

Abbreviated Outline¹ (current passage in bold):

- I. INTRODUCTION: THE WORD MADE FLESH (1:1-18)
- II. THE BOOK OF SIGNS: THE SIGNS OF THE MESSIAH (1:19-12:50)
 - A. *The Forerunner and the Coming of the Messiah* (1:19-51)
 - 1. The Testimony of John the Baptist (1:19-34)
 - 2. The Beginning of Jesus’ Ministry (1:35-51)
 - B. *The Cana Cycle: Jesus’ Inaugural Signs and Representative Conversations* (2:1-4:54)
 - 1. Sign 1: Changing Water into Wine at the Wedding in Cana (2:1-12)
 - 2. Sign 2: One of Jesus’ Jerusalem Signs: The Clearing of the Temple (2:13-22)
 - 3. Representative Conversations: Nicodemus the Jewish Ruler, the Samaritan Woman (2:23-4:42)
 - 4. Sign 3: The Second Sign in Cana: The Healing of the Royal Official’s Son (4:43-54)
 - C. ***The Festival Cycle: Additional Signs amidst Mounting Unbelief* (5-10)**
 - 1. **Sign 4 at an Unnamed Feast in Jerusalem: The Healing of the Lame Man (5:1-47)**
 - 2. Sign 5: Galilean Passover: Feeding the Multitude and Bread of Life Discourse (6:1-71)
 - 3. Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles (7:1-8:59)
 - 4. Sign 6: The Healing of the Blind Man and the Good Shepherd Discourse (9-10)
 - D. *Final Passover: Climactic Sign, the Raising of Lazarus, and Other Events* (11-12)
 - 1. Sign 7: The Raising of Lazarus (11)
 - 2. Final Events of Jesus’ Public Ministry (12)
- III. THE BOOK OF EXALTATION: PREPARING THE NEW MESSIANIC COMMUNITY AND THE PASSION OF JESUS (13-20)
 - A. *The Cleansing and Instruction of the New Covenant Community, including Jesus’ Final Prayer* (13-17)
 - B. *The Passion Narrative* (18-19)
 - C. *Jesus’ Resurrection and Appearances, Commissioning of Disciples* (20:1-29)
 - D. *Concluding Purpose Statement* (20:30-31)
- IV. EPILOGUE: THE COMPLEMENTARY ROLES OF PETER AND THE BELOVED DISCIPLE (21)

¹ Adapted from Andreas J. Köstenberger, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, The Cross, and The Crown: An Introduction to the New Testament* (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Academic, 2009), 307–308.

Interpretation: *Read through the passage, and then review and make notes under the questions below.*

1. Why is it significant that the man healed in chapter five had been lame for “thirty-eight years” (5:5)?
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2. What does Jesus’ statement, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you” (5:14), suggest about the man who had been healed?
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3. Why did the Jews desire to kill Jesus (5:16–18)? How can doing work on the Sabbath be as heinous as identifying God as one’s Father?
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4. How is 5:23b a tacit condemnation of “the Jews”? Given Jesus’ authority to “execute judgment” (5:22–30), is it legitimate to read 5:23b this way?
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5. How do Jesus’ miraculous “works” serve as a “greater witness” than the testimony of John the Baptist (5:36)?
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6. According to Jesus’ own statements in 5:37–39, *how* does the Father testify concerning his Son?
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7. In what sense could Jesus say that the Jews did not “believe” Moses’ writings (5:46–47)?
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Application: *Take time to reflect on the implications of this passage for your own life today.*

8. What does this passage tell us about Jesus? How does it help us to understand “his place in the sweep of redemptive history”?²
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9. What does this passage mean for your walk with the Lord?
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10. How does this passage challenge the way you think about situations in daily life? What should you do about that?
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² D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 102.