

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

APRIL 16TH, 2023 // GOSPEL OF JOHN

CASTING STONES (JOHN 8:1-11) A GREAT CONTROVERSY?

There was some debate on whether this section (7:53-8:11) was part of John's Gospel since early Greek manuscripts excluded it.

- Ancient scribes did not know where to place this story within John's Gospel or other gospel accounts, but most scholars agree that **this event did occur in the life of Jesus and belongs in Scripture.**

WHOSE LAW WOULD BE BROKEN?

The scribes and Pharisees tried to trap Jesus in His judgment over an adulteress.

- If Jesus claims the woman committed a capital offense punishable by stoning, then He loses the trust of sinners He came to save, also **violating Roman law.** If He lets her go, He would be showing a **disregard for the Law of Moses.**

THE TRAP WAS MOST LIKELY SET UP

In order for the death penalty to be carried out, two to three witnesses had to observe the act and be the first ones to cast stones.

- Both parties would be punished, but we do not see the male participant brought up. Also, since **the act of adultery was a "private sin," it is quite possible that the whole situation was a setup.**

"THE ONE WITHOUT SIN AMONG YOU..."

However, instead of passing judgment on the woman, He first passed judgment on the judges.

- Jesus exposes their hypocrisy and scheming by showing that **the witnesses to the crime, who by law are supposed to cast the first stone, were just as guilty as the woman caught in adultery.**

DROPPING THEIR STONES

What did Jesus write on the ground? Was it the names of the accusers, or their hidden sins? Was it the 10 Commandments to recreate that they were written by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18)? Was He reminding them of the warning in Jeremiah 17:13?

- Whatever it was that Jesus wrote, it was enough to make the men walk away, starting with the older ones.

NO CONDEMNATION FOR THOSE IN CHRIST JESUS

The woman was unfortunately used as a weapon against Jesus, but she was not innocent. Jesus did not condemn her, but He also did condone her sin.

- Forgiveness is not an excuse for sin and demands a clean break from sin. "Go and sin no more" tells us because we are forgiven, we must turn from our sin.

LIGHT OF THE WORLD (JOHN 8:12-20) THE SECOND GREAT "I AM" STATEMENT

At the Feast of Tabernacles, large candelabras were lit in the Temple at night to remind the Israelites of God's guidance in the wilderness.

- Like the water Jesus described in ch. 4 and the bread in 6, light is necessary for life. **Jesus is claiming to be the light given so we do not have to walk in darkness.**

THE LIGHT TESTIFIES ABOUT ITSELF

Typically, Jewish courts would not allow a person to bear witness to themselves, so the Pharisees claimed Jesus testifying to being the light was not valid.

- A light can be seen from a great distance in the darkness and bears witness to itself. **The light tells you that it is there, and the ones who cannot see it are blind.**

OUR JUDGMENTS ARE FAULTY

Jesus makes it clear that their judgment was faulty because they judged based on external knowledge. However, Jesus was able to judge based on spiritual knowledge.

- Jesus exposed that these men with a "great knowledge" of the Law neither understood the Law nor their own sinful hearts by how they judged the adulteress.

THEY DID NOT KNOW THE FATHER OR THE SON

The Law required two witnesses, so Jesus offered them the two testimonies they required: **He gave witness to Himself, and so did the Father.**

- These experts of the Law missed that the Messiah was right in front of them. **They boasted in knowledge of the Law of God, but they did not know the God of the Law.** The Word did not abide in their hearts (John 5:38).

THEY BEGAN TO HURL INSULTS AT JESUS

The Pharisees asked Him, "**Where is your Father?**" They intended it as a dig against Jesus, insinuating that His birth was not a miraculous one, but an illicit one.

- They thought they had "insider information" on Jesus, yet **He reveals that they do not actually know anything about Him or His Father.**

WE NEED THICK SKIN

Instead of being combative or offended by the vulgar claims from the Pharisees, He spoke to their ignorance.

- We need to remember that if they hate us or persecute us, they hated and persecuted Him first (John 15:18). Jesus' reaction was to **forgive them "because they do not know what they are doing"** (Luke 23:34).

UNABLE TO FOLLOW (JOHN 8:21-29) "YOU WILL DIE IN YOUR SIN"

Jesus warned them again (7:34) that He would leave them and where He was going, they could not follow.

- Jesus exemplified the Father in being patient and long-suffering (2 Peter 3:9) with them, but **they were wasting time arguing with Him instead of trusting Him,** and one day soon, their time would run out.

THE INSULTS CONTINUE

The Pharisees hurl another insult at Jesus as they assume He is going to kill Himself.

- For Jews, suicide would have been an abhorrent thing that places the person under a deeper level of judgment since they were taught to honor all life. Again, they missed what Jesus was saying and missed that **they were under judgment.**

WE ARE SINFUL FROM CONCEPTION

We are born in sin (Psalm 51:5), and if we hold onto our sin and never address it, we will die in it and pay for it in Hell. But if we address it and trust in Jesus and His sacrifice to save us, we avoid dying in our sin.

- We cannot think that if we refuse to follow Jesus on earth, we could be allowed to follow Him to Heaven.

"WHO ARE YOU?"

The Pharisees' question was born out of ignorance and frustration. Jesus had told them exactly who He was, yet they challenged His claims repeatedly.

- Jesus responded to them, "**Exactly what I've been telling you from the beginning,**" and when He is "lift[ed] up," they will witness who He is.

"WHEN YOU LIFT UP THE SON OF MAN"

The act of lifting up the Son of Man could mean exalting and glorifying Jesus, but Jesus is alluding to the way that He would be placed on a cross and elevated in a place that all see.

- To Jesus, these two meanings are the same. **His sacrifice on the cross was in obedience to Father, and He always did what pleased the Father.**

ARE WE THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES?

- Do we care more about proving our point or winning an argument regardless of who it hurts? Do we care more about being right than we care about people?
- Are we quick to point out the sin in others while completely ignoring the sin in ourselves?

ARE WE THE ADULTERER?

- Maybe our transgression is not adultery, but there is not one among us who is without sin (Romans 3:23).
- Have we cheapened grace and continued in sin (Romans 6:1), or have we properly responded to the grace we have been given by going and sinning no more (John 8:11)?

THE LAW DOES NOT SAVE US!

- Though the law cannot save us, it shines a light on the sin in all of us (Romans 3:20).
- We stand **condemned by the law,** which moves us to be **cleansed by grace.**
- Conviction is not the same as condemnation (Romans 8:1), and **conviction must come before conversion or correction.**