



Believe

JOHN

MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Examining the text & our hearts:

Bible Reading: John 7:53-8:11

[[⁵³ Then each one went to his house. ¹ But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² At dawn he went to the temple again, and all the people were coming to him. He sat down and began to teach them. ³ Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, making her stand in the center. ⁴ “Teacher,” they said to him, “this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. ⁵ In the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” ⁶ They asked this to trap him, in order that they might have evidence to accuse him. Jesus stooped down and started writing on the ground with his finger. ⁷ When they persisted in questioning him, he stood up and said to them, “The one without sin among you should be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸ Then he stooped down again and continued writing on the ground. ⁹ When they heard this, they left one by one, starting with the older men. Only he was left, with the woman in the center. ¹⁰ When Jesus stood up, he said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ “No one, Lord,” she answered. “Neither do I condemn you,” said Jesus. “Go, and from now on do not sin anymore.”]] (John 7:53-8:11 CSB)

SUMMARY:

The “woman caught in adultery” is a renowned Gospel account, portraying Jesus’ extraordinary forgiveness. This narrative is both unique and controversial; experts judge it wasn’t originally written by John but added later by an interpolator. Nevertheless, it’s recognized as an ancient and authentic episode showcasing Jesus’ profound compassion and literary skills.

The Pharisees present the accused woman to test Jesus’ adherence to Moses’ Law. In response, Jesus stoops and writes in the dirt twice, declaring, “Let the sinless one cast the first stone.” Struck by conscience, the accusers depart, and Jesus pronounces, “neither do I condemn you...”

An intriguing parallel emerges between Jesus' writing 'with his finger in the dirt,' and the Ten Commandments,

'inscribed with God's finger.' The point is not *what* Jesus wrote, but *that* he wrote. His act of writing signifies Jesus shares the divine identity of the OT Law's author; the allusion establishes his authority to interpret and even amend it. Applying the "law of Christ," Jesus extends "no condemnation," not only to the accused woman, but to all his believers. Like her, we are forgiven, & start anew, charged to live differently – "Go & sin no more."

"There is perhaps no other passage in the New Testament canon that is more beloved and yet more controversial than John 7:53-8:11, also known as the 'Woman Taken in Adultery'."—John D. Punch

The adulteress' "story is...one of the most memorable in...Scripture...not only due to Jesus' astonishing... acquittal of the adulteress...but also because [this] is the only text in the [NT] that presents Jesus as a man of letters." —Alan Rudrum & Julia Schatz

1. An Early Insertion into John's Gospel

a. Not Original to John's Gospel

- "This entire section, 7:53-8:11...is not contained in the earliest & best manuscripts (MSS) and was *almost certainly not an original part of John's Gospel*. Among modern commentators and textual critics, it is a foregone conclusion that [its] not original but...a later addition to the text of the Gospel. Bruce M. Metzger summarizes: "the evidence for the non-Johannine origin...of the adulteress [episode] is overwhelming" (*Textual Commentary Greek NT*, p. 187). [NET footnote to John 7:53]
- With regard to internal evidence...an attractive case can be made for inclusion, but this is...subjective...In terms of internal factors like vocabulary and style, the [episode] does not stand up very well [as original to John]...Although not an original part of the Gospel of John, should [this] be regarded as *an authentic tradition about Jesus*[?]? It could well be that it is ancient & may indeed represent an unusual instance where such a tradition survived outside of the bounds of the canonical literature." [NET textual footnote to John 7:53]

b. An Early Insertion into John's Gospel—When & Why?

a. Early Circulation—Second century?

- The Adulteress Account "or a version of it was circulating as early as the second century among Christians and *not necessarily in John's Gospel*." [Chris Keith, *Pericope Adulterae*..., 205]
- Since this "is not authentic Joh[n]...material. The story of Jesus & the adulteress initially confronted early Christians in *some context other than John's Gospel*...Eventually, however, an interpolator inserted [it] into John's Gospel at John 7:53-8:11." [Chris Keith, "Initial Location of the Pericope Adulterae," *Novum Testamentum* Vol. 51 (2009) p. 15]

b. Inserted: probably in *first half of the Third century* [200-250 AD]

- The Episode "was interpolated into a Greek copy of John in the West, probably during the *first half of the Third century*, & with great care." [J. Knust, T. Wassermann, *To Cast the First Stone*, p. 343]

c. Unique Case: An "*independent story...absorbed into a canonical Gospel*."—Chris Keith

- This "is the only certain instance of...a *full, independent story being absorbed into a canonical Gospel* [John] once that Gospel has already reached an authoritative status in the early Church...An attentive interpolator first placed [this episode in John 7:53-8:11]...The interpolator chose this location not randomly, but quite purposely...based on his careful reading...of John, especially John 7...to demonstrate...the falsity of the Jewish leadership's assumptions regarding Jesus' [alleged lack of] literacy (7:15)." [Chris Keith in A. Le Donne (ed.) *4th Gospel in 1st-Century Media Culture*, p. 50]

c. Does it Belong in the Bible? (Is it Scripture? Is it 'Canonical'?)

a. Should it be removed from John's Gospel? ...from the Bible?

- Philip Comfort rejects the passage as...non-Johannine: "True, the passage has been bracketed, or marked off with single lines...or set in italics. But there it stands—*an obstacle to reading the true narrative of John's Gospel*." [Philip W. Comfort, *Early MSS & Modern Translations of the NT*, p. 116]
- "Should the beloved story of the Woman Caught in Adultery be read in our churches? *Yes, I think so*. The story has the earmarks of a *genuine gospel story* albeit not original to John."—Tommy Wasserman

- “It is a *part of the personal Gospel of most Christians*, whether [text-] critical scholars regard it as authentic [i.e., original] or not.”—Torsten Lofstedt
- b. Grounds for inclusion—*Ancient*
- “It is canonical because it is both historical & Orthodox.”—F. F. Bruce
 - “There is little reason for doubting that the event here described occurred, even if...it did not in the beginning belong in the canonical books [of the Bible].”—D. A. Carson
 - It “presents the forgiveness offered by Jesus to those...condemned...by the Mosaic Law in a more elaborate, more colorful, & more pointed way than any other passage of the NT.” —Armin Baum
2. The Account of the Anonymous Adulteress (7:53-8:11) A. Jesus’ Teaching in the Temple (7:53-8:2)
- a. Jesus’ teaching in the temple (8:2; cf. 7:14)
- Jesus “went to the temple again...all the people were coming to him. He...*began to teach*” (8:2)
 - “In the context of the feast [Jesus’] action was a clear statement of his position and authority ...The Jewish authorities...question his status as a teacher...To them Jesus was an uneducated nobody who had...no formal (accredited) training.” [Edward Klink, *John*, 365-6]
- b. The Law of Moses & Adultery (8:3-6a)
- a. Jesus interrupted by Scribes & Pharisees (8:3a)
- “The scribes & Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, making her stand in the center.” (8:3)
 - “The entrance of the scribes & Pharisees with the adulteress...is abrupt & interruptive, upsetting the... harmony of the teacher [Jesus] & his audience...This...carries a symbolic message. *It is a take-over, a power play aimed at* rearranging participant positions through...*public humiliation*. It’s an effort to undo the popularity Jesus has built up...to discredit him, &, if possible, to remove him from society.” [Piet van Staden, “...*Dramatic Aspect...in the Pericope Adulterae*,” HTS Theolog. Studies (2015) p.]
- b. The Scribes’ Role
- “This is the first & only mention of ‘the scribes’ in the Gospel...[They had] a combination of roles: lawyer... jurist...Their presence makes formal the legal proceedings...to take place.” [Klink, *John*, p. 391] • The episode “portrays Jesus in a heated dispute with Jewish authorities over the interpretation of the Mosaic Law...[and] attributes to Jesus grapho-literacy [ability to write] (8:6, 8) and includes scribes, practitioners of this rare literate skill, among his representative opponents.” [Chris Keith, “*Scribes & Elders*,” in S. A. Hunt (ed.) *Character Studies in the 4th Gospel*, p. 404]
- c. The Pharisees’ ‘Pawn/Scapegoat’—the Adulteress—“a woman caught in adultery” (8:3)
- “The woman caught in adultery...is presented...as a *scapegoat*.” [J. Kim, *Women & Nation*, pp. 119-20]
 - “The description is vague. It is possible that she was caught in the act of adultery...It is also just as probable... that the *entire situation was a setup*...[At this point] she has been accused of adultery... [The] expectation of judgment is laid at [Jesus’] feet...Jesus is being challenged, not by words but with action...In this [episode] *it is Jesus who is on trial as the named defendant*.” [E. Klink, *John*, 392]
- d. The Accusation/Charge—“this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery.” (8:4)
- “The legal proceedings begin with the accusation...that she ‘has been caught...in the act’...the specific requirement of the Law...(Dt. 22:22).” [Edward Klink, *John*, 392]
 - Scribes & Pharisees’ want “to carry out the [Law’s] full requirement...—to stone her...to make a public spectacle of her...death—the logic of *the scapegoat*—to cleanse themselves by removing her.” Miller
 - “The concern of the scribes & Pharisees regarding [the one sin of] adultery was eclipsed by Christ the Judge’s concern *for all sin*. Christ is concerned with...*sins inside every person*.” [Klink, *John*, 396]
- e. Appeal to Moses’ Law (8:5)
- “In the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” (8:5)
 - “This is the only place where Jesus is expressly asked to adjudicate on a capital crime (Lev. 20:10; Dt.22:23-4).” [C. Marshall, “*Capital Punishment*,” J. Green (ed.) *Dictionary of Scripture & Ethics*, p. 120]
 - “A significant omission: The law states clearly that *both the woman & the man are to be stoned*...But the man is not present. It is therefore hard not to see the...scene as an intentional lynching of the woman...‘What do you say?’...They are trying to set up [Jesus] as the Judge.” [E. Klink, *John*, 393]
- c. Jesus— the Target of their Trap (8:6a)
- Scribes/Pharisees “asked this to trap him, so that they might have evidence to accuse him.” (8:6a)

- They try “to trap Jesus by having him pronounce on the prescribed Mosaic punishment of a woman who committed a [10 Commandment]-prohibited sin (adultery).” [C. Keith, *Jesus’ Literacy*, 152]
- “The intentions of the scribes & Pharisees were focussed on Jesus (not the woman) in order to test him...Jesus was the one on trial. And the accusation against the woman was...a pretext for a greater accusation against Jesus.” [Edward Klink, *John*, 393]
- “This is an attempt to...trap Jesus...The dilemma in which he is placed is either to agree the woman should be stoned or to teach that the Law [can] be broken. But the dilemma may be even sharper. Under Roman rule, only the Romans could exercise the death sentence, so Jesus might be being asked to agree to oppose the Romans or oppose the Law of Moses.” [David F. Ford, *John*, 175]

d. Jesus ‘turns the tables’

- Jesus “move[s] the issue to another level, changing the terms of engagement & posing a dilemma to his interrogators. Questioning Jesus leads to the questioners being questioned in a way that transforms the very terms of the inquiry.” [David F. Ford, *John*, p. 175]

3. Jesus & the Finger of God (8:6b-8)

a. Jesus’ Response: He “stooped down & started to write...” (8:6b)

- “Jesus...does not just ‘stoop down’ to stall for time, but that the action reinforces John’s High Christology, instating *Jesus as God Himself*.”—Alan Rudrum & Julia Schatz

a. Jesus wrote on the ground with his finger

- “Jesus ‘began writing’...He did not write on paper but ‘on the ground’...[in] the dirt or sand. Jesus did not write with pen, but ‘with his finger’.” [Edward Klink, *John*, p. 393]

b. The focus is not on what he wrote, but that Jesus wrote (8:6b, 8)

- “The history of interpretation takes a strong detour, focussing entirely on *what* Jesus was writing in the dirt... [But,] the focus of the [episode] is not on what Jesus wrote on the ground but that he wrote on the ground.... [This is] speaking through action and symbolism...[The] ‘impression’...is its own communication...The key is in the additional phrase ‘with his finger’.” [E. Klink, *John*, pp. 393-4]

b. Interpreters fixated on *what* Jesus wrote

- “John 7:53-8:11 becomes completely malleable in the hands of interpreters who seek to discover *what* Jesus wrote on the ground”—Gail O’Day

a. What did Jesus write? Multiple Proposals

- “No matter how much research & scholarly discussion is undertaken, *we can never know what Jesus wrote on the ground* in John 8:6, 8.” [Alan Rudrum & Julia Schatz, *Connotations*, Vol. 31 (2022) p.]
- “What did he write? We can’t tell...that doesn’t prevent...exegetes from guessing!” – Beasley-Murray
- There’s been “no shortage of creativity...spent on speculating the content &/or significance of Jesus’ Scholars have offered at least 38 possible explanations of Jesus’ actions.”—Chris Keith

b. Responses to Multiple Proposals—Scripture is Silent

- “There is simply not enough evidence to support conclusively any of these surmises...If the matter were of major importance, the content of the writing would have been reported.”—Raymond Brown
- “The text itself...draws attention...to the fact of Jesus’ writing, not to...what is written.”—Gail O’Day
- “The various suggestions...have yielded no conclusive result & for an obvious reason...*The text is totally silent!* Certainly, had the content of Jesus’ writing been a crucial element in this narrative, John[’s interpolator] would...have specified what it was.” – Zane C. Hodges
- We “may eliminate any proposed solutions that...[rely on] information the text itself does not provide This includes many of the previously mentioned 38 [proposals].” [C. Keith, *Pericope Adulterae*, p. 22]

c. Jesus Verbal Command (8:7)

- “When they persisted in questioning him, [Jesus] stood up & said to them, “The one without sin among you should be the first to throw a stone at her.” (8:7)
- “Jesus ignores their request to interpret the Law. Though his is asked to interpret Moses concerning the sin of the adulteress... Jesus maintained silence on the...issue, & instead *turned the situation into a question of the scribes & Pharisees’ [qualification] to judge*.” [C. Keith, *Pericope Adulterae*..., p. 23]
- This “is not a request; it is a forceful command. Who is qualified to throw a stone at this woman, e., to judge her? ...The ‘one without sin’...Jesus is commanding judgment to take place by a sinless one—

one who's entirely without sin. This isn't a denial of the Law...[it] only demands...this...qualification be met first. It is...a demand for the right—even perfect—execution of the Law.” [Klink, *John*, p. 394]

- “The combined...force of Jesus’ writing on the ground & his utterance, ‘Let the one...without sin cast the first stone’, was not the granting of permission to carry out the sentence, but the holding up of a mirror that reflects light to the darkest & innermost recesses of the hearts & minds of everyone...The one who is perfect & blameless...who stands pure before God, let him/her throw the 1st stone & be the executioner...The effect of Jesus’ symbolic act &...words he spoke to the accusers was one of shaming. They all looked into the mirror, & not one picked up a stone. They all went away.” [Piet van Staden, “...*Dramatic Aspect...in the Pericope Adulterae (7:53-8:11)*,” HTS Theological Studies (2015) p.]

d. Jesus & the Finger of God

a. Again, Jesus wrote on the ground (8:8)

- Two statements about Jesus’ writing (8:6b, 8) “sandwich” his verbal command (8:7)
- The 2 words for “wrote” (8:6b, 8) “signal...[an] important symbolic connection is communicated...[via] the narrator’s depiction...of the event, [with its] emphatic focus on Jesus’ ‘finger’.” [Klink, p. 394]

b. 10 Commandments written “*with the Finger of God*” (Ex. 31:18; Dt. 9:10)

- “...The LORD gave me the two stone tablets, *inscribed by God’s finger*. The exact words were on them, which the LORD spoke to you from the fire on the [Sinai] mountain.” (Dt. 9:10) The LORD “gave [Moses] two stone tablets *inscribed by the finger of God*.” (Ex. 31:18)

c. Parallels between the Adulteress’ Account & God’s Giving the Law

- “Jn. 8:6, 8...is an allusion to God’s authorship of the [10 Commandments] in Ex. 32:15 & 31:18.”— Keith
- “When we read the [‘Adulteress’ Account] and] ...seek...correlations with the [Greek] OT—we find a thoroughly inspiring...[&] enlightening—connection with God’s bestowal of the [10 Commandments] ...[the verb for ‘write’ (8:6, 8)] creates a *parallel between Jesus’ writing in the ground* in [‘Adulteress’ Account] *with God’s writing of the [10 Commandments]* in Ex. 32:15...[Plus] both God & Jesus use their fingers in the process.” [Peter Galadza, “*Pericope Adultera...*,” in C. Raith (ed.) *John*, 78]
- “The term ‘finger’...forges a connection, for according to Ex. 31:18/Dt. 9:10, the 10 Commandments were written by ‘the finger of God.’...In the context of 8:5...Jesus is being challenged to stand opposed to Moses [in judging this case] regarding one of the 10 Commandments. For this reason, the mention of [Jesus]’ ‘finger’ intentionally places Jesus in Moses’ position, *even more, eclipsing the legal authority of Moses* with that of Jesus.” [Edward Klink, *John*, 394-5]
- Ambrose (339–397 AD) “connects...Jesus’ use of the ‘finger’ & Ex. 31:18’s ‘finger of God’: ‘He [Jesus] *wrote on the ground with the finger with which He had written the Law*.’” [C. Keith, *Pericope*, 181]

e. The Divine Literacy of Jesus (Jn. 8:6, 8; cf. Ex. 31:18; 32:15)

a. Jesus is described having ‘Divine Literacy’

- The Account “describes Jesus’ acts of writing with the vocabulary that Ex. 32:15 ([&]...31:18) employs to describe God’s authorship of the [10 Commandments, thus depicting,] the (*divine*) grapho-literacy of Jesus.” [Chris Keith, *Pericope Adulterae...*, p. 175]

b. Jesus portrayed as Author of the 10 Commandments

- “In light of the allusion to the finger/writing of the 10 Commandments by God...the significance...is that [*Jesus himself is the author of the Law, & his finger is the very ‘finger of God’*].” When the... Pharisees challenge Jesus...[about] the Law...they are speaking...to its author.” [Klink, *Jn.*, p. 395]
- “By describing [Jesus]’ writing [using] the language of Ex. 31:18 and...Jesus’ use of his finger in reference to Ex. 31:18...[the Adulteress Account] *portrays Jesus* not as a copier of the Torah [Law]... but rather *as the author of the [10 Commandments]*, from whom the laws derive in the first place.[So,] when Jesus [responds] in John 8:7, he does so *in his authorial power as author of the [10 Commandments]*.” [Chris Keith, *Pericope Adulterae, the Gospel of John...*, p. 189]

c. Jesus parallels God, superior to Moses

- “Linking divine law as given through Moses, on stone & with the divine finger, with divine writing inscribed on the ground...by Christ, this detail implies that *Jesus is equal or even superior to Moses*, who simply receives rather than writes divine law.” [Jennifer Knust, T. Wassermann. “*Earth Accuses Earth: Tracing What Jesus Wrote on the Ground*.” Harvard Theological Review 103.4 (2010) p. 411]
- “Jesus is shown...to be the author for whom Moses himself was only the delivery person...*Jesus...is not to be compared* with Moses the deliverer, but *with God* the provider [of the 10 Commandments] ... *Jesus is to be paralleled with God*, rather than Moses.” [Keith, *Pericope Adulterae*, pp. 190, 194, 248]

d. Jesus' "neither do I condemn you" (8:11) comes from the 10 Commandments' author

- Jesus responds "to the challenge of the...Pharisees for Jesus to oppose Moses...[When] he does so...he borrows from an [OT Gk.] passage that *describes God*, not Moses, as *the author of the Law*... Jesus' lack of condemnation of the woman caught committing a [10 Commandment] sin...derives from the same...[divine] authority that originally authored the [Commandments, as shown by] the fact that Jesus uses his finger in John 8:6, as does God in his authorship of the [Commandments] in Ex. 31:18 /Dt. 9:10." [Chris Keith, *Jesus' Literacy*, p. 155]

f. The Accusers' Response (8:9)

- "When they heard this, they left one by one, starting with the older men. Only [Jesus] was left, with the woman in the center." (8:9)
- "The narrator...describes 'Only [Jesus] was left (alone)...' to emphasize...that only he met his own qualification, only he was 'the one without sin' (8:7)." [Edward Klink, *John*, p. 395]

g. Jesus' Equal Treatment of the Accusers & the Accused

- In 8:6-10 twice "Jesus stoops, [writes,] rises & speaks, first to the accusers, and then to the woman accused—but to both he speaks judgment. [Thus there's an] equality of the woman & the scribes & Pharisees before Jesus (G. O'Day) ...Both the accusers & the accused are treated identically. Jesus refuses to...objectify...the woman or treat her differently from the male characters...Jesus challenges both parties to give up previous sinful practice & to embrace a new future: 'both stand under the power of old ways, the power of sin...but [Jesus] invites both to a new way of life' (O'Day)." [Peter Phillips, "Adulterous Woman," in S. A. Hunt (ed.) *Character Studies in the 4th Gospel*, p. 419]

h. Jesus & the Woman (8:10-11)

- "For Jesus, *people are persons, not pawns*. They are also sinners...with [a] sense of guilt."—Williamson

a. No Condemnation—"Neither do I condemn you" (8:11)

- "God didn't send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world thro'" (3:17)
- "There is now no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1)
- "When Jesus stood up, he said, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" "No one, [Sir]," she replied "Neither do I condemn you," said Jesus. "Go...from now on do not sin anymore." (8:10-11)
- "The woman's answer is...not a statement of *faith*, but simply a statement of *fact*...Jesus declares that he does not condemn her...[This is] condemnation in a legal sense. [Here] is the paradox of the gospel of Jesus Christ...The One who wrote the Law is also the judge that presides over it, [so,] everything in between—freedom & condemnation, life & death—is under his authority." [E. Klink, *John*, 396]

b. Charged to live differently—"Go, &...don't sin anymore." (8:11)

- "Jesus sends the woman away—free, but not without qualification...She must live accordingly...under the law of God (& of Christ; 6:2)...True freedom is found in Christ (8:31-8)." [Klink, *John*, p. 396]
- "Mercy from God calls for life unto God...No record...of the woman's acknowledgment of her sin or repentance...Yet the Lord's 'Neither do I condemn you' (8:11) must be...a declaration of forgiveness in the name of God. He saw her need and addressed himself to it...[This] word of forgiveness [is] a means of release for new life. Grace...is always undeserved." [George Beasley-Murray, *John*, 147]
- "The concluding exhortation of Jesus to the woman...is a command to 'sin no longer' (8:11). It is a gracious command to live in freedom...The gospel of Jesus Christ proclaims a...paradox... 'the one without sin' [8:7b] becomes sin for us [2 Cor. 5:21] &... [We are called] to submit to sin no longer & instead to submit to Christ [Rom. 6:22]." [Edward Klink, *John*, 395-6]
- "The woman *enters as a pawn* of the...Pharisees, & *leaves as a person set free* by Jesus."—Macconi

4. The Law of Christ (8:9-11; cf. Gal. 6:2)

a. "Carry one another's burdens; in this way you will *fulfill the law of Christ*." (Gal. 6:2)

- The actions of Jesus [writing on the ground] were...symbolic...[he] was...the Author of the very Law to which [the Pharisees] appeal[ed]. If He were no more than a...Rabbi, He could [merely] assent to the Mosaic... But if He's the Law's Giver, He could do for this woman what He [did for... Israel] at Sinai. He could forgive! But...His moral requirements...must remain the same. As the broken [OT] tablets...were replaced by new ones, so the [OT] Law she had shattered by her sin must again be *rewritten with the words, 'go...& sin no more'* (8:11). Of all this, [Jesus'] two writings on the ground are the impressive visual image." [Zane C. Hodges, *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 137:545 (Jan 1980) p. 47]

- “In this...[incident] the grace of...Jesus Christ is dramatically displayed...What begins as a trial of an unnamed woman becomes a trial of Jesus, & what *starts in the law of Moses becomes entirely about the law of Christ*...Jesus...is the author of the Law & the authority over it...Jesus is the ‘finger’ of God ...& his law—*the law of Christ*—is the foundation for all humanity (Gal. 6:2). [E. Klink, *John*, 396]

QUESTIONS:

1. Most scholars agree that this episode was not John’s original composition, but a later addition to John’s Gospel. Some ‘hard line’ textual critics argue it ought to be eliminated from our Bibles. Do you agree or disagree? What would we miss if it were eliminated? (Discuss)
2. A few commentators argue that we’ve misjudged the “scribes & Pharisees” here; that they were simply consulting with the “young Rabbi Jesus,” to avoid applying the penalty of stoning to this woman. Does the text support this “sympathetic” view of the “scribes & Pharisees”? Why or why not? (Discuss)
3. What was the dilemma (‘trap’) which Jesus faced in responding to this case?
4. What gave Jesus the right to override &/or redefine Moses’ Law (10 commandments) in this case?
5. The accusers focussed on the woman’s sin of adultery; how did Jesus’ statement (8:7) expand their focus to include the accusers’ own sins?
6. Why is it the case in this episode that “the point is not *what* Jesus wrote, but *that* he wrote”?
7. Twice the text says Jesus “*wrote on the ground (with his finger)*” (8:6, 8). How does this symbolic action help us understand Jesus’ position/authority related to God’s OT Law, Moses, and this case?
8. As Christian believers today are we under/subject to God’s OT Law or the “law of Christ”? (Discuss)
9. Jesus told the woman: “I don’t condemn you...Go...from now on don’t sin anymore.” When we believe/receive Jesus does he do the same for us? Is there anything in addition? If so, what?