

“The Gospel of John: The Adulterous Woman Interlude”

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Scripture

John 8:1-11

“But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them.

3The scribes and **the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery and having set her in the center of the court**, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, **in the very act**. "Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?"

6They were saying this, **testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him**. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.

7But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "**He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her**." Again, He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

9When they heard it, **they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones**, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court.

10Straightening up, Jesus said to her, "**Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?**" She said, "No one, Lord."

11And Jesus said, "**I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.**]"

An Interlude

Interlude: An intervening or interruptive period, space, or event

John 8:1-2

“But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. **Early in the morning He came again into the temple**, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them.”

This text in **John 8:1-11** was not seen in the first 300 years of scrolls for John’s gospel

Many versions of the Bible do not include it in the text

Others place brackets around the passage to note its history and concerns

The RSV does not include it in the text of the Bible but keeps it as a footnote

The passage does not fit into the chronology of John’s gospel

Looking at **John 7:37-52** -> **Jesus is teaching in the temple courts** on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles

Looking at **John 8:12-20** -> **Jesus is teaching in the treasury in the temple courts**

That the woman caught in adultery placed in the middle is pretty obvious from reading the text

The original language does not match John's linguistic style -> most likely Luke wrote this passage

Many pastors refuse to teach the passage because of its history

Some suggested men did not want this passage taught -> it would have lessened the penalty for adultery

The "best" location for this story would be after **Luke 21:38** -> Jesus was spending each night on Mount Olivet

Then teaching in the temple during the day, exactly what happens in **John 8:1-2**

Jesus is teaching in the temple -> **Luke 21 is during the last week of Christ's earthly life**

It is right before the Passover, the crowds would have been huge during this week

Christ is teaching in public -> there are lots of witnesses around to observe what He says and does

Into this scene, the Pharisees bring a woman to Jesus:

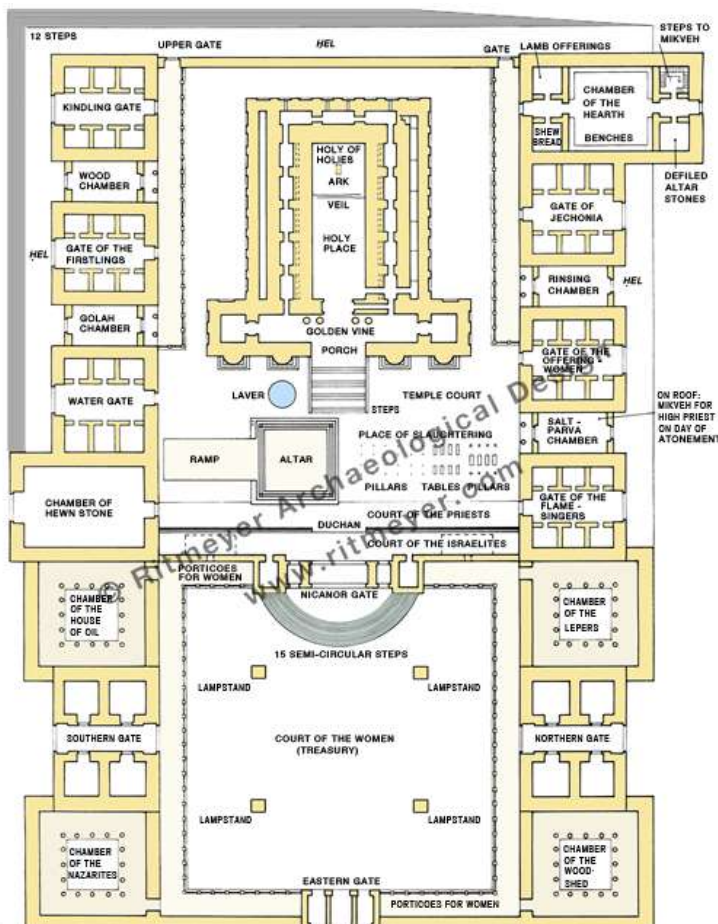
It Takes Two to Tango

John 8:3-5

"The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery and having set her in the center of the court, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. "Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?"

The Pharisees bring a woman to Jesus in the middle of the temple court

It is a very public area as shown in the picture:



The woman was set in the middle of the "Court of the Women" or the "Treasury"

There must have been a great crowd around them

Lots of opportunity for Jesus to teach

Lots of opportunity for others to arrest Him

But they do not seize Him because it's too public of a location

Jesus had been celebrated as the Messiah coming into the city on a donkey a few short days ago

The woman has been caught in the very act of adultery

How many people does it take to commit adultery?

How many people are presented to Jesus?

Where's the man?

The Pharisees call Jesus "**Teacher**" showing respect

But their intent is not to show Jesus any respect

“Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?”

What is the punishment for adultery in the Law?

Leviticus 20:10

“If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, **the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.**”

Pretty clear – both individuals would be put to death

Deuteronomy 22:22-24

“If a man is found lying with a married woman, then **both of them shall die**, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; **thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.** "If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, then **you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death**; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's wife.”

Deuteronomy is pretty clear, too...death by stoning at the gate of the city

The Pharisees didn't follow the law because they brought only 1 of the couple to the temple, not the city gate

They have to bring the woman to Jesus for another purpose

Testing Jesus

John 8:6

“They were saying this, **testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him.** But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.”

This is a ruse because they are intending to trap Jesus by giving Him an impossible problem to solve

“Testing” is *Peirazo* -> used both positively and negatively -> “the Tempter” in Matthew 4 -> Satan & Jesus

Jesus has been preaching about God's grace to the people for 3 years:

If He tells the Pharisees to stone the woman, He would be seen as harsh and without grace

If He tells the Pharisees to let her go and shows grace, He would be seen as antinomian -> against the Law

Jesus did not immediately respond to the Pharisees

“Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground”

So, what was Jesus doing in writing on the ground? -> Have you ever wondered?

- Was He buying time to think His way out of the problem?
- Was He silently praying to the Father about what to do in the situation?
- **Why write on the ground?** He could have walked in a circle, instead...

Jesus knows the intents of man and the thoughts of the heart -> He cannot be tricked by the Pharisees

John 2:25 -> “He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man.”

Few have focused in on what Jesus was writing on the ground

What do you think He was writing?

Jesus is not responding as the Pharisees want

They feel like they have Him right where they want Him -> same as in Matthew 22 with the poll tax question!

Judging Righteously

John 8:7-8

"But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, "**He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.**" Again, He stooped down and wrote on the ground."

"Persisted" means "to stay on with intensity"

We might use the phrase they "road my back" or someone was "on my case"

Intense pressure to respond

Jesus doesn't have to dance to their tune, but He has something to say

"He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her"

He is giving them the seat of judgment to judge righteously

Jesus returns again to write on the ground -> He had more to write!

- What if Jesus was writing down the name of the man who was caught in the act with the woman?
- What if the man caught in adultery with her was holding a stone?
- What if Jesus was writing down every man's name who was holding a stone and their individual sins?

Could it be, that one of the men set her up to be caught?

Perhaps he told his buddies, "Hey, she's coming over to my house -> come on over at 5PM and catch us!"

Obviously, they had not been judging righteously in tossing the woman before Him

In addition, they are only considering the physical act of adultery with their accusation

We should remember that Jesus had already interpreted the commandment in the Sermon on the Mount:

Matthew 5:27-30

"You have heard that it was said, YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; but I say to you that **everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell."

It is not the actual physical act of sex out of marriage that is adultery according to Jesus

Adultery is committed long before the actual act -> Adultery is in the intent that forms in the heart of man

The same goes for Murder, Theft, Covetousness, etc. -> **Not being content with what you have!**

What principle is Jesus reinforcing?

Matthew 7:1-2

“Judge not, that ye be not judged. **For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged:** and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”

The way you judge others, you will be yourself judged -> **think about your intent before you judge others!**

True Guilt Displayed

John 8:9

“When they heard it, **they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones,** and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court.”

“When they heard” -> personal introspection occurs

“one by one” -> personal conviction or guilt is shown

“**beginning with the older ones**” -> **Why would the older ones go out first?**

You might think that the older ones are more mature, wiser, be more willing to let it be?

Let me give you a different perspective:

If you're older, what should you have more evidence of in your life? -> **Your own Sin!**

You have more experience with falling short of the glory of God -> sin is “missing the mark”

One by one they left, dropping their stones along the way out of the temple court

You know what they did?

They judged righteously! -> They applied Jesus's truth to their own lives – **THEY deserved to be stoned, too!**

Jesus and the woman are left alone in the middle of the court

No Condemnation

John 8:10

“Straightening up, Jesus said to her, **“Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?”** She said, **“No one, Lord.”**”

“Where are your accusers?” Jesus says

“Did no one condemn you?” He asks

The Old Testament principle was in **Deuteronomy 19:15**

“A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.”

This is where “when two or three are gathered in my name” comes from, by the way

Witnesses against someone are needed to discern guilt -> something Jesus did NOT have at His trial

Sin No More

John 8:11

“And Jesus said, **“I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more.”**”

No accusers -> no charges -> no condemnation

“I do not condemn you, either”

What do you think? Was the woman guilty? -> Flash Poll: Are You Guilty?

“From now on sin no more” -> Yes, she was guilty as charged!

Jesus gives grace to the woman

The beauty of grace is unparalleled

You are never more like God than when you forgive and show grace another person!

John 1:7

“For the Law was given through Moses; **grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ**”

This scene with the adulterous woman is an example of that grace

Ephesians 2:3-7

“We too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. **But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us**, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (**by grace you have been saved**), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

The riches of God’s grace given to us

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. **Such were some of you; but you were washed**, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.”

2 Timothy 1:9

“God who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, **but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity**”

His grace is on display at the table before us

Communion Prayer & Benediction