



HE WHO
HAS NO
SIN CAST
THE FIRST
STONE

JOHN 8:7

Throwing Stones

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What a difference it makes in the gospel narrative when we know the Torah, and we take it into our consideration for understanding the story we are reading in the Scriptures.

Take for example the passage pertaining to the woman caught in adultery.

When we don't know the Torah we have to take the details of the story itself filtered through our own understanding to decide what's taking place and why. And historically this has led to some incredible and erroneous ideas particularly concerning Yeshua Himself.

The story typically begins in chapter 8 of John's account. But we must not start there since the chapter breaks were added many centuries later, and the last verses of chapter 7 are imperative here.

Sukkot had just ended and Yeshua had stood up on the Last Great Day and declared, "The one who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, will have streams of living water flow from deep within him."

And the people there responded with a question - "Is this truly The Prophet?"

If we don't know Torah before reading this passage, we might think there was a prophet rumored to be around in that time, and no one knew who it was. We might conclude that word had gone ahead of Him, and this was the moment people believed that the person standing in front of them was the prophet they had heard about. But knowing Torah, we are aware that there were many prophets yet only One Who is called *the* Prophet.

These verses constantly refer back to Moses, and so we must go back to Moses to find what they're talking about. Moses stated in Deuteronomy 18 - "YHWH your Elohim will raise up unto you a Prophet from your midst, of your brothers, like unto me; unto Him you shall hearken."

Since then, the Israelites were always looking for not just *a* prophet, but *the* Prophet, the specific prophet that Moses had spoken of Who would be like him.

At the declaration that this Yeshua could possibly be *that* Prophet spoken of old by Moses that is like Moses and Moses commanded we must listen to, the debate about whether or not Yeshua is the Messiah started in that place.

The text says that the people were divided about Him, but that the Pharisees were solidly Him declaring that no prophet will ever be from Galilee.

John 7:52 "Investigate and you will see that no prophet arises from Galilee." So they said. And so we should. Investigate. And what follows is what proved Moses true. Not only in his instructions that he gave us, but that Yeshua is *that* Prophet, and indeed the Messiah, Who was foretold by Moses.

But before we begin our investigation of chapter 8, we cannot leave off without reading the words of Nicodemus.

In John 7:51 he says to his colleagues, "Our Torah doesn't judge a man before it hears from him and knows what he's doing, does it?"

Indeed the Torah does not judge a man (or woman) before it hears from him and knows... And this is an absolute truth.

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Chapter 8 of John is usually read in the absence of this background info and disconnected from the context of being at the conclusion of the feast of Sukkot. It's read without consideration for this proclamation of Yeshua being *the* Prophet

foretold by Moses. It is not considered as being the answer to that question that the crowd was asking. And it is commonly not considered in accordance with this fact spoken by Nicodemus.

Devoid of these understandings, the wrong conclusions are reached by most who read the story about Yeshua and His treatment of the woman caught in adultery. And because most people do not consider *all* the Torah in *all* aspects of the Gospel accounts and what took place right prior to this point, they do not take into consideration all the details that should be understood as happening ahead of time.

The story, that most consider begins with Yeshua, going to the Mount of Olives before dawn to pray as He so often did. And then at dawn going to the temple. This is not random in place or time, because at dawn was when the morning sacrifice takes place in the temple service. If we do not know the Torah context of the times, we do not know what is taking place.

Yeshua went to the temple to pray and partake of the temple service as we later see his disciples doing the likewise.

Right after this, He starts to teach the people, and the Pharisees show up. But we can't gloss over the details here. The text does not say what He's teaching. The text never says He is teaching. It always simply says that He taught the people, but not what.

Did He teach them mathematics? Farming techniques? Perhaps He was instructing them in quantum mechanics?... No. He was a Torah teacher, and taught them Torah. This is the overall arching theme, the underlining instructions of all that we see in the narrative of the gospel throughout.

Yeshua is teaching them the Torah. And the supposed teachers - the scribes and Pharisees show up to challenge Him on Torah.

Remember again what just happened in chapter 7. He has been teaching Torah. He is causing controversy as to his identity. And many believe He is *the* Prophet foretold in the Torah by Moses. And the Pharisees do not believe. Now they bring

Him a Torah challenge to try to disprove Him. They present this problem of mercy verses fidelity to try to prove He is not *the* Prophet Moses foretold.

So many times the arguments between Yeshua and the Pharisees are over the man-made traditions that are also called by the Pharisees “Torah, traditions that run contrary to the actual Torah that YHWH gave to Moses. But here we are dealing strictly with the actual Torah of Moses, because the issue is not man’s tradition versus the ancient Commandments of Heaven. The issue here is whether or not Yeshua is *the* Prophet Moses prophesied would one day appear.

The challenged the Pharisees bring Him, is not spontaneous as many suspect without knowing Torah...It is carefully constructed, well thought out, and decisive. And because it is so it proves Yeshua as opposed to disproving Him. The scribes and Pharisees wanted Him to countermand Moses. Why?...because countermanding Moses is a sin.

If Yeshua countermands Moses then He cannot be *the* Prophet Moses foretold. It would prove Him to be an imposter if He acted as most preachers perceive in the absence of Torah. Even to be merciful to a helpless woman about to be executed, it would prove Him an imposter if the mercy contradicted Moses.

Yeshua, of course, actually being *the* Prophet foretold by Moses and the *author* of all that Moses ever ordered in Torah, flawlessly, navigates this trap and uses it instead to prove Himself the One that Moses prophesied would come.

For starters, we must understand that the Pharisees, contrary to what most preachers will say did not grab a random woman in that moment and bring her before Yeshua. Most often the timing and coordination is never taken into account. The Pharisees set this up to try to prove that Yeshua was not *the* foretold Prophet, spoken of anciently in the Torah. Therefore, they have to approach according to the Torah...

Lacking in knowledge of the Torah, one might think that it was serendipitous this adulterous woman happened to be caught at that moment, and it just worked out in their favor to present her case to Yeshua. Or folks may feel the Pharisees grabbed a

woman they set up for adultery. Many point out that the Torah says both the man and the woman have to be presented, because they know a little bit, but are not considering all of Torah.

They are not taking into account that this was carefully planned and orchestrated. And without a knowledge of the Torah, we do not know that it is against the Torah to commit a mob execution. If they are bringing an air tight case, this woman has not been caught in adultery in that moment. Maybe not even recently.

If the typical understanding is true, then Yeshua could have handled this scenario easily. If these Pharisees had brought a random woman to Him for judgment, that was just caught in adultery, there are several ways in which He could have walked out of the trap without even trying because they would have set it improperly. And there are several ways in which he would have handle. He turned the tables up on them, and differently down the way in which he actually did

Torah does not allow a woman of Israel to be slandered. It matters not if the woman was caught in the act of adultery in that moment by the people who were standing right there (which is never stated, but always presume by the audience that does not know the Torah).

Had this woman been caught right then in there or even a little earlier that day or the day before, then Yeshua would have been able not just to walk out of the trap very easily but to stroll out by saying to them that they are out of order. Not only are they out of order for speaking openly against a woman of Israel who has not been convicted by the Torah court of the crime she is charged with, but also the matter cannot be brought to anyone but the Torah court to be judged.

Therefore, if the Pharisees are trying to set a trap for Him, they would not bring Him a random woman just caught an adultery. He is not the one who is set to judge the case, being one who is not sitting on the court in a court being convened. And they do not have the authority by the Torah to open their mouth and speak about what they saw outside of the court, unless the court has already passed judgment.

Therefore, contrary to the traditional reading without considering the Torah, we must conclude that this woman was caught in the active adultery some time ago. She

has been brought before the Torah court already. The witnesses testified before the court what they saw. The witnesses were determined trustworthy. And the woman was convicted on the testimony of either two or three witnesses just as the Torah requires.

Only this scenario preceding the story we are reading allows for the Pharisees to be approaching the matter technically correctly. And though they are in the habit of inappropriate behavior, especially regarding the Torah, they are meticulous about the appearance of propriety. And there is no way to get around those proper channels technically or otherwise.

So when they step into the temple courts and testify openly before the crowd and Yeshua that this woman was caught in the active adultery, they are not speaking of a moment that they just witnessed or that just happened. In order for this to be a perfect trap, these things had to have happened first: This woman had to have been caught in the act of adultery with another person, particularly a man. Either she was married and he was not or he was married and she was not or they were both married to different people and engaging in sexual activity with each other. The deed had to have been witnessed by at least two people, if not three. The matter had to have already been judged by the Torah Court and proper procedure followed to the letter of the law. And the court had to declare a conviction and pass the sentence of death.

Anything else would allow Yeshua to walk out of the trap without any effort, and it would not have been a challenge. If she had not been tried yet and was just caught in the act right then, then Yeshua could call them on slander, because they are not allowed to say what they saw, unless they are standing in the court, making themselves the witnesses. Yeshua could have called foul on them, bringing an adulterous woman to him instead of to the court, because even though we know who He is and that He wrote the rules of the Torah, He does not get to countermand the rules of the Torah while alive as a human being, walking the world.

If He is truly the Messiah, (which this moment in the story is unfolding to prove) He lives by the rules that He wrote.

And so we must know and conclude from the start that this woman is in fact a tried and convicted adulterous woman. The Pharisees have the technical right even

though they are not trying to be merciful and are trying to use the execution of a woman which should be a serious matter as a decoy to trap Him.

In that understanding, we read on. The Pharisees present this woman and declare that by the Torah of Moses, she is supposed to die. Suspecting that He will, usurp Moses's authority, the Pharisees say, "... But what say you?"

The Pharisees are bringing this woman for execution on the basis of Leviticus 20:10, "If a man commits adultery with another man's wife-with the wife of his neighbor-both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death."

(We do not know the fate of the man who was involved. Maybe he was already executed. Maybe he is present and unmentioned. Maybe his fate awaits him later. Maybe he ran away and escaped. The details do not come into the story.)

The commandment is reiterated in Deuteronomy 22:22,

"If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel."

So the Pharisees are not wrong that the woman is guilty of a great evil. And the Pharisees are not wrong that she deserves to die. But what is the reason that Moses commanded that she must die?

"You must purge the evil from Israel."

The goal is the purging of evil from Israel. And even though the Pharisees were right in *demanding* the death penalty, they were wrong in *wanting* it. And that was one of the other points that Yeshua makes... There is more than one way to purge the evil from Israel.... A matter which He then demonstrates.

Yeshua stoops down and begins writing with His finger on the ground.

Much speculation has gone into what He wrote. Some say that He was simply doodling for dramatic effect to allow the buildup to His climatic moment. Some

speculate that He was writing down the names of all the accusers. Some suggest that He was writing down the guilt and sins of each of the men who were demanding her death.

But again, when we read the narrative in light of the Torah and the fact that the Torah is what Yeshua was always teaching, and what He was always calling the people back to observing in its proper way, and that this scenario is a Torah trap, we should probably presume that He is writing the relevance commandments of the Torah...

Because of the words He utters next, we should also believe that He most likely just wrote down Deuteronomy 27:6-7.

“The one condemned to die is to be executed on the testimony of two or three witnesses. No one is to be executed on the testimony of a single witness. The witnesses’ hands are to be the first in putting him to death, and after that, the hands of all the people. You must purge the evil from you.”

Again, keeping in mind that this entire scheme is put forth, because Yeshua is suspected by the people of being *the* Prophet Moses foretold. He is believed to possibly be the Messiah, and therefore the test is whether or not he will accept what Moses said or reject what Moses said. The one to come, will not usurp the authority *of* Moses, but will be the one to come *in* the authority of Moses and speak, *according* to the authority of Moses and teach what Moses taught.

When we do not have Torah in mind as our governing principal reading the story, we assume like the atypical theologian does that Yeshua is making His own ruling in His own authority here. But that would be feeding into the trap by implementing His own authority *instead* of Moses. That was exactly what the Pharisees wanted Him to do and thought that He would do.

Contrariwise Yeshua, knowing the goal is to purge the evil from Israel, and knowing what the Torah requires, and what it says, and the intention behind it (having wrote it), does not make a new ruling but reverts back to the full commandment of Moses.... And He uses it to bring both judgment *and* mercy.

Yeshua is not countermanding the Torah here. And He is not inventing a new method of mercy. But as always, He's calling the people back toward the intention of the Torah in the first place, which was to be merciful *while* being just.

The Pharisees demanded that this woman must die, and contrary to common Christian teaching, Yeshua did not disagree with them. But calling it back to the text of the Scriptures and the commandments of the Torah, He agrees with them that she deserves to die.. and then adds in the rest of the Torah that requires the witness to be the first to throw the stone.

The Pharisees site the commandment from Moses that the adulterers must die. Then Yeshua writes *something* on the ground and says, "He who is without sin cast the first stone." And then proceeds to write again.

Is it hard to deduce what He wrote when we are considering the Torah and that this is a Torah trap set by the *pretenders* to Torah for ensnaring the *author* of Torah?

If the Pharisees begin with the commandment that the adulterers must die, and Yeshua writes something unknown, but then responds with the sinless one being the first to throw the rocks at the adulterer, and we know that the commandment for execution requires the witness to be first to throw a rock, we should be able to deduce easily that Yeshua wrote down the commandment which He then referenced. It is the natural progression from where they began and what He responded with verbally.

In other words, He is agreeing that she deserves to die and agreeing with Moses, that the one to throw the rocks first has to be the one who stood witness against her before the court. Therefore He is telling the one who is sinless to stand as the witness, and that whoever was witness in court must step forward to start the execution.

As usually, Yeshua's response is pointed and layered. In a single statement, He agrees with Moses, agrees with the Pharisees, cuts out their hopes of contradicting Torah, points out the flaw in their plan, and proceeds to walk right out the trap

through the gap in their application, and offering a way for the woman to escape too without violating Torah or the lawful court sentence of death. And in the process He also managed to highlight their hard hearts.

Moses told us that adultery is punishable by death, and Moses says that the witness has to be first to throw the stone, and Moses told us that the goal is to purge the evil from Israel... but Moses never said that anyone *has* to stand up to be the witness.

After speaking, Yeshua went back to writing. What should we deduce that He was writing then? Should we not deduce that it was more Torah? Particularly the Torah requiring a corrupt witness to suffer the penalty he sought for the one he testified against?

What shall we suppose Yeshua wrote after telling the Pharisees to follow Moses in having the witness throw the first stone?

Perhaps Deuteronomy 19:19 “...you must do to him as he intended to do to his brother. You must purge the evil from you.

There seems to be a running theme here from Torah. Purge the evil.

There’s evil like adultery but then there is evil like fake righteousness that preys upon the people and would mercilessly execute a woman not *for* the purging of evil but *with* an evil intent.

Yeshua smashes through their trap by not usurping Moses’ authority but implementing it properly. And pointing out the flaw in their perfect plan the whole time. The Pharisees brought the adulterous woman for execution but *they never brought the witnesses* with them. Or were otherwise corrupt witnesses liable to the same fate they sought for her. They either can’t throw the first stone not being the witnesses or being as guilty can’t throw without earning the same judgment.

Unlike the common misunderstanding in Christianity, Yeshua is not deviating from the Torah to be merciful. He knows the entire scenario that is taking place, that the people present were not the lawful witnesses and that *only* the lawful witnesses can

start the processes of putting her to death and that the lawful witnesses *must* be first to put her to death. The Pharisees messed up. They were so focused on trying to get Yeshua to disband the Torah for mercy that they overlooked the crucial detail that He was able to point out, and exploit, not to destroy the Torah but to implement it for mercy *and* justice rather than a malicious execution of the lawfully convicted.

Yeshua, even being Who He is as the ‘Son’ of the Most High and the One who issued the Torah in the first place, does not get to offer mercy contrary to His own criteria. “Rules for thee but not for me“ is not how He works. There is no “do as I say it not as I do” with our Savior. He implemented the rules for us, and then when He became one of us, He lived by them entirely.

This woman was commanded to die by Moses, and therefore would have been required to die by Yeshua, because Yeshua cannot countermand Moses and be the Messiah. This woman was supposed to die first by the hand of the witnesses that testified against her in the Torah court, and Yeshua commanded that that happen... But those witnesses were not present, and Yeshua did not throw a stone at her not He he was being merciful and not because He was countermanding Moses, or making His own rules. No.

Yeshua did not throw a stone at her, because even though He said “He who without sin cast the first stone,” and He was the only one present without sin, He is throwing it back to Moses as He always did. Moses commanded that the witness be not malicious, and that the witness be the first to throw the stone. But Yeshua was not the witness.

Yes He sees all and knows all, sure. But that’s not the point, the point is that a witness doesn’t just see something. Especially in the Torah the witness has to be the one to put themselves forward, knowing the penalty that will befall the one that they are testifying against, knowing the penalty for perjury is the same as that they are seeking for the person they are testifying against, and doing so before a lawful court of Torah.

Yeshua did not do this. He was not the one to testify against her in court, and therefore was not obligated nor allowed by Torah to execute her, sinless or no. But

by making this entire scenario possible, He allows the Torah to be fulfilled to the letter while also affording this woman, a second chance and a knowledge of her faithfulness, and a commandment to leave her evil behind, thereby changing the heart of this woman and exposing the hearts of the evil Pharisees, who maliciously sought her demise, not for justice, but for spite and succeeded in purging the evil from Israel.

Yeshua, navigated the trap set for Him, exposed their evil hearts, not by acting against Moses, but by appealing to Moses, and pointing out the details that they, the Pharisees, had overlooked, succeeded in exposing them and being merciful at the same time while doubling down upon Moses' commandment and not deviating from it... Therefore He proved that He was and is *the* Prophet that Moses foretold and therefore the King Messiah as well.

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