

Jesus Is...#17 Forgiving

John 7:53 to 8:12

I. John 7:53-8:11: A Floating Fragment

II. Grace with Jesus vs. Moses' Law Misused

A. The Teacher (8:2)

B. The Trap—Moses' Law Misused (8:3-6a)

1. Accusers: the Scribes & Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery (8:3)
2. Adultery (sexual relations violating the marriage bond) involves 2 parties. Where's the man?
3. Accusation: "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery." (8:4)
4. Moses' Law: "Moses commanded us to stone them. What do you say?" (8:5; Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22)
5. Only the woman brought to Jesus; this suggests a "set up," If so, the Pharisees weren't innocent observers.
6. The Trap: "What do you say?" (8:5b-6a)

C. "The Trial"—Jesus Turns the Tables (8:6b-9)

1. Jesus stooped & wrote with his finger on the ground (8:6b). What did he write? Jer. 17:13; or Exo. 23:1, 7?
2. Jesus stood & said: "The one without sin...be the first to throw a stone at her." (8:7b)
3. Jesus wrote on the ground again
4. The response: the accusers "went away one by one, beginning with the older ones" until all left (8:9)
5. They walked away from Jesus, the "light of the world" (Jn. 3:19)

D. The Triumph--of Grace over Legalism (8:10-11; Jn. 3:17; 16:8; Lk. 24:47; Rom. 8:1, 3; Eph. 1:7; 1 Jn. 1:9)

1. Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. He's the only sinless one qualified to remain
2. Jesus said, "Woman, where are [your accusers]? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord."
3. Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more." (8:11)
4. Grace gives power to live differently: Jesus didn't say adultery doesn't matter. But: I'm reestablishing righteousness in your life based on an experience of grace. Don't commit adultery any more. Not because you fear stoning. But because you've met God, & been rescued by his grace! [John Piper]
5. Jesus receives us as we are; but He doesn't leave us as we are. Come to Jesus as you are; don't remain as you are.

Jesus Is...#17 Forgiving

John 7:53 to 8:12 “But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more. Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 7:53 to 8:12)

I. John 7:53-8:11: A Floating Fragment

- A. **Not Original to John's Gospel:** Most scholars agree the account of the woman caught in adultery was not part of John's original text. Prof. Bruce Metzger states, "the evidence for the non-Johannine origin of the periscope of the adulteress is overwhelming." It's very difficult to claim the text was authored by John because it "includes numerous expressions and constructions that are found nowhere in John," and stylistically it is more characteristic of the Synoptic Gospels [Matt., Mark & Luke], "Luke in particular." [D. A. Carson & Douglas J. Moo, *Introduction to the NT.*, 2nd Ed., (Zondervan, 2005) p. 274.]
- B. **Evidence that this Section Isn't Original to John's Gospel:**
1. The story is missing from all the Greek manuscripts of John before the 5th century.
 2. All the earliest "church fathers" (in the few centuries after apostles, Peter, Paul, etc) omit this passage when commenting on John. They pass directly from John 7:52 to 8:12 (omitting these 12 verses).
 3. The text flows very smoothly from 7:52 to 8:12 if you leave out this story.
 4. No Eastern [Greek] Church father cites the passage before the 10th century.
 5. When the story starts to appear in manuscript copies of John's Gospel, it shows up in 3 different places other than here (after Jn. 7:36; 7:44; & 21:25), & in one manuscript of Luke, it shows up after Luke 21:38.
 6. Its style & vocabulary is more unlike the rest of John's Gospel than any other paragraph in John's Gospel.
- C. **But Probably an Authentic Event in Jesus' Life:** But scholars also agree that "the story is a truly ancient one with all the earmarks of an authentic incident from Jesus' life," and that doesn't contradict any doctrinal issues in Scripture. [Frances Taylor Gench, "John 7:53-8:11," *Interpretation*, vol. 63, no. 4 (Oct. 2009) p. 398] Professors Metzger & Carson (quoted above) agree. Bruce Metzger says, "The account has all the earmarks of historical veracity" (*Textual Commentary*, p. 220). D. A. Carson says, "There is little reason for doubting that the event here described occurred" (*Gospel According to John*, p. 333). Scholars hold that even though this account is absent from the best & earliest manuscripts, it "is, however, widely believed to be a true story about Jesus that was preserved in the oral tradition and eventually added by well-meaning scribes." [Ted Cabal, Chad Owen Brand, *et. al.*, *Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Pub., 2007), p. 1587]
- D. **3rd century?** *Didascalia Apostolorum*, a Greek original trans. into in Syrian, probably near the start of the 3rd century (the early 200s), plus sayings attributed to Papias, the bishop of Hierapolis in Asia Minor (ca. 3rd century), seem to allude to this incident. This suggests that either author could have received oral accounts of this incident which continued to circulate during their era. The stories are not exactly identical, Papias relates an account of a woman "caught in sin rather than adultery," and the Syrian document encourages bishops to "welcome repentant sinners back into the congregation."
- E. **Our Attitude:** The best approach is to show that points derived from John 7:53-8:11 are "true on the basis of other parts of Scripture, and so let this story not be the basis of our authority," but rather to point to the authority of the other, supporting Scriptures, and what they teach. By using this passage for teaching & reproof in this manner, one can stay true to the overall Biblical canon, while still learning from this historical passage, without altering any doctrine or teaching. [Scott Fillmer, *PERICOPE ADULTERAE: AN EXEGETICAL EXAMINATION OF THE CANONICITY & MEANING OF JOHN 7:53-8:11*, NBST 652 HERMENEUTICS, Liberty Univ. April, 2012]

II. Grace with Jesus vs. Moses' Law Misused

E. The Teacher (8:2)

- Jesus came to the Temple & taught
- The people kept coming to Him
- Jesus 'hung out with sinners,' in contrast to the Pharisees. They challenged Jesus' disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors & sinners?" Jesus responded, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go & learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, & not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt. 9:11-13) God wants to show mercy (not just religious duties).

F. The Trap—Moses' Law Misused (8:3-6a)

7. Accusers: the Scribes & Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery (8:3)

8. Adultery (sexual relations violating the marriage bond) involves 2 parties. Where's the man? Does the Law apply only to women? Or does the Law apply to both men & women? Then why don't the Jews put the man on the spot?
9. Accusation: "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery." (8:4)
10. Moses' Law: "Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" (8:5)
 - "If a man commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, both the adulterer & the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 20:10)
 - "If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, & the woman" (Deut. 22:22)
11. A set up? Only the woman is brought before Jesus; this suggests this is a "set up," that the Pharisees orchestrated events leading to the woman's adultery (entrapped?). If so, they're not innocent observers.
12. The Trap: "What do you say?" (8:5b-6a)
 - "They said to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him." (8:6a)
 - If Jesus agrees she should be stoned (executed) there's no mercy, just the harsh application of the law, even though the woman might have been "framed, set up."
 - If Jesus says that she ought to receive a more lenient sentence, or go free, he's not administering the law; he's flaunting Moses' law & "leading the people astray."

G. The Trial—Jesus Turns the Tables (8:6b-9)

6. Jesus stooped down & wrote with his finger on the ground (8:6b). What did he write? Various expositors suggest:
 - He doodled, playing for time or seeking to calm the situation
 - Jesus quoted OT verses, e.g.
 - "O LORD...those who turn away from You shall be written in the earth, for they've forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living water." (Jer. 17:13)
 - "Don't spread a false report. You shall not join with a wicked man to be a malicious witness." (Exo. 23:1)
 - "Keep far from a false charge; don't kill the innocent...for I will not acquit the wicked." (Exo. 23:7)
 - Jesus wrote what he said: "Let the one without sin among you be the first to throw a stone,"
 - Trying to touch their conscience? If so, they didn't get it—they persisted questioning (8:7a)
7. Jesus stood & said: "The one without sin...be the first to throw a stone at her." (8:7b)
 - Not establishing a general principle that only sinless (perfect) people can judge or punish crime
 - A situation-specific requirement (in the presence of Jesus, a sinless perfect person)
 - Jesus, the "light of the world," is asking—Are you, the accusers, innocent? Were you part of this conspiracy which entrapped this woman? Are you attempting to trap me? How's your conscience?
8. Jesus wrote on the ground again
9. The response: the accusers "went away one by one, beginning with the older ones" until all left (8:9)
10. They walked away from Jesus, the "light of the world"—"This is the judgment: the light has come into the world, & people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil." (Jn. 3:19)

H. The Triumph--of Grace over Legalism

6. Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. He's the only sinless one qualified to remain
7. Jesus said, "Woman, where are they [your accusers]? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord."
8. Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."
 - He doesn't condone sin; Jesus calls it what it is—adultery is sin (the Jews' conspiracy, entrapment is also sin)
 - Only Jesus is fully qualified to condemn, but He doesn't condemn: he forgives sin (in view of His redemption)
9. "God didn't send his Son...to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (Jn. 3:17)
10. The Holy Spirit comes to "convict the world concerning sin & righteousness & judgment" (Jn. 16:8)
11. "Repentance for forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in Jesus' name to all nations" (Luke 24:47)
12. "There's ...now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...For God has done what the law...could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh & for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh" (Rom. 8:1, 3)
13. "We have redemption thro' his blood, the forgiveness of trespasses, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7)
"If we confess our sins, He's faithful & just to forgive our sins & to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn. 1:9)
14. Grace gives the power to live differently—"Go, & sin no more." (8:11) Jesus didn't say adultery doesn't matter. But: I'm reestablishing righteousness in your life based on an experience of grace. Don't commit adultery any more. Not because you fear stoning. But because you've met God, & been rescued by his grace—saved by grace! [J. Piper]
15. Jesus receives us as we are; but He doesn't leave us as we are. Come to Jesus as you are; don't remain as you are.

Jesus Is...#17 Forgiving [Script]

Did you ever get a **late acceptance** into college, university, or into the program you were seeking? This story got a 'late acceptance' into the Bible. It's one of the best-known incidents from Jesus' life. Yet it got a 'late acceptance' into the Bible. Most scholars recognize that it's an authentic event from Jesus' life. Probably it wasn't written by John (so it doesn't really belong here in John 8. In Luke?)

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PIX: John 8 Papyrus Fragment

- I. John 7:53-8:11: A Floating Fragment
- II. Grace with Jesus vs. Moses' Law Misused

VIDEO: John 8 Woman Caught in Adultery

A. The Teacher (8:2)

PIX: John 8 Jesus Teaching

- Jesus came to the Temple & taught
- The people kept coming to Him

PIX: John 8 Jesus with Sinners

- Jesus 'hung out with sinners,' in contrast to the Pharisees. They challenged Jesus' disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors & sinners?" Jesus responded, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go & learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, & not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matt. 9:11-13) God wants to show mercy (not just religious duties).

PIX: John 8 Woman Brought to Jesus

B. The Trap—Moses' Law Misused (8:3-6a)

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2. Adultery (sexual relations violating the marriage bond) involves 2 parties. Where's the man? Does the Law apply only to women? Or does the Law apply to both men & women? Then why don't the Jews put the man on the spot? Suggests it's a "set up," the woman was entrapped

PIX: John 8 Woman Adultery

PIX: John 8 Woman Adultery 1

3. Accusation: “Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.” (8:4)
4. Moses’ Law: “Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” (8:5)
 - a. “If a man commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, both the adulterer & the adulteress shall surely be put to death” (Lev. 20:10)—Both the man & woman judged & punished
 - b. “If a man is found lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, & the woman” (Deut. 22:22) Ph’s care for trap over justice
5. A set up? Only the woman is brought to Jesus; Suggests a “set up,” the Pharisees orchestrated events leading to the woman’s adultery (entrapped?). If so, they’re not innocent observers.
6. The Trap: “What do you say?” (8:5b-6a)
7. “They said to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him.” (8:6a)
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PIX: John 8 Jesus Writes

PIX: John 8 Jesus Writing

C. The Trial—Jesus Turns the Tables (8:6b-9)

1. Jesus stooped down & wrote with his finger on the ground (8:6b). What did he write?
Various expositors suggest:
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 - Jesus wrote what he said: “The one without sin among you be the 1st to throw a stone,”
 - Trying to touch their conscience? If so, they didn’t get it—they persisted questioning

PIX: John 8 v7 Without Sin Throw Stone

2. Jesus stood & said: “The one without sin...be the first to throw a stone at her.” (8:7b)
 - Not establishing a general principle: only sinless people can judge or punish crime
 - A situation-specific requirement (in the presence of Jesus, a sinless perfect person)
 - Jesus asking: in this specific case are you sinless? Or are you involved, complicit?

PIX: John 8 v12 I am Light of World

PIX: John 8 v12 Jesus said I am Light

- Jesus, the “light of the world,” is asking—Are you, the accusers, innocent? Were you part of this conspiracy which entrapped this woman? Are you attempting to trap me? How’s your conscience?

PIX: Jesus wrote

3. Jesus wrote on the ground again

4. The response: the accusers “went away one by one, beginning with the older ones” until all left (8:9)
5. They walked away from Jesus, the “light of the world”—“This is the judgment: light came into the world, & people loved darkness rather than light because their works were evil.” (Jn. 3:19)

PIX: John 8 Pile of stones

D. The Triumph--of Grace over Legalism

1. Jesus was left alone with the woman. He’s the only sinless one qualified to remain

PIX: John 8 Jesus & Woman Bible Miniseries

2. Jesus said, “Woman, where are they [your accusers]? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.”

PIX: John 8 Jesus Forgives Go & Sin No More

3. Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more.”
 - a. He doesn’t condone sin; Jesus calls it what it is—adultery is sin (the Jews’ conspiracy, entrapment is also sin)
 - b. Only Jesus is fully qualified to condemn, but He doesn’t condemn: he forgives sin (in view of His redemption)
4. “God sent his Son...*not to condemn* the world, but that the world *might be saved*” (Jn. 3:17) That’s grace—He could condemn, but He doesn’t; He forgives. The woman (who came expecting to die/ be executed), got a second chance; She walked away to live differently. Grace: You don’t get what you deserve; you get what you don’t deserve; Grace came with Jesus Christ
5. **E.g. Lacrae**—arrested by police; they saw his Bible in car (luck); let him go; read that book!
6. Holy Spirit comes to “*convict* the world concerning sin & righteousness & judgment” (Jn. 16:8)
7. “Repentance for forgiveness of sins ...proclaimed in Jesus’ name to all nations’ (Luke 24:47)
8. “There’s ...now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...For God has done what the law...could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh & for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom. 8:1, 3)

PIX: John 8 Redeemed & Forgiven

9. “We have redemption thro’ his blood, the forgiveness of trespasses, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7) “If we confess our sins, He’s faithful & just to forgive our sins & to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 Jn. 1:9)

PIX: John 8 Jesus Changed My Life

PIX: Grace Changes Everything

PIX: Titus 2 v11 Saving Grace

10. Grace gives the power to live differently—“Go, & sin no more.” (8:11) Jesus didn’t say adultery doesn’t matter. But: I’m reestablishing righteousness in your life based on an experience of grace. Don’t commit adultery any more. Not because you fear stoning. But because you’ve met God, and been rescued by his grace—saved by grace! [J. Piper]

PIX: John 8 Does Jesus Accept Me as I am?

PIX: John 8 Come as You are

PIX: Follow Jesus Change

11. Jesus receives us as we are; but He doesn't leave us as we are. Does Jesus receive/accept us as we are? Yes! You don't have "to clean up your act," deal with your bad habits before you come to Jesus. Just "come as you are" SONG: "*Just As I am...I come, I come...*"
12. Come to Jesus as you are; don't remain as you are. Don't insist that "I've got to stay the same," (as a condition) when you come to Jesus. Don't resist...
13. Everyone will be changed by encountering Jesus
 - Adulterers will be changed
 - Immoral people will be changed
 - Everyone's a sinner; all can/should be changed. SONG: "*Things are different now, something happened to me, since I gave my heart to Jesus*"
 - Self-righteous, judgmental & condemning people will also be changed.
 - This woman came to Jesus, experienced grace & changed her life
 - The Pharisees came to Jesus & walked away unchanged; still Self-righteous, judgmental & condemning
 - Are you willing to come to Jesus? Are you willing to experience grace & be changed?