

Jesus, Justice, and the Law

John 8:1-11

The Pharisees Attempt to Trap Jesus (John 8:1-6)

While Jesus is teaching in the temple, the Pharisees attempt to impale Jesus on the Horns of a Dilemma. Placing a woman in front of him who they claim was caught in the act of adultery, they challenge Jesus with the fact that the Law demands she be put to death by stoning. They ask him, "Should this woman be put to death?". They believe that they have caught him and that no matter how Jesus responds they will have a charge to bring against him.

Part 1.	The Coming of the King
Part 2.	The Authentication of the King
Part 3.	The Controversy over the King
Part 4.	The Training of the Twelve by the King
Part 5.	The Opposition to the King:
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Part 6.	The Preparation of the Disciples by the King
Part 7.	The Official Presentation of the King
Part 8.	The Preparation for the Death of the King
Part 9.	The Trial of the King
Part 10.	The Death of the King
Part 11.	The Resurrection and the Ascension of the King
Part 12.	The Sequels

If Jesus says no, she shouldn't be stoned, he would be in violation of the Mosaic Law and be discredited in his claim to be the Messiah and as a teacher.

If Jesus says yes, she should be stoned, he would put himself in conflict with the Roman authorities. Only the Romans could carry out capital punishment. If Jesus authorized this woman's death, he would face being arrested and punished by the Roman Government.

The Law's Instructions for Adultery (Leviticus 20:10 & Deuteronomy 22:22-23)

The Mosaic Law had very specific instructions for dealing with adultery, including that both the man and the woman be punished.

Leviticus 20:10 *"If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death."*

There is no such thing as adultery where only one party is guilty. Bringing just the woman for punishment is a violation of the Law. This mishandling of the Law reveals the Pharisees true motive. They had no concern for justice or desire to see the Law upheld. They didn't care about the woman or her guilt or innocence. She was just a tool to be used to get what they really wanted, which was to bring charges against Jesus in order to have him permanently silenced.

Jesus' Brilliant Response (John 8:7-9, Leviticus 19:15-16, Deuteronomy 19:15-19)

"Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her."

What Jesus did not mean by this response was that you had to have a sinless nature in order to judge someone else's wrongdoing, or that if you had sinned you could not make a determination as to right or wrong concerning someone else's actions. If this were the case, then no one could ever be convicted of doing wrong. There would be no justice at all and all crime would have to go unpunished.

The Mosaic Law contained not only the rules by which the people of Israel were to live by, it was also the basis of their judicial system.

Deuteronomy 19:15-19

“A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrongdoing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. The judges shall inquire diligently and if the witness is a false witness and has accused a brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.”

In context, what Jesus is saying is, “if you are without sin in your handling of this woman's case; if you have followed the Law, and have 2 or 3 witnesses and diligently examined them in order to find the truth and done everything right, then go ahead and stone her. If you are guilt free in adherence to the Law, then follow it.” This is Brilliant! In one short sentence Jesus slips from the Horns of the Dilemma and exposes the wickedness of the Pharisee’s hearts. They have nothing they can say and can only respond by walking away one by one.

Jesus and the Woman (John 8:10-11)

Jesus continues to show his love for justice and for the Mosaic Law in his interaction with the woman. Jesus states that there are no valid witnesses to bring accusations against her and that since he himself was not a witness, according to the Law, there are no valid charges to be brought against her. She was saved by both the righteousness of Jesus and the righteousness of the Law and was now directed to turn from sin and live in accordance with the Mosaic Law.

Footnote on John 7:53-8:11

John 7:53 - 8:11 is not found in the earliest manuscripts. It was most likely passed down through the early church orally, and added to the Gospels later by scribes. The main reason that we are confident in teaching from this passage is that the main principle these verses teach is consistent with what is taught throughout the Gospels. It is not teaching anything unique or inconsistent with the rest of scripture.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Children's Ministry - Volunteers are still needed in the nursery and toddlers. Contact Billie Phipps for more information, billie@gccramona.com

Youth Ministry - Outing to the Arroyo Tapiado Mud Caves on January 18th from 8AM to 5PM. Cost is \$5 per person. Contact Matt Smith for details.

Youth Ministry - SNOW JAM! Happening March 29 - April 2nd in Brianhead Utah. See Matt Smith for details.