
At the Pool of Bethzatha

Bible Reading: John 5.1-18

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At the Pool of Bethzatha pictures Zakkai and Azra, two members of the Jewish Council doing the rounds of Jerusalem to make sure the Sabbath rules are being kept. It is festival time as well as Sabbath and some of the visitors may be a little too casual. So the Pool of Bethzatha (or Bethesda or Bethsaida, depending on the text - and your Bible translation) comes under watchful eye. It's a place where hopefuls look for healing and discipline must be maintained.

At the Pool of Bethzatha

It is the Sabbath day and also one of the Jewish festivals. Zakkai and Azra, two members of the Jewish Council, usually move around the city to be sure the Sabbath rules are being faithfully observed. With visitors in the city for the feast, this “patrol” seemed even more necessary than usual. It was always important to check those odd corners where over-flow crowds sometimes collected.

Reading: **John 5.1-9a.**

ZAKKAI: Quiet Sabbath for festival time, Azra.

AZRA: Yes, it is, Zakkai. The group from Antioch back at the inn had arrived good and early.

ZAKKAI: I was amazed by those proselytes from Rome. The synagogue there must have instructed them well in the Sabbath rules.

AZRA: The visitors all seem very serious about it.

ZAKKAI: Yes, certain of the locals give us more problems.

AZRA: And the Galileans!

ZAKKAI: Even so, it has been quiet today!

AZRA: We must get down to the Pool of Bethzatha.

ZAKKAI: Yes – there’s always a collection of hopefuls waiting for healing.

AZRA: Plus visiting hopefuls at feast-time.

ZAKKAI: I hope not! Visiting hopefuls tend to come in after the Sabbath curfew! And you know what that means!

AZRA: But don’t feel bad about it! We still have to make sure the Sabbath rules are kept!

ZAKKAI: I don’t feel bad – just a little awkward. The Sabbath rest must be kept by everyone!

AZRA: No exceptions!

Reading: **John 5.9b-18.**