

An Exposition of the  
**GOSPEL OF JOHN**



## “Stone-Throwers & Glass Houses”

***John 8:1-11***

**Theme:** God’s grace teaches us to prioritize examining our own standing before Him, not someone else’s.

**Introduction: [Read text]** When we step into John 8:1–11, we enter a scene steeped in hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and deadly accusation. The scribes and Pharisees were eager to drag a sinful woman before Jesus, not because they cared about holiness, justice, or God’s law, but because they were ready to accuse—ready to condemn someone else so they didn’t have to face their own hearts. **God’s grace teaches us to examine our own standing before Him, not someone else’s.** And nowhere is that principle displayed more powerfully than in this moment.

These religious leaders were armed with stones and Scripture snippets, proud of their moral superiority and convinced that exposing her would elevate them. In reality, their eagerness to condemn exposed their own blindness to sin. They stood in the presence of the sinless Son of God while acting as though they were without guilt.

As the Lord stoops to write, then speaks, **“He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her”** (John 8:7, NASB95), the ground beneath their self-righteous feet gives way. Grace does not excuse sin—but it confronts the sinner with truth. Jesus’ words dismantle their pretense and compel each man to look inward before judging outward.

When the accusers vanish, the only One who had the right to condemn stands before the guilty woman and says, **“I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on sin no more”** (John 8:11, NASB95). This is not moral leniency—this is holy mercy. Christ calls her to forsake her sin, not justify it; to walk in obedience, not hide in shame.

- I.     **The readiness to accuse others (vv. 1–6).**
- II.    **The responsibility to assess oneself (vv. 6–9).**
- III.   **The requirement of abandoning offenses (vv. 10–11).**

In this passage, we see it plainly: God’s grace strips away our excuses, silences our accusations, exposes our hearts, and calls us to repentance. Before we dare point out another’s sin, Jesus demands that we look to our own. And before we ever lift a stone, we must first kneel before the One who alone has the authority to forgive.

Before we begin, I have received numerous questions about the authenticity of this section, beginning in John 7:53. Although some ancient manuscripts omit John 7:53–8:11, and others place it elsewhere in the gospels, the church has recognized and received this account for centuries. Its message aligns with the character of Jesus, the teaching of Scripture, and the

surrounding context in John's Gospel. Nothing in the passage contradicts biblical doctrine; instead, it reveals the holiness, wisdom, and mercy of our Lord. Because it aligns with the whole counsel of God and has been preserved by God's providence, we will study it with confidence, allowing the Spirit to confront our sin, expose hypocrisy, and magnify Christ's grace as He says, "**Go, and sin no more.**"

## I. **The Readiness to Accuse Others – 8:1-6a**

### A. **The Accusation Expressed – *vv. 1-5***

1. At the end of the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, everyone "went to his home," except for Christ, who "**went to the Mount of Olives.**"
2. The Pharisees had been thwarted in their attempts to arrest Jesus – primarily because of the "division" among the people over the identity of the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Consequently, they decided to change their tactic and attempt to entrap Jesus into contradicting the Law of Moses.
4. So, "*early in the morning [when] He came again into the temple, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst,* they posed a question to Christ as to what they should do with her.
5. Knowing how Christ had been the friend of sinners – those who were guilty of gross transgression, including fornication or adultery - they believed they could get him to contradict Moses.
6. So, they "**said to Him, 'Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act. Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such a woman; what then do You say?'**"
  - a) *The stoning of a woman caught in adultery was reserved for women who were engaged or betrothed to be married, or for the daughter of a priest – cp. Deuteronomy 22:22-25.*
  - b) *For others who commit adultery, the method of slaying them is not specified, leading the Talmud to prescribe strangulation.*

### B. **The Accusation Exposed – *v. 6a***

1. These men were not interested in this woman's spiritual condition – only in finding some means by which they might "trap" the Lord – "**There were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him.**"
2. Essentially, they sought to induce Jesus to forgive the woman (knowing that He was the friend of sinners and had previously taken the authority "upon Himself" to forgive sins) – thereby placing Himself in opposition to

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the Law and the Talmud.

3. It is interesting how little they cared about propriety, modesty, and decorum – speaking manipulatively about those activities that are shameful and vile.

## **II. The Responsibility to Assess Oneself – 8:6b-9**

### **A. The Confrontation of Iniquity – vv. 6b, 8**

1. Jesus' response has been the subject of intense intrigue and speculation: *“But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.”*
2. Some believe that Jesus was writing a list of sins He knew those accusing this woman had recently committed.
3. Others believe He was writing the names of these men together with their sins.
4. Still others believe that Jesus was doodling – that He was merely trying to stall, hoping they would stop this circus and go away.
5. The reality is that we don't know what He was writing – a pity, since there is no record of anything written by Christ Jesus.
6. However, it is my personal view that whatever He was writing would naturally have brought conviction to the hearts of these vile men (*it would have been the Word of God*) who ignored their own sin while seeking the punishment of another's sin – cp. *Hebrews 4:12-13*.

### **B. The Call to Integrity – vv. 7-9**

1. However, as Jesus wrote, they refused to give up on the issue, but *“when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, ‘He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.’”*
2. He was in no way excusing sin, as though there were no spiritual accountabilities among men – He was merely exposing their hypocrisy.
3. Thus, instead of indicating that stoning the woman was wrong, He calls upon these men to concern themselves with the whole Law, not just with what they chose to focus on; they didn't bring the man – cp. *Deuteronomy 22:22*.
4. Jesus *“again, ... stooped down and wrote on the ground.”* – perhaps returning to write the texts we've just mentioned – calling them into account to the Scriptures they knew they would violate should they (who were likewise guilty before God) pursue stoning her.

5. Slowly but surely, these men realized that their scheming had been trumped by a wiser, more knowledgeable Teacher of the Word – “*When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones.*”
6. Finally, all the hypocritical accusers left until “*He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst*” of the crowd that had been listening to Him teach.
7. This is where every sinner must come – to where it can be said that they are “*alone*” before the Lamb of God, who came the first time to deliver men but will come a second time to judge those who reject Him.

### III. The Requirement of Abandoning Offenses – 8:10-11

#### A. **The Evidence of God’s Grace – vv. 10-11a**

1. Here we see the mission for which Christ humbled Himself – to seek out sinners who would repent of their sin and trust in Him – “*Straightening up, Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?’*”
2. Her response is so clear – “*No one, Lord*” – and each man had sensed the tremendous burden of his own sin, so he was unwilling to be the first to cast the stone of judgment on this woman.
3. Jesus’ beautiful response encourages every sinner – “*Neither do I condemn you.*”
4. Jesus thought that even a woman caught “stealing” the affection of another woman’s husband was worth His grace and mercy.

#### B. **The Exhortation to Repent – v. 11b**

1. However, lest we believe that Jesus went “light” on this woman’s sin, He stands before her and admonishes her to “*Go, from now on sin no more.*”
2. This clearly confronts the issue of this woman’s sin – that she was not excused without a demand for change being issued to her – cp. *John 5:14*.
3. Some believe that the “casting the first stone” idea disqualifies anyone from ever holding another person accountable; however, Jesus did not eliminate accountability; He exposed hypocritical, malicious, and unlawful judgment – *John 7:24 Galatians 6:1*.
4. Clearly, Jesus left this woman, whom He wouldn’t condemn, with a reminder that she would stand before Him again someday to give an account of her life – cp. *John 5:22; 2 Corinthians 5:10*.
5. She could repent of her sin, seek His grace and mercy, or continue to live licentiously and face judgment when He came in power and might to

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avenge God's righteousness.

6. The mercy and grace of God are not designed to induce indulgence and freedom to "sin it up" with relative safety and tolerance from God.
7. The grace of our Lord teaches us to deny ourselves and be holy – cp. *Titus 2:11-13*.

So What?

1. Do I hide my hypocrisy behind religious behavior?
2. In what ways do I demonstrate an understanding that mercy today does not eliminate judgment tomorrow?
3. What sin is Jesus calling me to abandon right now?
4. Whose life around me needs the balance of truth and grace?

**Theme: God's grace teaches us to prioritize examining our own standing before Him, not someone else's.**