

Biblical Mercy: No Condemnation--Go and Sin No More John 7:53-8:11 (Page 78 in the BPB)

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Introduction

The problem with John 7:53-8:11 is summarized as follows by John Piper. (<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/neither-do-i-condemn-you--3>)

1. The story is missing from all the Greek manuscripts of John before the fifth century.
2. All the earliest church fathers omit this passage in commenting on John and pass directly from John 7:52 to John 8:12.
3. In fact, the text flows very nicely from 7:52 to 8:12 if you leave out the story and just read the passage as though the story were not there.
4. No Eastern Church father cites the passage before the tenth century when dealing with this Gospel.
5. When the story starts to appear in manuscript copies of the Gospel of John, it shows up in three different places other than here (after John 7:36; 7:44; 21:25), and in one manuscript of Luke, it shows up after 21:38.
6. Its style and vocabulary is more unlike the rest of John's Gospel than any other paragraph in the Gospel.

D. A. Carson lists many of the same concerns but goes on to say, "On the other hand, there is little reason for doubting that the event here described occurred, even if in its written form it did not in the beginning belong to the canonical books." (The Pillar N.T. Commentary, Gospel of John, 333-34)

The ESV study Bible includes the note, "There is considerable doubt that this story is part of John's original Gospel, for it is absent from all of the oldest manuscripts. But there is nothing in it unworthy of sound doctrine. It seems best to view the story as something that probably happened during Jesus' ministry but that was not originally part of what John wrote in his Gospel. Therefore it should not be considered as part of Scripture and should not be used as the basis for building any point of doctrine unless confirmed in Scripture." (<https://www.esv.org/John+7>)

The Setting:

⁵³**[Everyone went to his home.**

¹**But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.**

This is the only place in John's Gospel that the Mount of Olives is mentioned. See the similarities to Luke 21:37-38.

³⁷Now during the day He was teaching in the temple, but at evening He would go out and spend the night on the mount that is called Olivet. ³⁸And all the people would get up early in the morning to *come* to Him in the temple to listen to Him.

²**Early in the morning**

**He came again into the temple, and
all the people were coming to Him;**

and He sat down and began to teach them.

The Conflict:

³**The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery, and having set her in the center of the court,
⁴they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, in the very act.**

Why was only the woman brought to Jesus?

Using the Law to Entrap the Law-Giver

⁵**"Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women;
what then do You say?"**

Leviticus 20:10

If *there is* a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Deuteronomy 22:22-24

²²"If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.

²³"If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and *another* man finds her in the city and lies with her, ²⁴then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's wife. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

Who is really on trial here, the woman or Jesus?

⁶They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him.

Jesus' Reaction to the Scribes & Pharisees

But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground.

⁷But 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."

⁸Again He stooped down and wrote on the ground.

The Result:

⁹When they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones,

and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the center of the court.

Jesus Addresses the Woman

¹⁰Straightening up, Jesus said to her,
“Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?”

¹¹She said, “No one, Lord.”

The One without Sin Shows Mercy

And Jesus said,

No Condemnation

“I do not condemn you, either.

Mercy is not an Excuse to Sin
Go. From now on sin no more.”]

The Basis for Mercy

Matthew 9:9-13

Ephesians 2:4

Romans 3:21-26

Romans 8:1-4

What about Judging Others?

Matthew 7:1-5

Matthew 5:7