

MSB257

MORE Seed and Bread

BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

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ONE OF CHRIST'S BATTLES WITH THE PHARISEES

The following article was written by Walter Mikaitis, a believer and long time friend of the Word of Truth Ministry, he is also an active Bible student who loves and seeks the truth. The Biblical record of the "Woman taken in adultery" has always generated many questions for anyone who reads the story in John 8:1-11. Walter analyses the story from a different viewpoint, knowing that the scribes and Pharisees had arranged this incident. It was their attempt to trap the Lord and force Him into what they thought was a no-win situation, Walter sets forth some interesting facts and other possibilities that expose their unscrupulous plot. drh

THE WOMAN TAKEN IN ADULTERY

Walter Mikaitis

The story from the King James Version, John 8:1-11

1 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.

2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said - unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

A superficial reading of John 8:1-11 would appear as though the Lord Jesus is taking a softer stance regarding the sin of adultery, but a closer examination appears to prove otherwise. This record is usually titled "the women taken in adultery," but a more appropriate title should read "a contrived pharisaic plot orchestrated to bait the Lord Jesus so they might destroy him."

Some ancient manuscripts omit these verses entirely; however the church fathers, Tertullian and Calvin, concur with the omission but Griesbach, Jerome and Augustine note their omission but agree that this portion is indeed an authentic part of Holy Writ.

The internal evidence of this narrative gives credence to its canonical content. In verse 2 the scribes and Pharisees bring a woman taken in adultery, thereby presenting themselves as reliable witnesses to the very act and in compliance with the Mosaic law in Deuteronomy 19:15-19.

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth; at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong. Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges, who shall be in those days; and the judges shall make diligent inquiry; and behold if the witness be a false witness and hath testified falsely against his brother then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother, so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.

In verse 3 the word used for "brought" in the Greek text is **agousin**, to lead. It seems she was led willingly, without force, coercion or obvious resistance. This conclusion is warranted, since the word of God through the Holy Spirit applies the precise words in Scriptural usage. Other words in the Greek New Testament describe the use of force: **biazo** used in Acts 5:26; **suron** (haling) in Acts 8:3, **eilkuson** (drew or dragged) in Acts 16:19, **aposkan** (draw or dragged away) in Acts 20:30.

At the very outset this woman appears to be a used willing participant or co-conspirator determined to entrap and destroy the Lord Jesus. In doing so our Lord is discredited among the common people. In this setting the scribes and Pharisees appear to be doing God's will in condemning adultery and reaffirm their position as true righteous leaders in the eyes of the people of Israel. The scribes and Pharisees whose sin darkened hearts thought the Lord Jesus was an unschooled Galilean carpenter from among the common people who did not know the Mosaic law.

In John 7:49 the self-righteous Pharisees state, "**But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed,**" (Greek **eparatoi**, doomed to destruction). Little did they realize they were in confrontation with the veiled in the flesh **I AM** (Jehovah) of the Old Testament (Exodus 3:14) and the same "**I AM** of the New Testament (John 8:58) who gave Moses the law on Mount Sinai. Note Philippians 2:7. (NASU) **He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.**

The Pharisees persist in challenging the Lord Jesus, placing Him in a position as judge, but He said he came not to judge but to seek and save that which was lost. The case of the adulterous woman should have been adjudicated by the duly assembled Sanhedrin instead of by the Lord Jesus. This whole episode in a sense seems to place all representative human kind both men and women as the federal head attempting to conspire to destroy the Lord and thwart God's plan of salvation.

In verse 5 they say, "Now Moses commanded that such should be stoned but what sayest thou?" If the Lord says, "Stone her," He is in jeopardy with Roman law (John 18:31) and if He says, "Turn her loose," He is then contrary regarding the Mosaic law and is discredited before the people of Israel gathered in the Temple to hear His teaching.

In verse 6 the Lord stoops down and writes in the ground what I believe is Deut. 22:22: **"If a man be found lying with a woman married to a husband, then shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman and the woman so shalt thou put away evil from Israel."** So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up himself and said to them, "He that is without sin let him first cast a stone at her."

The Lord does not answer them and again He stooped a second time and wrote on the ground, possibly Jeremiah 17:13. **"O Lord the hope of Israel all who forsake thee shall be ashamed and they who depart from me shall be written in the earth because they have forsaken the Lord the fountain of living waters."** See and compare John 4:15; 6:35; and 7:37. The Lord upon rising may have audibly quoted Jeremiah 17:13. Then the scribes and Pharisees upon hearing and being convicted as false witnesses, they turn and flee for fear of the people. They desert their woman co-conspirator after being exposed by the white light of the Word of God. The woman does not depart but stands speechless face to face before the Lord Jesus, conscious of her guilt and ready to receive the just penalty for her sin.

The sinless one (the Lord himself) has the sole authority to cast the first stone and the people would then concur by casting a stone in sympathy as witnesses to the deservedly just punishment, thereby putting away sin in Israel. In verse 10 Jesus lifted up himself and said to the woman, "Where are they?" (Thine accusers is supplied and is not in the Greek text.) The woman knew who "they" were and the Lord, the discernor of hearts, knew who "they" were. In all likelihood "they" were her paramour or paramours who devised and authored this adulterous plot of entrapment. (Note Matt. 12:39 and 16:4).

He then asks her, **"Hath no one condemned thee?"** Man is supplied and not in the Greek text She said, **"No one, sir,"** (**kurie** - Greek), thus expressing a rudimentary step of faith and respect for the Lord. The Lord said, **"Neither do I condemn thee. Go, from this instant onward sin no more."** The woman, in receiving this direct word from the Lord Jesus" lips essentially received an opportunity for faith, if she responded to His words, there would be forgiveness of sins and the help of the Holy Spirit resulting in a change of mind (Greek **metanoeo**) toward this One who could truly be the long promised Messiah to Israel.

Afterward, she would understandably return to her former lover or lovers recounting all the details of her encounter with the Lord Jesus, thus heaping further condemnation upon the scribes and Pharisees for their hardness of heart and unbelief.

This woman could possibly have lived to see and understand the significance of the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord Jesus; however there is no record given as such. What an object lesson to the people gathered at the temple who witnessed this drama and for our learning an admonition to the praise and glory of our great God. Admittedly there is speculation in understanding this account; nevertheless in the Kingdom of God the truth of the matter will be revealed in total brilliant light.

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