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He Who Is Without Sin
Jn. 7:53-8:11

Jesus has been dealing with the intense opposition from the Jewish leader, his brothers, the Sanhedrin and the topic has centered around His deity and His righteous judgment as opposed to their human unrighteous judgment.

1. Jesus had healed the paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day, so they sought to kill Him. 5:16
2. Jesus declared that God was His Father. 5:18
3. Jesus declared that He was the bread of life come down from heaven at the synagogue of Capernaum and the Jews murmured and the people were divided over who He was. 6:41
4. Jesus then went up to Jerusalem to the Feast of Tabernacles and taught in the Temple and told the people that their judgment of the paralytic man was unrighteous for they judged according to appearance. 7:24

Now a woman is brought to Jesus as He is once again teaching in the temple, specifically in the treasury. 8:20

There is great debate about the genuineness of the story among the scholars.

1. There are those who reject the story for the following reasons.

- a. The manuscripts that are considered to be the oldest omit the story. (Aleph, A, B, L, N. W.)
- b. The first manuscript we have where it appears is the Codex Bezae of the 6th century and later uncials, so called Koine text, and cursives based on the uncials.
- c. The appearance of words within the story that are not found anywhere else in John.

2. The reasons for except the story are the following.

- a. The story fits well in context for the subject and theme of this entire section is the righteous judgment of Jesus who is deity in human form.

* Remember that Jesus came on the fourth day of the Feast of Tabernacles and proclaimed the invitation to drink on the eighth day and chapter eight is the following day, the ninth till chapter ten, verse twenty-one. 7:1-10:21

- 1) They were judging according to appearance. 7:24
- 2) Their judgment as to who Jesus was ended up in a division. 7:40-43
- 3) They were accusing the woman of adultery yet they were guilty of hate and murderer in their hearts. 8:1-12
- 4) They judged according to the flesh. 8:15-16
- 5) The Lord had many things to judge concerning them. 8:26
- 6) The Lord asks them who was able to convict Him of sin for He was sinless

and they could not see the heart only the actions. 8:46

- 7) The Lord makes an absolute judgment to clear the parents and child of any personal sin for the birth defect because He is the light of the world. 9:3-5
- 8) The leaders judged that Jesus was not from God because He healed the blind man on the Sabbath. 9:16-17
- 9) The leaders judged that the blind man who was now healed was born of sin and unable to instruct them. 9:34
- 10) The Lord makes dogmatic statements judging people as thieves and robbers if they do not come by and through Him to the Father. 10:1, 14, 16

b. The witness of early church fathers.

- 1) Papias, a disciple of John the beloved knew the story and expounded it says Eusebius.
* Whenever the church fathers are used against this section, it is misrepresented, they do not say anything against the section, they simply are silent for the most part.
- 2) Augustine believed the story was removed because of fear that women would appeal to the story as an excuse for the infidelity. 400 A.D.

* The ascetic life style that followed the apostolic age would support this explanation.

- 3) I believe the story to be not only authentic but crucial to the context of the Lord's righteous judgment discourse!

* Others that except the story as genuine are Augustine, Ambros, Calvin, Hendrickson, Beacons Comt., Bengel, Zwingli, Burgon, R. C. Ryle and Arno C. Gabelein.

The story has three movements which reveals Jesus' righteous judgment in contrast to the unrighteous judgment of the Scribes and Pharisees.

- I. The setting chosen for the woman's judgment. vs. 53, 1-2
- II. The setting up of Jesus for judgment. vs. 3-6a-b
- III. The setting forth of righteous judgment by Jesus. vs. 6c-11

I. The setting chosen for the woman's judgment. vs. 53, 1-2

- A. The day before, on the eight day of the Feast, the Sanhedrin had failed to arrest Jesus in the temple area and at the end of the day everyone went to their own house. vs. 53

1. Jesus had declared that Israel still needed to depend on God to quench their spiritual thirst. 7:37-39
2. Jesus had caused a division among the people as to who He was. 7:4-43
3. Jesus had impressed the temple police regarding His words which kept them from arresting Him. 7:45-46

B. The same day Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. vs. 1

1. The word "but" places a sharp contrast between the people and Jesus.
 - a. They all had homes to go to.
 - b. He had only the Mount of Olives, yet He was the Creator of the world.
 - 1) At no time do we ever read that Jesus spent a night in the city of Jerusalem but He always left it.
 - 2) Jesus said to His disciple when they asked Him where He lodged, "The foxes have holes, the birds have nest but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. Lk. 9:58
 - 3) The Mount of Olives is an interesting place.
- a) Solomon built for his pagan wives on the Mount of Olives a house and temple for false gods. 1Kings 11:7, 2Kings 13:13

- b) The Mount of Olives was the last vantage point from where David saw Jerusalem as he ran for his life from his son Absalom. 2Sam. 16:1
- c) The Mount of Olives was the place from where Jesus would ascend up to heaven fifty days after the resurrection and His disciples looked on as the angels rebuked them for staring up to the sky and promised that He would return in like manner. Act 1:9-11
- d) The Lord Jesus will return to the earth at His second coming at the Mount of Olives and as His foot touches it, the Mount will cleave in half, Zachariah tells us. Zach. 14:4

C. The next day, the ninth day, Jesus came back to the temple. vs. 2

1. The word "but" once again put Jesus in sharp contrast to the religious rulers who went to their houses.
 - a. They did not return early to the Temple the day after the Feast of tabernacles because to them it was mere ritual and ceremony.
 - b. Jesus was there early because He cared and loved the people.
2. The statement is that all the people came to Him.

- a. He was sitting as the practice of teachers.
- b. The position of a herald was to stand as He did on the eighth day of the Feast of Tabernacles.
- 3. The concern of Jesus was to teach the people the word of God.
* The tense is imperfect, He was teaching!

This is the setting for the woman's judgment who was caught in adultery!

II. The setting up of Jesus for judgment. vs. 3-6a-b

- A. The condemnation of the woman by the Pharisees and Scribes. vs. 3-5
 - 1. The scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery and set her in the midst. vs. 3
 - a. The Scribes were the lawyer of the law and the Pharisee were the religious hypocrites.
* This is the only time John mentions the scribes in his gospel.
 - b. The word adultery implies that the woman was married for Jesus used the same word for allowing divorce. Matt. 5:32

1) The only Scriptural allowance to be released from the present marriage and able to remarry according to Jesus but it is not a command to do so, forgiveness and reconciliation is always the best if there is genuine repentance!

2) The law in Deuteronomy was not a law of divorce but an orderly manner by which a woman was freed from an unreasonable husband who had a hardened heart. Deut. 24:1-4

- 2. They told Jesus that they caught her in the very act. vs. 4
 - a. The fact that they caught her in the very act exposed their respect of persons and evil intent by not bringing the man also.
 - b. The phrase "the very act" epautophoro is an interesting word in the Greek that is made up of three words.
 - 1) The word "epi" which means upon.
 - 2) The second word "autos" means self.
 - 3) The third word "phor" means a thief.
 - 4) The phrase means to be caught in the act of theft.
 - a) The privilege and satisfaction of sexual inter-course is that it is taking place with only the

person you are married to, this is God's design. Gen. 2:24-25

b) The act of sexual-intercourse with a person who is a virgin is a theft of their purity and a theft against their future husband or wife by both individuals, as well as with a single person who is not a virgin because the only one who has a right to touch you and enjoy you sexually is your husband or wife.

c) The act of sexual-intercourse with a married person is theft against their present husband or wife by both individual who commit the act.

d) Your body is not for fornication but for the Lord and for your husband or wife as well being the temple of the Holy Spirit, therefore sexual immorality is the only sin against your own body. 1Cor. 6:13-20

3. They declared that the law of Moses commanded stoning. vs. 5a-b

a. The seventh commandment declared, "You shall not commit adultery. Ex. 20:14

b. The man who commits adultery with another man's wife or his neighbor's

wife, they both shall be put to death. Lev. 20:10

c. The woman who deceived her husband of being a virgin on her honeymoon night was stoned. Deut. 22:20

1) The law seemed to place a greater emphasis on the woman's sexual purity than the man's in that it goes out of the way to specify in detail what takes place when she has sexual inter-course before marriage.

2) Certainly it does not imply that God sees sexual sin in a man any less than sin nor am I implying that, yet these things are never said of the man only the woman and more than once!

3) The man is moved by what he see basically and initiates while the woman is moved by what she feels and responds to the man!

4) Every woman is the sentinel of her own purity, the man in his fallen state will always press the boundaries and she is the one who decides how far he will go, she is always in control of the relationship, as long as she does not give in sexually!

5) The woman is said to be defiled, humbled by the man, played a harlot while in her father's house, given her

honor to another and if she lied to her husband to be about her virginity, she was a deceiver and stoned!

4. They have caught this woman in the very act and they asked Jesus, “What do you say?”. vs. 5c

B. The commentary on their motives. vs. 6a-c

1. They were doing this testing Jesus. vs. 6a-b

* The word testing “peirontes” mean to put to the test in order to prove.

- a. The word in a positive context is used to verify and authenticate the genuineness and trustworthiness of a person or object.
 - b. The word in this context it is in the negative, a bad sense, to test one maliciously, craftily to put to the proof his feelings or judgments.
2. The apostle John provides the explanation, that they might have something of which to accuse Him. vs. 6c
 - a. If Jesus said stone her, He would lose favor and influence with the people for He was known as a friend of sinners” also they could accuse Him before Rome for passing judgment of capital punishment which the Jews

did not have any longer as they confessed to Pilot. 18:31 .

- b. If He said release her, He would be guilty of violating the law of Moses which was the law of God, the very Father He was claiming to be serving.
- c. They brought her in the midst of the crowd before Jesus. vs. 3b
 - 1) To publicly discredit Jesus.
 - 2) To publically pressure Jesus.

This was the setting up of Jesus for judgment

III. The setting forth of righteous judgment by Jesus. vs. 6d-12

- A. Jesus remained silent at their accusation. vs. 6d-e
 1. The word "but" again marks a sharp contrast between their motives and the Lord's.
 2. The Lord stooped down and wrote with His finger on the ground.
 - a. The word wrote "grapho" means to write, with reference to the form of the letters, to delineate or form letters on a tablet, parchment, paper, or other material.
 - b. The word is used for the Old Testament writings and for the New Testament books.

- c. There are only a few times recorded in the Bible that God wrote.
 - 1) God wrote on the two tables of stone with His finger for Israel to judge themselves. Ex. 8:19
 - 2) God wrote with the finger of a man's hand opposite the lampstand on the plaster of the wall on the King's palace..."MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN", to judge Belshazzar. Dan. 5:5, 25
 - 3) God, in the person of Jesus wrote on the ground with His finger here, to judge the evil hearts of these self-righteous religious men. vs. 6, 8
- 3. The Lord did not even give them much importance acting as if He did not hear them.
 - a) Some manuscripts do not have this explanation.
 - b) If it is authentic, it certainly was a loud cry to their evil deed against this woman and Himself without saying a word!
- B. Jesus responds to their insistent accusation. vs. 7-9
 - 1. Jesus at this time lifted Himself up and looked straight into their faces knowing what their judgment was regarding the woman and Himself. 2:25
- 2. Jesus looked into their faces and pronounced judgment on them by declaring that the person who was without sin could cast the first stone. vs. 7
 - a. The phrase without sin "anamartetos" means never has sinned, never will sin nor desire to.
 - b. The law commanded that the first person who witnessed the offense was to be the first to stone the person then the others. Deut. 17:7
 - c. You see the only One who could cast a stone was Jesus, and He did not!
- C. Jesus reminded them of their own sinfulness. vs. 8-9
 - 1. He stooped down again and once again wrote on the ground. vs. 8
 - 2. Those who gave ear and understood the question being convicted of their own conscience departed one by one, from the oldest to the youngest. vs. 9a-e
 - a. What did Jesus write is not known and any suggestion is mere guess work but allow me to suggest that we have put the focus and emphasis on the wrong place!.
 - b. The text says that they were convicted at what they heard, not what He wrote, but because of what He said, the fact that the one who had never

sinned, could never sin or desired to sin was to be the first to throw the first stone.

- c. The very silence of Jesus and the awareness of their own sin before God in the person of Jesus convicted and silenced them.

* O Lord, the hope of Israel, all that forsake You shall be ashamed, and they that depart from me shall be written in the earth, because they have forsaken the LORD, the fountain of living waters. Jer. 17:13

- 3. Jesus was left alone and the woman in the midst. vs. 9f-g
 - a. She stood in the midst alone, for the immediate circle of her hypocritical accusers had been run off by their conscience.
 - b. What a beautiful picture of every person who will be judged by Jesus one day, one on one.
 - c. No one will be there to defend, justify or excuse us.
 - d. Jesus is not interested in exposing sin but in covering by forgiving it, for God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world but that the world through Him might be saved. 3:17

- D. Jesus releases the woman of her sin and guilt. vs. 10-11

- 1. He now looks to the woman, seeing none of the men. vs. 10a
- 2. He addressed her with respect, "woman" the same word used for His own mother at Cana. vs. 10b-c, 2:4b
- 3. He asked her where her accuser were and if any man had condemned her? vs. 10d-e
- 4. Her response was , no one, Lord. vs. 11a-c
- 5. Jesus gave the reason why. vs. 11d-f
 - a. He said, neither do I condemn you which implies her repentance and the forgiveness of her sins.
 - b. He said, go and sin no more, which implies not only that she was not to commit adultery any more but any other sin that would grieve God and her fellowship with Him.
 - * Jesus alone knows and see the heart of man at the moment and man sees the evidence of it through time! 2:24-25
 - * This occasion is much like the prostitute who entered Simon's house and washed the feet to Jesus with her tears and dried them with her hair while Simon looked down on Jesus and her in his heart. Lk. 7:36-50

* The wicked servant who would not forgive having been forgiven all.
Matt. 18:21-35

This is the setting forth of righteous judgment by Jesus!

IV. The setting forth of basic principles from the story.

- A.** Their will always be imperfect judgment by man in this life.
 - 1. Malicious judgments as this one.
 - 2. Self-righteous judgments forgetting the amount of sin they were forgiven and that they are as capable of any sin given the right circumstances.
 - 3. Critical judgment that is hypocritical and never ending. Matt. 7:1-5
- B.** There must always be judgment of sin in a Biblical way.
 - 1. Sin needs to be confessed, repented of before God and abandoned.
 - 2. Sin needs to be confronted when it involves others and the body of Christ, according to Scripture. Matt. 18:15-20, Gal 6:1-3, Ja. 5:19-20, 1Pet. 4:8

- C.** ☐ There are always consequences that we live with even though our sin has been judged on the cross and forgiven when we confess it.
 - 1. There is never a question about your forgiveness, that is absolute when there is genuine repentance.
 - 2. There must never be a confusion between forgiveness and restoration.
 - a. Forgiveness is unquestionable.
 - b. Restoration depends on the offense and the position one held at the time of the sin and how this will affect the church body.

* The law came through Moses but grace and truth by Jesus Christ! Jn. 1:17

Conclusion

These three movements reveals Jesus' righteous judgment.

- I.** The setting chosen for the woman's judgment was malicious!
- II.** The setting up of Jesus for judgment was thought to be sure!
- III.** The setting forth of righteous judgment by Jesus was based on grace!