

The Character of Jesus 14
Jesus Heals on the Sabbath
John 5:1 – 47

- Characteristic: Evidence
 - (1 – 8) Jesus' motivation for this healing was not given specifically.
 - (9 – 11) The claim that the healed man violated the Law of Moses by carrying his bedroll was incorrect. He did break the rules of the rabbis, the vast majority of whom would have a general rule about carrying anything other than food from the kitchen to the table.
 - The Law says to do no “work” on the Sabbath (*e.g.* Exodus 31:13), but “work” is not explained.
 - A man who was picking up sticks for firewood on the Sabbath during the Wilderness period was stoned (Numbers 15:35). He had had the opportunity to plan or he could have borrowed from his neighbors (as manna was to teach).
 - The people were not to carry “burdens” out of their houses or through the city gates on the Sabbath (Jeremiah 17:21 – 23, Nehemiah 13:19). The exact nature of a “burden” was not given, but the idea was commerce.
 - The healed man had no opportunity to plan, and the sleeping mat was not for commerce. Either he must abandon his bed or stay with it until sundown.
 - He specified that the one who healed him said to do it. He drew the conclusion that anyone who could heal him must have better advice than the rabbis.
 - (12 – 15) Apparently, the man's original disease was the result of sin. Assuming that, Jesus took the trouble to warn the man.
 - Jesus addressed the accusations of the Jewish leadership with evidence:
 - (17) The leaders knew of His past miracles, also. Jesus told them that the fact that He could do this, and being already recognized as a prophet, should be evidence enough that their rules which fleshed out the generalizations in the Law about the Sabbath should be re-examined.
 - (18) A second accusation was, by referring to God as His Father, tantamount to claiming equality with God. God is called Father several times in the Old Testament: Psalms 68:5, 89:26, Isaiah 9:6, 63:16, 64:8, Jeremiah 3:19, 31:9, Malachi 2:10. So, Jesus just kept calling Himself “Son” (as did Ezekiel, 91 times) throughout His rebuttal, just to needle them.
 - (19) Jesus reminded them that miracles, by definition, are beyond human ability. Therefore, they needed to re-think their “rules outweigh miracles” argument.
 - (20) Jesus told them that this miracle was only the beginning. They will get bigger.
 - (21 – 24) Jesus had proved Himself a prophet, so their objections to His methods were objections to God.
 - (25 – 27) Jesus was referring to spiritually dead and alive people here. Jesus was telling the rabbis that His message (from the Father) was about spiritual life, not political life as with many of the earlier prophets.
 - (28 – 29) Fast forward to Judgment. Jesus' reminded them that messages from God have to do with eternity, too.

- Jesus listed His evidences:
 - (30) No financial or political gain,
 - (31) Not claims but outside evidence.
 - (32 – 33, 35) John the Baptist, who was already recognized as a prophet.
 - (34) Not reliant on scholars or kings for His endorsements.
 - (36) His miracles were His strongest evidence.
 - (37 – 40, 45 – 47) The Scriptures had announced Him in detail.
 - (41 – 44) The rulers had a “good old boys” club, so rejected all outsiders.
- Applications
 - What post-first-century conclusions have been incorporated into modern Christian doctrine?
 - Health and wealth doctrine
 - End times
 - Unverifiable miracles
 - Every doctrine must be “right.”
 - Calvinism
 - How do these cultural accretions hinder understanding of the gospel?
 - It is appropriate to warn people not to fall back into their old ways.
 - Do religious people miss miracles in favor of what they have been taught?
 - Do we emphasize the family of God or the authority of God?
 - Are we a closed group?
 - What evidence can we cite?
 - No personal gain. In fact, faith is expensive in terms of both time and money.
 - Miracles with physical evidence
 - Predictions about Jesus and other verifiable historical predictions.
 - What percentage of modern church folks would have followed the earthly Jesus?