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Bible Interpretation 101

John 8:1-11 ¹But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ²Early in the morning He went back into the temple courts. All the people came to Him, and He sat down to teach them. ³The scribes and Pharisees, however, brought to Him a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before them ⁴and said, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. ⁵In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such a woman. So what do You say?" ⁶They said this to test Him, in order to have a basis for accusing Him. But Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with His finger. ⁷When they continued to question Him, He straightened up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to cast a stone at her." ⁸And again He bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹When they heard this, they began to go away one by one, beginning with the older ones, until only Jesus was left, with the woman standing there. ¹⁰Then Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are your accusers? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹"No one, Lord," she answered. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Now go and sin no more." (BSB)

I. This passage is **not** in our oldest manuscripts. Here are some important ideas to note in regards to this.

A. There are **two** main ways that people deal with this fact.

1. There is the **Revelation 22** method of dealing with this.

Revelation 22:18-19 ¹⁸I testify to everyone who hears the words of prophecy in this book: If anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. ¹⁹And if anyone takes away from the words of this book of prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book. (BSB)

B. There is the **sieve** method of dealing with this.

II Timothy 3:16-17 ¹⁶All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for instruction, for conviction, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷so that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work. (BSB)

II. Let's interpret this passage through **Scripture**.

A. What is this woman's sin and why is it **wrong**? V.3

Adultery is defined as sexual relations with another person in which either one or both involved are legally married to another.

Exodus 20:16 You shall not commit adultery. (BSB)

B. What was the **penalty** of this particular sin? V.5

Leviticus 20:10-14 ¹⁰"If a man commits adultery with another man's wife-with the wife of his neighbor-both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.

¹¹""If a man has sexual relations with his father's wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. ¹²""If a man has sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, both of them are to be put to death. What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads. ¹³""If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads. ¹⁴""If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you. (NIV)

C. What was the significance of Jesus writing in the dirt? V.6

James 1:19-20 ¹⁹My beloved brothers, understand this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, ²⁰for man's anger does not bring about the righteousness that God desires. (BSB)

D. What was the significance of Jesus's answer? V. 7

1. It is possible that all of them deserved the same punishment as her.
2. This would make them unfit to testify against her.

E. What was the response to Jesus's answer? V.9

1. They all abandoned their quest.
2. This created a sort of mistrial. Scripture is clear on the need of two or more witnesses to establish that a crime was committed.

F. When everyone was gone, what was Jesus's response to the woman? V.10-11

1. Jesus is not advocating anarchy.
2. Jesus was advocating grace and mercy.

I Corinthians 6:9-11 ⁹Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who submit to or perform homosexual acts, ¹⁰nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor verbal abusers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (BSB)