



Lesson 13: In Jerusalem For the Feast

December 23, 2020
"Jesus And The Woman Taken In Adultery"
John 8:1-11

The woman caught in adultery

John 8:1-11

In the context of John 7:24 and the need to "*judge righteous judgment.*"

"The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court." (John 8:3)

- Who else should have been present? (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22)
- Why did they bring just her to Jesus?
- They were "**testing**" Jesus (John 8:6; cf. Matthew 16:1; 19:3; 22:15ff;) so they might "**have grounds for accusing Him.**"

Jesus and the Woman Taken In Adultery John 8:1-11

8:1-11 – Some translations omit these verses because they are not in some of the older manuscripts.

- However, there is not anything questionable taught in these verses.
- Though it cannot be proved that this story formed a part of the gospel of John, neither is it possible to establish that it is not. Therefore, the story should be retained and used for our benefit.
- Jesus came to the mount of Olives after the feast of Tabernacles. (cf. 7:2)
- The next morning he returned to the temple and continued teaching the multitudes.

Jesus and the Woman Taken In Adultery John 8:1-11

Questions about the authenticity of this text.

- "... it can hardly have belonged to the original text of this Gospel. It is absent from most of the oldest copies of the Gospel that precede the sixth century and from the works of the earliest commentators. To say that it does not belong in the Gospel is not identical with rejecting it as unhistorical. Its coherence and spirit show that it was preserved from a very early time, and it accords well with the known character of Jesus. It may be accepted as historical truth ..." (Merrill Tenney, Expositor's Bible Commentary, Volume 9:89).

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- "First, it is missing from the two earliest copies of John, papyrus manuscripts numbered 66 (Papyrus Bodmer II, about A.D. 200), and 75 (Papyrus Bodmer XV, early third century A.D.)."
- "Second, it appears in only one of the early Uncials, Codex Bezae (D), from the fifth or sixth century."
- "Third, many of the later Cursive manuscripts (dated after the beginning of the ninth century) omit it, while others include it."
 - "One group of cursives, family 15, contains the pericope, but places it after Luke 21:38. Its prevalence in these later manuscripts led to its inclusion in the Textus Receptus, the textual basis of the King James New Testament."

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- "Fourth, several ancient translations omit it."
 - "For example, the Syriac and Egyptian, and some manuscripts of the Old Latin do not have it."
- "Fifth, no commentator before Euthymius Zygadenus (A.D. 1118) mentions the passage."
- "Sixth, its position in manuscripts where it is found varies considerably: some place it before John 8:12, some at the end of John and still others after Luke 21:38."
 - "A number of manuscripts include the text with asterisks or obeli to signify that its inclusion is questionable."

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- “Seventh, scholars who have compared the style and vocabulary of the pericope with the rest of John’s Gospel argue that it is too different stylistically to have been penned by the Apostle.”
 - *“The most complete discussion of all issues involved with this passage is found in a German work by Ulrich Becker, Jesus und die Ehebrecherin, Untersuchungen zur Text- und Überlieferungsgeschichte von Joh. 7. 53-8. 11 (Berlin, 1963).”*
- “Apart from these issues of textual criticism, we believe the passage should be treated as a true story, which early became associated with John’s Gospel.”
 - (Daniel H. King, Sr., *John, Truth Commentaries*, Pages 218-219)

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In this chapter the tension between Jesus and the Jews continues to heighten.

- In Judea the Jews had sought to kill Him because He healed on the Sabbath and told the lame man to take up his bed and walk. (5:1-18)
- Note the discussion in Chapter 6.
- In Galilee after Jesus had fed the multitude with five barley loaves and two fishes many turned back and followed Him no more. (7:1-71)
- At the feast of tabernacles in Judea there is much questioning about who Jesus is. (7:1-53)
- Now in Chapter eight the Jews try to entrap Jesus by questioning Him about the woman taken in adultery.
- Afterward they take up stones to cast at Jesus because He said, *“I am.”* (John 8:58)

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8:1-2 – According to the account in Luke, Jesus spent His final week in Jerusalem teaching in the temple during the day and camping on the Mount of Olives at night. (Luke 22:37-39)

- Jesus drew a large crowd: *“all the people.”*

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8:3-5 – The Scribes and Pharisees had failed to have Jesus arrested during the feast of Tabernacles. (cf. 7:32, 45)

- Now they seek to find fault with Him with reference to the Law. (cf. verse 6)
- They bring a woman caught in the very act of adultery.
- The Law of Moses commanded that such a person be stoned to death. (cf. Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22-24; Ezekiel 23:43-44, 47)

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Roman law, whose dominion then governed, did not permit putting anyone to death without due process through Roman courts. (cf. John 18:28-31; 19:7)

- In *“tempting”* Jesus they believe Jesus is in a dilemma. (John 8:6; cf. Matthew 16:1; 19:3; 22:15ff) so they might **“have grounds for accusing Him.”**
 - *If he says she is to be stoned according to the Law of Moses, they are prepared to accuse Him of violating Roman law.*
 - *If he says she is not to be stoned, but turned over to Roman authorities, they would accuse Him of violating the law of Moses.*

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Clearly, this was a trap.

- These were not honestly seeking to do right.
- If they were, where is the man involved in this adulterous act? (Leviticus 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22)

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8:6 – The motive of these men clearly revealed.

- **Jesus wrote on the ground with his finger.**
 - *Some speculate that He wrote a list of names of those who accuse this woman, listing some of their sins.*
 - *Others speculate that He wrote warnings aimed at the Scribes and Pharisees.*
 - *Still others speculate that Jesus was doodling, aimlessly scribbling.*

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8:7-8 – The Scribes and Pharisees continue to press Him for an answer.

- Jesus stood up. (cf. John 7:37)
- Jesus did not answer their question. cf. John 4; 1 Timothy 4:7
- Jesus said, *“He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone.”* (NOTE: Deuteronomy 17:7)
- Now the dilemma is upon the Scribes and Pharisees.
- The issue is not would the law of Moses be respected and obeyed, but would these hypocrites condemn themselves by insisting that the death penalty be carried out according to the law?

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Jesus knew they sought occasion to kill Him.

- John 5:18, *“For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.”*
- John 7:1-25:

7 *And after these things Jesus walked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Judaea, because the Jews sought to kill him.*

19 *Did not Moses give you the law, and (yet) none of you doeth the law? Why seek ye to kill me?*

20 *The multitude answered, Thou hast a demon: who seeketh to kill thee?*

24 *Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

25 *Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this he whom they seek to kill?*

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- **NOTE the hypocrisy:** These who are determined to murder Him are supposing interest in the sin of this woman.
- These who are so interested in applying the law to this woman must act responsibly and equally apply the law to themselves. (cf. Romans 2:1-3; Matthew 7:1-5)
- Jesus then continues to write on the ground.

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8:9-11 – They all left, beginning with the eldest.

- KJV and NKJV – *“being convicted by their own conscience”* not in the Greek text.
- *“Beginning with the older ones ...”* either referring to age or rank.
- NOTE: When Jesus said, *“Neither do I condemn thee ...”* Jesus was not implying what the woman had done was right.
- Yet, He could not command that she be stoned without witnesses. (Deuteronomy 17:7)
- Secondly, He stood prepared to forgive her – **if she is willing to repent.** (cf. Matthew 9:13; 1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9)
- As Lord, He is willing to forgive all sin.
- He often forgave sinners while on earth. (cf. Luke 7:47; Matthew 9:2)
- Yet, forgiveness is conditioned upon repentance and obedience. (cf. Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11)