

John 5:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

Analysis

'In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.' The scene is desperate—blind, lame, paralyzed people waiting for an uncertain cure. The 'moving of the water' refers to periodic disturbance, superstitiously believed to have healing properties. Religion without power produces waiting, not healing. The multitude represents humanity's hopeless condition apart from divine intervention.

Historical Context

The belief that an angel periodically troubled the water (verse 4, omitted in some manuscripts as possible later addition) reflects popular superstition. First-century medicine offered little for such conditions. These were society's outcasts, dependent on charity, waiting for uncertain deliverance that rarely came.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this scene of desperate waiting picture humanity's condition without Christ?
2. What false hopes do people pursue today in place of true divine healing?

Interlinear Text

ἐν	ταύταις	κατέκειτο	πλῆθος	πολὺ	τῶν	ἀσθενούντων
In	G3778	lay	multitude	a great	G3588	of impotent folk
G1722		G2621	G4128	G4183		G770
τυφλῶν	χωλῶν	ξηρῶν	ἐκδεχομένων	τὴν	τοῦ	ὑδατος
of blind	halt	withered	waiting for	G3588	G3588	of the water
G5185	G5560	G3584	G1551			G5204

κίνησιν

the moving

G2796

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 15:30 (Parallel theme): And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

Luke 7:22 (Parallel theme): Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.