

John 5:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.

Analysis

John provides geographical detail: 'Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches.' The name Bethesda means 'house of mercy' or 'house of outpouring'—ironically, a place of paralysis waiting for mercy. The five porches held multitudes of disabled people. This setting becomes the stage for Jesus' demonstration of divine mercy that transcends human limitations.

Historical Context

Archaeological excavations in Jerusalem's Old City discovered a pool matching John's description—a trapezoid-shaped double pool with five covered colonnades. This confirms John's eyewitness accuracy. The pool was associated with healing rituals, attracting those desperate for cure.

Related Passages

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does the name 'Bethesda' (house of mercy) contrast with the reality of those waiting there?
2. What does archaeological confirmation of this site teach about the Gospel's historical reliability?

Interlinear Text

ἔστιν δὲ ἐν ἣ Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ ἣ προβατικῇ
there is Now at which Jerusalem by which the sheep
G2076 G1161 G1722 G3588 G2414 G1909 G3588 G4262

κολυμβήθρα ἣ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἐβραϊστὶ Βηθεσδά,
market a pool which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda
G2861 G3588 G1951 G1447 G964

πέντε στοάς ἔχουσα
five porches having
G4002 G4745 G2192

Additional Cross-References

Nehemiah 12:39 (Parallel theme): And from above the gate of Ephraim, and above the old gate, and above the fish gate, and the tower of Hananeel, and the tower of Meah, even unto the sheep gate: and they stood still in the prison gate.

Nehemiah 3:1 (Parallel theme): Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.

Nehemiah 3:32 (Parallel theme): And between the going up of the corner unto the sheep gate repaired the goldsmiths and the merchants.