



SESSION 36 | JOHN 8:1-11

JOHN 8:1-11 | THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY

- Verses 1-4 –
 - Jesus, coming from the **mount of Olives**, met the people in the temple, after the Feast of Tabernacles which had just finished.
 - The **scribes and Pharisees** bring a woman to Jesus who was **taken in adultery, in the very act**.
 - Since the Sanhedrin served as the religious council of judgment, one must assume that the only reason they bring her to Jesus is to trap Him.
- Verse 5 –
 - Clearly a trap is being laid. If the law of Moses was so clear, then **what sayest thou** is a side-show. The men should go about and do what the law says (especially as the self-proclaimed police-force for Jewish law). The only reason to bring her to Jesus was for political agenda.
 - Their political agenda included an attempt at *misleading Jesus and the people*. The only commandment to stone a woman in adultery is when an engaged virgin commits adultery with a married man. In this case, both are to be stoned (Deut. 22:23-24). In the case of John 8, the stoning law *does not apply*. Perhaps the accusers are hopeful that this “sleight of hand” exchange of the law will not be noticed. (Politicians notoriously view “the masses” as too ignorant to see their schemes).
 - What is to happen to a married woman caught in adultery? These instructions are giving in Numbers 5:11-31. There are three interesting aspect to the instructions of Numbers 5.
 - In Numbers, the woman was to be brought by the priests, who were to **set her before the Lord** (Num 5:16). Could it be that the scribes and Pharisees were unknowingly bringing this woman before the Lord?
 - Just like in the background of John 7 (see session 34), Numbers 5 contains a powerful connection with *water*. While we do not see the “water ceremony” in John 8, perhaps it is only because Jesus refuses to take the role of judge of the law.
 - Jesus writes *something* in the sand before this story is over. Numbers 5:23 demands a record of the curses to be written, then blotted out.
- Verse 6 –
 - Here the author clearly tells us that they were looking for grounds upon which to **accuse him**. Their interest was not in justice, but in getting rid of Jesus.
 - Jesus wrote *something* in the ground. Was it the curses against her, which were to be blotted out, as commanded in Numbers 5:23? We are not told.

- The King James version supplies, ***as though he heard them not.***
 - I am not sure why they inserted this thought (perhaps further study could reveal their thinking). Nothing in the Greek text seems to demand it.
 - If, in fact, we have correctly associated this passage with Numbers 5, then Jesus wrote in the ground *in fulfillment of the command.*
- Verse 7 –
 - While this verse is always taken as “if you are a sinner then you have no right to accuse,” I am not convinced that such is the proper application.
 - If, however, Numbers 5 is the proper background for this account, then we see there that the process in the Law *left the punishment up to God, not to man.*
 - In effect, Jesus (whom they are trying to trap) puts these men into a trap of their own. If they **cast a stone** in this case, then they are guilty of taking God’s place in the judgment seat, the very sin they are accusing of Jesus.
- Verses 8-9 –
 - Jesus again **wrote on the ground**. If our Numbers 5 connection is correct, then He was continuing the curses against her. The men were **convicted by their own conscience** and walked away.
 - It does not take excessive speculation to assume that the men were convicted because they were *caught* trying to trap Jesus in the law, and He is the one that caught them.
- Verses 10-11 -
 - This woman now stands alone before the Lord, with no **accusers**.
 - In Numbers 5, the **priest shall charge the woman with an oath of cursing** (Num. 5:21).
 - But in John 8, all of the men have gone, none to give accusation. In Numbers 5, even with accusation, only the Lord would give punishment.
 - When Jesus says, **neither do I condemn thee**, she becomes, by Mosaic law, free from accusers and from curse, and can go and **sin no more**.
 - Clearly Jesus was showing grace in this matter. He was also showing Himself to be the Lord, reigning over judicial matters. This aligns with the purpose of the Gospel of John; convincing readers that Jesus is the Son of God.