

WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

Where was the Man !? John 8:1-11

Floyd Nolen Jones, Th.D., Ph.D.

Excerpt from Apples of Gold

“A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” Proverbs 25:11

“But what sayest *thou*?” Thus, the real issue before us is that of “**authority**” (cp. vs. 36!).

We must come to see that Jesus perfectly upheld the demand of the Law – Jesus actually told these religious unbelievers to obey the Law and *stone her* (verse 7)!

But He dealt with their *consciences*, bathed in murder as they were, by the prefacing remark “He that is without sin among you” let him cast the first stone. The idea behind this stipulation was twofold.

- (1) Jesus caught them unawares in that rather than having the “Bible study group” carry out the stoning, Jesus called on the unregenerate scribes and Pharisees to perform the deed.

Thus if they so did, it would be they whom the Roman authorities would come against and not Jesus. They would have fallen into the pit that they themselves had dug (Pro.26:27). The Romans had taken the power of death away from the conquered Jews (Joh.18:31), and Roman law did not condemn an adulteress to be put to death.

- (2) Jesus is challenging them to merely *obey* the law to which they so devotedly cleave. Jesus is calling on the required two or three eye witnesses (Deu.17:6-7) to now step forward. If they are credible witnesses, they must now identify themselves and also make known the identity of the man.

If they will not identify the man they will be disobeying the law and thus will incur guilt. The man having been summoned, the stoning could continue but the first stones must be cast by these same men.

The qualifying “without sin” – the context refers to the witnesses not being guilty of sin with respect to their being false or unrighteous witnesses *in the matter at hand* (cp. Lev.20:10; Deu.17:6-7; Exo.23:1-2 & 7; Deu.19:15-19 and Pro.6:16-19). This is especially made clear in Exo. 23:1-2, 7.

One of the main functions of the Law was to convict of sin (Rom.3:20, 7:7 & 8b; 7:13).

Besides, it was the Law with which they hoped to trap Jesus (vs.5), yet now through a *word of wisdom* (I Cor.12:8; Heb.2:4) the Lord Jesus had used the very same to ensnare them in their own pit.

And the man that committeth adultery with another man’s wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death (Lev.20:10).

The second time was from Deu. 19:15-19. Even though the woman was actually guilty, without two or three of them stepping forward and identifying the man they would be false and unrighteous with regard to the matter.

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Moreover, if they now come forward and attempt to only stone the woman, not being willing to also name the man, they will bring upon themselves the selfsame judgment.

The Lord would not deal with her in the presence of unbelievers (I Cor.6:1 and 6).

His tactic emptied the “Bible study” of the lost hypocrites. The Lord would not deal with His own concerning their sins in the presence of the wicked.

Jesus had not accepted the testimony of these wicked lost men, men with murder in their hearts, as being credible or valid against a sinning saint. And how do we know she was a Christian? By our Lord’s very words: “go and sin no more.” Were she a lost sinner, she would have so remained. Sinning no more would not have dealt with the sin she had just committed – she would still be lost. The Christ would hardly have left her as such – else what good had He really done for her.

Thus, all would be handled as an *unconfirmed* bad report – “Church” discipline.

Now, according to the exact instructions of the Law, Jesus brought the “court” to order – calling for the credible witnesses against her (vs.10)!

Afterward in the same chapter, Jesus asserted that:

- (1) He was not there to judge men (vs. 15): not yet (cp. John 5:22; 18:36 – i.e., “now”)! But if He does judge now (in questions other than civil or criminal matters) in “Family” matters and the like, His judgment will be true (vs.16).

In the same verse, Jesus acknowledges that He is not executing this wisdom by His own God power and attributes, but by the power and wisdom of His Father (via the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Heb.2:4 etc.).

- (2) He then brings up the point from the Law which calls for the necessity of at least the attestation of two witnesses in establishing truth (vs.17),
- (3) And in verse 36 Jesus makes unmistakably clear that He has final authority.

Majestically, we have seen the Lord Jesus the Christ in an awesome display of wisdom, mercy, love and compassion employ only several Scriptures from the Law and merely 15 words (only 9 in the Greek) to vanquish the wicked.

Then with only 21 words (Greek = 18), He both judged and restored a sinning saint. Truly – He is Worthy!

But was not Jesus letting her off too easy for such a flagrant shameful sin? Shouldn’t she have gotten what she deserved?

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First, we all deserve to be banished to hell forever – we all have dared to sin against a three times Holy God. By His marvelous plan of redemption through faith in Christ Jesus, God has made a way for Him to deal with us in both mercy and justice such that we are disciplined but not condemned.

When He deals with our sin in any way less than eternal exile to the lake that forever burns with fire, we all get off “easy” – though it may not seem so at the moment.

Next, we affirm that she did not get off easily. Note what God allowed this backslider to endure.

All her life would be the humiliation of being caught in the very act of adultery.

She had been brought out and terrified with the threat of public execution. What wild fear must have raced through her heart!

Consider the shame of being thrust before your own local Bible study half covered – men so bent on the destruction of another would certainly not have allowed her to have made herself more “presentable”. Brought low before those who know you and the fact of your hypocrisy laid open for all to see – was this really getting off “easy”?

But there is more. To be brought, degraded and disheveled, **before the Savior** face to face after having just failed Him so ignominiously would hardly be light discipline.

Further, the Name of her God had been dishonored for now the scoffers would mock.

Finally, though forgiven of this sin – and let all observe and mark that Jesus did call adultery “sin”, not an “affair between consenting adults” or “a meaningful relationship” – the woman had lost **eternal rewards**. Blessings that God desired to heap upon her for all eternity, He now in righteousness could not so shower.

To forever lose something that He who loves and died for you would have given you – is not that just punishment? Yes, for such is the actual discipline that was discharged.

Moreover, we do not know if further ramifications followed as venereal disease, pregnancy, loss of husband and/or children (if applicable in her case), loss of job, depression, guilt, etc.

Having one’s sins *forgiven* does not mean that the *consequences* of the sin are obliterated in this life.

David was forgiven in the matter of Uriah and Bathsheba, but the consequences that were set in motion by the sin followed David to his grave. It is to David’s credit that there is no record of his ever accusing God of dealing too severely with him or his ever whined concerning the matter.

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For many, stoning would have been the preferred choice over the above. No, her sin was neither condoned nor soft peddled.