

Woman - Where are Your Accusers?

Scripture Reference: John 8:1-11 (NLT)

Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, 2 but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. 3 As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd.

4 “Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?”

6 They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. 7 They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” 8 Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

9 When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. 10 Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?”

11 “No, Lord,” she said.

And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

Scripture Reference: John 8:1-11 (NET)

1 But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.[a] 2 Early in the morning he came to the temple courts again. All the people came to him, and he sat down and began to teach[b] them. 3 The experts in the law[c] and the Pharisees[d] brought a woman who had been caught committing adultery. They made her stand in front of them 4 and said to Jesus,[e] “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of adultery. 5 In the law Moses commanded us to stone to death[f] such women.[g] What then do you say?” 6 (Now they were asking this in an attempt to trap him, so that they could bring charges against[h] him.)[i] Jesus bent down and wrote on the ground with his finger.[j] 7 When they persisted in asking him, he stood up straight[k] and replied,[l] “Whoever among you is guiltless[m] may be the first to throw a stone at her.” 8 Then[n] he bent over again and wrote on the ground.

9 Now when they heard this, they began to drift away one at a time, starting with the older ones,[o] until Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. 10 Jesus stood up straight[p] and said to her, “Woman,[q] where are they? Did no one condemn you?” 11 She replied, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “I do not condemn you either. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”][r]

Footnotes

1. John 8:1 sn The Mount of Olives is a hill running north to south about 1.8 mi (3 km) long, lying east of Jerusalem across the Kidron Valley. It was named for the large number of olive trees that grew on it.
2. John 8:2 tn An ingressive sense for the imperfect fits well here following the aorist participle.
3. John 8:3 tn Or “The scribes.” The traditional rendering of γραμματεὺς (grammateus) as “scribe” does not communicate much to the modern English reader, for whom the term might mean “professional copyist,” if it means anything at all. The people referred to here were recognized experts in the law of Moses and in traditional laws and regulations. Thus “expert in the law” comes closer to the meaning for the modern reader.
4. John 8:3 sn See the note on Pharisees in 1:24.
5. John 8:4 tn Grk “to him”; the referent (Jesus) has been specified in the translation for clarity.
6. John 8:5 sn An allusion to Lev 20:10 and Deut 22:22-24.
7. John 8:5 sn The accusers themselves subtly misrepresented the law. The Mosaic law stated that in the case of adultery, both the man and woman must be put to death (Lev 20:10, Deut 22:22), but they mentioned only such women.
8. John 8:6 tn Grk “so that they could accuse.”
9. John 8:6 sn This is a parenthetical note by the author of 7:53-8:11.
10. John 8:6 tn Or possibly “Jesus bent down and wrote an accusation on the ground with his finger.” The Greek verb καταγράφω (katagraphō) may indicate only the action of writing on the ground by Jesus, but in the overall context (Jesus’ response to the accusation against the woman) it can also be interpreted as implying that what Jesus wrote was a counteraccusation against the accusers (although there is no clue as to the actual content of what he wrote, some scribes added “the sins of each one of them” either here or at the end of v. 8 [U 264 700 al]).
11. John 8:7 tn Or “he straightened up.”
12. John 8:7 tn Grk “and said to them.”
13. John 8:7 tn Or “sinless.”
14. John 8:8 tn Here καί (kai) has been translated as “Then” to indicate the implied sequence of events within the narrative. Greek style often begins sentences or clauses with “and,” but English style generally does not.
15. John 8:9 tn Or “beginning from the eldest.”
16. John 8:10 tn Or “straightened up.”
17. John 8:10 sn Woman was a polite form of address (see BDAG 208-9 s.v. γυνή 1), similar to “Madam” or “Ma’am” used in English in different regions.
18. John 8:11 tc The earliest and best mss do not contain 7:53-8:11 (see note on 7:53).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS WOMAN

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STORY IN JOHN 8:1-11?

ATTEMPT TO TRAP JESUS

The main point of this story in the Bible is not the woman. The focal point is that the religious leaders were trying to trap Jesus regarding how He deals with sin. They just happened to have found her in the act of sin and used her in their attempt to trap Him.

REVEALS GOD'S PLAN OF GRACE THROUGH JESUS

While Jesus was alive on earth prior to His crucifixion, He was under the Old Covenant Law. He was fulfilling all of the laws that man(kind) could not. It is important to remember this when you are reading stories during Jesus' life. He was always acting as one of two things:

- 1) Old Covenant Priest
- 2) Bridge revealing the New Covenant

While everything that Christ did/said while He was alive is relevant to us, it is not always something that applies to us today under the New Covenant of Grace. In this story, Jesus is acting as a bridge to reveal to us God's grace, as it will be for us under the New Covenant. He was the only person in the crowd who could condemn the woman and could have stoned her. But He chose to walk in God's perfect love and grace. He extended grace to her FIRST. SO many people focus on condemning others and telling them to "go and sin no more", but without first extending God's grace. ONLY God's grace can equip the person to be saved (if they are not) and then enable them to go and (live in) sin no more. Without extending God's grace FIRST, the focus is on man(kind) attempting (on their own) to not sin.