The Dialogue of the Paralytic With Christ

This brief apocryphon is an expansion of the story of Jesus and the paralytic from John 5:1-15, though here it is situated after the resurrection. The text is extant in Georgian and Armenian, but ultimately derives from a Greek original. It has been published only once in a modern language—into French by Bernard Outtier for the second volume of Écrits apocryphes chrétiens (pp. 63-74). The following is translated from Outtier’s work.

1 There was a paralyzed man, poor and without a Master, invalid and without resources, disabled and helpless, paralyzed and deprived of the use of all his limbs; he was indeed blind, without strength in his hands, disabled of the two feet and covered with wounds. He was thus stretched out in a street, in the town of Jerusalem, for the alms which people gave him. And this occurred in the time of Christianity, after the ascension of Christ to heaven in the glory of the Father, from whom he had not separated.

2 Out of his love of men, Christ descended to the Earth and like a man, he passed by, under pretext of some business, on the street in which the paralytic was stretched out. Christ came and stood close to the paralytic. He greeted him and said: “Why are you sitting here?” The paralytic said: “For alms, because I am lame and blind, crippled and without a Master, as you can see.”

3 Christ said: “How long have you been lying here?” The paralytic said: “It has been thirty-eight years that I have sat here in torment.” Christ said: “What sickness do you have?” The paralytic said: “I am what you see: filled with afflictions and lying on the ground hindered.” He said: “Do you have a powerful patron?” The paralytic: “I have somebody: Christ; of importance:
my wounds; as parents, my hunger and my indigence; as life, the blindness of my eyes and disability of my body.” Jesus said: “The one who lives well until the end, will live.” The paralytic: “Until when will I live well? Christ has made of me the fable of all the people.” Jesus said: “The one whom the Lord loves, he cures.”

4 The paralytic said: “Christ has cured me; today, I am worthy. But I want to ask you: who are you, you who say all of this to me?” Christ said: “I am a man like you. Ask what you want.” The paralytic: “Are you a priest, or a doctor?” Jesus said: “I am neither a priest, nor a doctor.” The paralytic: “What kind of man are you then? Your smell is that of a priest, your words, of a doctor.” Jesus said: “I am a man who walks a lot, a traveler.”

5 The paralytic said: “Where do you come from?” Jesus said: “From the country of the Indians.” The paralytic said: “Did you stay in a school?” Jesus said: “I studied a little and I endeavor to learn still, because I have a strong will and I try hard, if possible, to arrive at true knowledge.” The paralytic said: “Did you not hear of the doctor Athenogene? Where is he?” Jesus said: “I am his student, but I know a practice greater than his.” The paralytic said: “You are a young man and you speak according to your intelligence. How can a pupil know more that the Master?” Jesus said: “Goodness, greatness, is recognized in work.”

6 The paralytic said: “Have mercy on me, so that you also may have mercy with the arrival of Christ.” Jesus said: “You, how do you know Christ?” The paralytic said: “I heard some talk of his reputation, because his apostles preached to the entire universe the power of his miracles, which also the holy
gospel reports.” Christ said: “Since, then, you know Christ, his holy gospel and the apostles, why are you not cured?” The paralytic said: “Me? I did not have anyone to carry me to the feet of the apostles, who were curing”

7 Jesus said: “What would you give me to cure you?” The paralytic said: “Who else could cure me, if not only the right hand of Christ?” Christ said: “Whereas you have hopes at this point in Christ, why did he not cure you? Would you not be unbelieving and guilty of very serious sins?” Then the paralytic became angry and said: “In what would I have sinned, since I do not have the means of sinning? My eyes are blind and my hands without strength; my feet are crippled and I am devastated by my wounds. This is my business and my work: night and day, to pray to Christ for the good and the peace of this world, and especially for those who give me alms and for my afflictions.” Christ said: “Why then at this point suffer do you suffer, if you are not sinning? Indeed, Christ loves the just and hates the sinner, cures the just and makes suffer the sinner.” The paralytic said: “Would you not be one of his disciples?” Jesus said: “Me? I am not one of his disciples and I did not hear his preaching.”

8 The paralytic said: “Did you not hear of his incarnation which saves the world? That he descended from the skies and was incarnated from the Blessed Virgin Mary? He was born in a cave, received gifts from the Magi, was honored by the shepherds, was adored by angels, was glorified by kings and was served by celestial being. At forty days old, he came to the Temple and opened the door which had been closed by himself; he was pampered by the old man and was proclaimed God; he untied the old man of the bonds of the body and made him pass from death to life. He fled to Egypt and destroyed
the idols. He was baptized by John in the Jordan river, accepted the testimony of his father’s voice and the Holy Spirit descended in the form of dove. He fasted forty days and triumphed over the tempter in three forms of combat; he walked on air and tread upon the waves of the sea; he changed water into wine and carnal desire by chastity of the spirit. He drove out demons, purified the lepers, returned walking to the lame, sight to the blind; he multiplied the bread, raised the dead; he forgave the sins of lepers, returned just the publican. He was crucified and buried, was raised from the dead and rose gloriously to the Father in heaven; he sat down on the right-hand side of the Father in the heights; he will return to judge the living and the dead and to reward each one according to his works.”

9 Jesus said: “Where did you learn all this?” The paralytic: “I learned it from the doctors and heard from preachers.” Christ said: “Since you are so eloquent, why did Christ not send you to preach his Gospel?” The paralytic said: “He gave me in my share pains of the body and blindness in my eyes.” Jesus said: “That is what you deserve.”

10 Then the paralytic became angry and said: “Today I receive what I deserve, but you, you will not remain unpunished.” Jesus said: “It is from your language that you must be in this state.” The paralytic said: “I have received what is returned to me according to my merits; your reward will come according to your merits.” Jesus said: “You are accustomed to speaking much. Your language is eloquent and your face impudent; you are blind from birth for your shame. But if you want to recover health, give me what you have, and I will cure you.”
11 The paralytic: “What do you want to receive from me, because I do not have anything?” Jesus said: “I know that you have many gold coins wrapped in your bag. Give me that and I will cure you your atrocious affictions.” The paralytic: “You look like a rich man; how would I have gold coins?” Jesus said: “If you do not have gold, give me some money.” The paralytic: “No, I do not have money.” Jesus said: “You have some, but you are miserly; you do not want to give.” The paralytic said: “I said: ‘You were born rich’; how would I have money and gold?”

12 Jesus said: “What do you have then?” The paralytic said: “Christ is the witness, I have four pennies and a piece of bread, and two coppers; here: take that for you and cure me.” Jesus said: “When one has swept the house, two or three coppers and even more leave with the brush, and one throws to the dogs the piece of bread.” The paralytic: “Two coppers are the wages of an imbecile, and the servant eats the piece of bread.”

13 Jesus said: “You said: ‘I have seven affictions.’ For a payment such as you offer, would you would remove all your affictions?” The paralytic: “You are terribly greedy and you are an eager man. Would you be relative of Judas?” Jesus said: “Do you not know that any man is a son of Adam and that we, all men, form only one family? But each one will be remunerated according to his works.” The paralytic: “Well, if the remuneration is to each one according to his works, I will not perish.” Jesus said: “It is because of your thoughts that you are in these affictions.”

14 The paralytic: “Although, of body, I would be exposed as a laughing stock, of spirit I am invited in the womb of Abraham.” Jesus said: “It is
because of your misdeeds that here you are tortured, and over there also, you will be tortured.” The paralytic: “You believe yourself largely loved by God, but Christ has prepared for you the dark darkness and the fire of Gehenna.” Christ said: “I do not render worship to that which throws me in the outer darkness and the pit of Gehenna.”

15 Then the paralytic became angry and said: “Go and remove yourself from me, the legless cripple, because here: you disavowed Christ. Remove yourself from me, poor that I am; today, you prevented me from begging. You orate thus with the council of the kings and you ruin the country. Go, remove yourself from me, unhappy that I am and find yourself a speaker in the city.” Jesus said: “You boast so much in Christ that it seems that you are a relative of Christ or a great benefactor. Are you so that your merits are something in front of Christ?”

16 The paralytic said: “I believe in Christ my God and I have in him the hope of finding mercy, as far as he is concerned. Although I would be sinning, he atones for sins. Although I would be lost, he finds those who were lost. Although I would be scorned, he honors the scorned. Although I would be corrupted, he is a renewer. Although I would have died, he gives life. He who cured the wounds of Adam by his sufferings on the cross, will cure me. He who has raised Lazarus, dead for four days, will also have pity on me and will give me health.”

Then Jesus had pity for him and said to him in a soft voice: “Stand up, take your palate and walk!” And at once the man rose—his limbs healthy, his feet
swift, his hands skillful, his arms robust, his eyes brilliant with light. He went, his limbs strong, and glorified God, and he no longer saw Jesus.

17 And now, that nobody doubts what I have just said, thinking: “That did not happen”; it really did happen and it is not too much for the compassion of the divine will which loves men. Because he who fought with Jacob from evening until dawn, who was united without confusion with our sinful nature and has made incorruptible our corruptible flesh that he took from the Blessed Virgin Mary, and without sin the sinful flesh spoke with the same mercy with the paralytic and gave him health: Christ, our God.