

# The Gospel of John: *No Stones*

*John 7:53-8:11*

## The Text's Placement

- This story is not original to this location in John
  - Some manuscripts place it earlier in the chapter (after 7:36 or 44) or at the end of John (after 21:25)
  - Others put it after Luke 21:38 or 24:53
- The story was part of an early collection of Jesus' teachings (John 21:25; Ex. Acts 20:35)
- What does this mean?
  - It is inspired & thus was included in the canon
  - Its larger context is unknown
    - So, we don't need to search for the meaning of the text outside of the pericope
  - This should not be worrisome to our view of inspiration or inerrancy

## It's a Trap! (7:53-8:6a)

- Jesus is teaching in the Temple courts when the Teachers of the Law & Pharisees set a trap for Jesus
  - Teacher of the Law/Scribes: Scholars of Mosaic law who took on the roles of lawyer, ethicist, theologian, and jurist
- They put a woman on display who is caught committing adultery
  - Notice the absence of her partner
    - Her accusers are not interested in justice but rather in ensnaring Jesus
    - We are meant to feel compassion for her
- They cite Mosaic Law, stating that she should be stoned for her crime
  - If she was betrothed, then both she and her partner were to be stoned (Dt 22:23-24)
  - If she was married, the means of justice is not explicit, but both parties were to face death (Lev 20:10; Dt 22:22)
- This was not common practice in 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine because executions usually needed Roman approval
  - However, if Jesus ignored the Mosaic Law, He could be accused as a lawless person
  - If He agreed with them, He might be seen as both merciless & get in trouble with Rome

## Throwing Stones (8:6b-9)

- Jesus seems almost to ignore them, instead writing something in the dirt
  - What He wrote is unknown, but it may have been some part of the Mosaic Law, which states the witnesses of the crime must be the *first* to throw the stones, and they must not be participants in the crime itself (Dt 17:7; see also Lev 24:14; Dt 13:9)
- Jesus responds with a deeper understanding of Scripture
  - Those who are innocent of this particular sin are the only ones who can pass judgment
    - Adultery = lust (Mt 5:28)
- The accusers' response is to drop their stones & leave
  - The older ones leave first because they know their guilt
  - The younger ones may have needed reminding

## The Judgment (8:10-11)

- When it is just Jesus & the woman, He addresses her

- Those who had no right to condemn her are gone
- The only one with the right to condemn her (Jesus) doesn't
  - He show her mercy
  - But He also calls her to repentance: Turning away from sin to walk righteously with God

### **So What?**

- Do we throw stones?
  - Are we passing judgment rather than showing mercy?
- Have we been shown mercy?
  - Has it led us to repentance?

**Meditation Verse:** John 8:7

**Next Week:** The Falconers