

## Ask The Rabbi – December 21 2021

### Question:

Is there more to understand about the woman caught in the act of adultery, than what is typically taught from a church perspective?

### Response:

Here is the entire account of the woman caught in the act of committing adultery as is conveyed through Yochanan's Gospel.

**Joh 8:1** But Yeshua went to the Mount of Olives.

**Joh 8:2** At daybreak, he appeared again in the Temple Court, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.

**Joh 8:3** The Torah-teachers and the P'rushim brought in a woman who had been caught committing adultery and made her stand in the center of the group.

**Joh 8:4** Then they said to him, "Rabbi, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery.

**Joh 8:5** Now in our Torah, Moshe commanded that such a woman be stoned to death. What do you say about it?"

**Joh 8:6** They said this to trap him, so that they might have ground for bringing charges against him; but Yeshua bent down and began writing in the dust with his finger.

**Joh 8:7** When they kept questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "The one of you who is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

**Joh 8:8** Then he bent down and wrote in the dust again.

**Joh 8:9** On hearing this, they began to leave, one by one, the older ones first, until he was left alone, with the woman still there.

**Joh 8:10** Standing up, Yeshua said to her, "Where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

**Joh 8:11** She said, "No one, sir." Yeshua said, "Neither do I condemn you. Now go, and don't sin any more."

In reading the entire account first we get all the details, yet what we will do now is break down these verses in order to understand the depth of these verses. A common literary term is "reading between the lines" indicating there is more to what is written and thus there is more to be understood. This is further amplified when you consider the cultural context at the time whereby there is a mindset that is understood by the people of that time. These people are those that are challenging Yeshua, those that are embracing Yeshua and those on the fence.

In addition to the cultural context there is a Scriptural context. Infused within the culture of Y'hudah at the time of Yeshua is the Tanakh, the Hebrew Scriptures. When Yeshua is constantly challenged by the P'rushim and the Torah-teachers, it pertains to a combination of Torah and tradition, that which is not found in Torah, yet as I have shared with you last week is infused into the cultural context through what is known in the New Covenant writings as "The Traditions of the Elders" and what have become the Talmud, otherwise known as the "Oral Law." Without realizing and accepting these elementary aspects, it will be challenging at best and impossible at worst to truly understand the intent of what is being revealed to us, what we are to know, what we are to embrace and thus what we are to live by.

**Joh 8:1** But Yeshua went to the Mount of Olives.

**Joh 8:2** At daybreak, he appeared again in the Temple Court, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.

This is not the first time Yeshua would be at the Temple to teach, yet at this time of Sukkot He will offer some of His most profound teachings. Here we will see Him convey that He is the Living Water and the Bread of Life. His teachings have been both profound in the manner by which He has taught,

**Luk 4:22** Everyone was speaking well of him and marveling that such appealing words were coming from his mouth. They were even asking, "Can this be Yosef's son?"

He spoke about Avraham, Moshe, David, Yonah to name a few. He spoke of Adonai as Father. He spoke of Torah and its Mitzvot. He spoke of the heart and of being born again a concept embraced by the church yet not fully understood. Yeshua's teaching covered many areas, addressing hypocrisy and legalism, yet conveying the heart of Adonai. Thus, this time would be no different though we do not know what Yeshua had taught here, we can understand that it would pertain to the Kingdom of God.

**Joh 8:3** The Torah-teachers and the P'rushim brought in a woman who had been caught committing adultery and made her stand in the center of the group.

In the midst of His teaching, Yeshua was confronted by the Torah-teachers and the P'rushim, having brought a woman caught committing adultery. This is by no means anything to be taken lightly for Torah as revealed by Adonai to Moshe conveys it is a transgression punishable by death.

**Lev 20:10** "If a man commits adultery with another man's wife, that is, with the wife of a fellow countryman, both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.

**Deu 22:22** "If a man is found sleeping with a woman who has a husband, both of them must die—the man who went to bed with the woman and the woman too. In this way you will expel such wickedness from Isra'el.

Two places in Torah the command of stoning is to be performed when the transgression of adultery has been committed. It is such a serious crime because a covenant is involved. In this case the covenant of marriage which is a covenant created and instituted by Adonai.

**Joh 8:4** Then they said to him, "Rabbi, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery.

**Joh 8:5** Now in our Torah, Moshe commanded that such a woman be stoned to death. What do you say about it?"

Yeshua is confronted by the Torah-teachers and P'rushim asking directly...here she is, caught in the act. Yeshua is also confronted by their words, in quoting Torah. They are not incorrect in what they are saying yet the next verse is rather revealing, conveying intent and ultimately motive.

**Joh 8:6** They said this to trap him, so that they might have ground for bringing charges against him; but Yeshua bent down and began writing in the dust with his finger.

When Adonai reveals through Yochanan that this entire confrontation was intended to entrap Yeshua, sirens should be going off, flashing warning signals should be overwhelming you with this single verse. Their intent was to entrap Him for speaking out against the Law of Moshe, setting him up with the evidence and thus the testimony brought before Him. Those that brought the woman must have witnessed what had

transpired, thus challenging Him in front of those that were there listening to His teaching. A very public encounter.

What was Yeshua's initial response? Silence. The only thing he did was write in the sand. There has been a great deal of speculation as to what He had written. It is interesting that Adonai reveals that what is being done here is a trap, yet He remains silent as to what Yeshua was writing. One such perspective is based on Jeremiah 17:13

**Jer 17:13** Hope of Isra'el, Adonai! All who abandon you will be ashamed, those who leave you will be inscribed in the dust, because they have abandoned Adonai, the source of living water.

Those who would abandon Adonai, their names would be written in the sand. Though this is plausible, what Yeshua wrote has not been revealed to us. At this point, no one had abandoned anyone. Thus, in my opinion I am not convinced by this scenario. I have another premise that I will share shortly.

In remaining silent, Yeshua in His own way provoked them. Accusers do not like silence nor being ignored.

**Joh 8:7** When they kept questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "The one of you who is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

They likely continued to press Him on this issue. The same argument, the same questions, the same conclusion from their perspective, all with the intention to entrap Him into speaking against the Torah of Moshe. They wanted Him to blaspheme the Word of God. Yet, Yeshua would have none of that and responded. Knowing that the penalty for adultery is death by stoning, turned the narrative around, conveying to the woman's accusers, you have caught her in the act, thus she is guilty, therefore she is to be stoned. Taking control, Yeshua challenged her accusers, who will throw the first stone.

I can imagine the reaction. A stunned silence fell upon the zealous accusers. He challenges their accusation towards the woman. How long this would last for, Adonai does not reveal, yet in that moment. He did not contradict them in anyway but actually affirmed what the Torah of Moshe conveyed and thus the conveying the responsibility to enact the punishment. Though He would challenge the woman's accusers even further with His response..."The one of you who is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

Upon issuing that challenge, Yeshua repeats His action from before.

**Joh 8:8** Then he bent down and wrote in the dust again.

What did Yeshua write this time?

Was it the same as the first time?

Was it something different?

Ultimately, we do not know. Before I share my thoughts I want to share the next verse.

**Joh 8:9** On hearing this, they began to leave, one by one, the older ones first, until he was left alone, with the woman still there.

Upon Yeshua's challenge..."The one of you who is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."

They would leave, the eldest first...the one's who were most learned, most knowledgeable as it pertains to Torah, because Yeshua challenged the Torah-teachers and the P'urshim on this legal matter, a death penalty case. I believe the response that followed was based on a chain reaction caused by the eldest leaving first.

What did they conclude?

What Did Yeshua write in the sand?

Thus, my theory pertaining to what Yeshua had written in the sand, moreso the second time than the first had to do with His challenge as it pertains to stoning. Knowing the woman's accusers knew Torah combined with Yeshua's understanding that they had come to entrap Him. The best way to challenge someone directly is with the Word of God. We saw this when Yeshua was being tempted by the Adversary...

**Luk 4:9** Then he took him to Yerushalayim, set him on the highest point of the Temple and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, jump from here!"

**Luk 4:10** For the Tanakh says, 'He will order his angels to be responsible for you and to protect you. (Psalm 91:11 - 12)

**Luk 4:11** They will support you with their hands, so that you will not hurt your feet on the stones.' "

**Luk 4:12** Yeshua answered him, "It also says, 'Do not put Adonai your God to the test.' " (Deuteronomy 6:16)

Likewise Yeshua challenged them with what He wrote in the sand. In my opinion it could have been as simple as "where is the man?" or something similar such as the entirety of Leviticus 20:10 or Deuteronomy 22:22. Why the entire verse? Because it contained the full instruction as it pertained to adultery. Everyone there who was learned, knew the Scriptures as it pertained to the penalty for adultery.

**Lev 20:10** " If a man commits adultery with another man's wife, that is, with the wife of a fellow countryman, **both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.**

**Deu 22:22** "If a man is found sleeping with a woman who has a husband, **both of them must die**—the man who went to bed with the woman and the woman too. In this way you will expel such wickedness from Isra'el.

Where the P'rushim and Torah-teachers guilty of their own crime? Some have alluded to bearing false witnesses as is conveyed in Torah and the 10 commandments...

**Exo 20:13** 1 "Do not murder. 2 "Do not commit adultery. 3 "Do not steal. 4 **"Do not give false evidence against your neighbor.**

Yet what we know from what has been revealed is that the woman was brought having been caught in the act. If this statement is not correct and she was not caught in the act, thus fabricating the entire offense, would convey that Scripture is misrepresenting the matter as well. Thus we must take on the merit of these verses that was conveyed is accurate.

Yet, I do believe there is a crime committed by the P'rushim and Torah-teachers and it has to do with what

was not included in their presentation of the defendant, the woman.

**Deu 4:2** In order to obey the mitzvot of Adonai your God which I am giving you, do not add to what I am saying, and do not subtract from it.

Do not add nor subtract. What did the P'rushim and the Torah-teachers do in their presentation of the defendant, the woman caught in the act? They did not bring the man, yet they were expecting Yeshua to rule on the offense based solely on the woman being presented as the offender.

This raises an interesting hypothetical which the church never approaches because their take on this encounter is rather different. We see that Yeshua confronts the woman directly

**Joh 8:10** Standing up, Yeshua said to her, "Where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

Has no one condemned you?

Condemned - sentence (someone) to a particular punishment, especially death.

Has anyone sentenced you to the penalty for the crime that you have committed? Her response and thus Yeshua's response.

**Joh 8:11** She said, "No one, sir." Yeshua said, "Neither do I condemn you. Now go, and don't sin any more."

Yeshua did not condemn her to the punishment (death by stoning) for the crime that she was not only accused of, but was in the act of committing, because the ones who brought her, did so, likely while the act was being committed.

Yeshua did not condemn her even though she was guilty because Torah is merciful in that it does not bear the burden of the punishment on one when there is more than one who has transgressed. In order to enact the death penalty for adultery both the man and the woman must be tried. Both the man and woman if found guilty must be punished.

Thus Yeshua was merciful to her because Torah is merciful.

The misconception placed on Yeshua's action of not condemning the woman is that He forgave her transgression. Yet, He did not say that at all. He did not condemn her to death, but He told her to go and sin no more. Though she was guilty of the crime she was exonerated because the man needed to be there as well.

Thus the premise of Yeshua forgiving her transgression is not supported here because we have other accounts where we read of His authority to forgive one's transgression, because He has the authority to do so. This authority was further elaborated on in my sermon "The Authority of God's Word"

[http://www.shalommaine.com/sermon\\_notes\\_pdf/The\\_Authority\\_of\\_God's\\_Word.pdf](http://www.shalommaine.com/sermon_notes_pdf/The_Authority_of_God's_Word.pdf)

Thus we read of the account of the man who was paralyzed and Yeshua's actions.

**Mat 9:1** So he stepped into a boat, crossed the lake again and came to his own town.

**Mat 9:2** Some people brought him a paralyzed man lying on a mattress. When Yeshua saw their trust, he said

to the paralyzed man, "Courage, son! Your sins are forgiven."

**Mat 9:3** On seeing this, some of the Torah-teachers said among themselves, "This man is blaspheming!"

**Mat 9:4** Yeshua, knowing what they were thinking, said, "Why are you entertaining evil thoughts in your hearts?"

**Mat 9:5** Tell me, which is easier to say—'Your sins are forgiven' or 'Get up and walk'?

**Mat 9:6** But look! I will prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." He then said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, pick up your mattress, and go home!"

**Mat 9:7** And the man got up and went home.

Therefore, the words of Yeshua here clearly convey His authority to forgive sin and thus do so. What transpired with the woman caught in the act of adultery was different.

There is a question that I pose to people after I have shared this teaching and the very different perspective I share. Once we understand Yeshua's authority and the authority of God's Word, both must be in agreement with each other.

Thus, the challenge I make to Believers, for you have heard me teach on this already and many of you know the challenge I make. Yet when someone hears this for the first time they are challenged to the point that it doesn't align with the love of Yeshua and the premise of grace. Grace does not judge but is done in love. Thus knowing that Yeshua is the epitome of the love of God, this must also be balance with the righteousness of God. There must be a total alignment and thus no division.

My challenge to people I share this with is simply this...

What if the Torah-teachers and the P'rushim brought both the woman and the man. What would Yeshua have had to do?

Could He have forgiven their sins? Absolutely! He has the authority to do so in that all authority has been bestowed upon Yeshua. Yet, what if he didn't? What if there was no contrite heart, no T'shuvah, no remorse for their actions.

In order for Yeshua to remain without sin, which is the transgression of Torah..

**1Jn 3:1** See what love the Father has lavished on us in letting us be called God's children! For that is what we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it has not known him.

**1Jn 3:2** Dear friends, we are God's children now; and it has not yet been made clear what we will become. We do know that when he appears, we will be like him; because we will see him as he really is.

**1Jn 3:3** And everyone who has this hope in him continues purifying himself, since God is pure.

**1Jn 3:4** Everyone who keeps sinning is violating Torah—indeed, sin is violation of Torah.

**1Jn 3:5** You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and that there is no sin in him.

Would He have not had to follow Torah? If there is no sin in Him and He is obedient to Torah and does not forgive them when there is no contrition, then He must put them to death for their transgression.

A very different perspective than what has been taught, yet in alignment with what Adonai says. The only presumption made here has to do with what Yeshua may have written in the sand. Yet, regarding Yeshua and what He would have been required to do, does not go against anything Torah says for you are to Love Adonai first. Yeshua has demonstrated this over and over, yet the challenging encounters have been watered down, as

this one has. Yet, tonight, you are experiencing a much different perspective.

I need to elaborate further with regards to the death penalty associated with adultery. As is conveyed in Torah, the penalty is applicable to the those that reside in the land, whether citizen or foreigner...

**Lev 20:10** " **If a man commits adultery with another man's wife, that is, with the wife of a fellow countryman**, both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death.

**Deu 22:22** "If a man is found sleeping with a woman who has a husband, both of them must die—the man who went to bed with the woman and the woman too. **In this way you will expel such wickedness from Isra'el.**

What is this but a law of the land. Though adultery is a sin that does separate and ultimately lead to death among those who are believers, the penalty of stoning is a law of the land. A statute applicable to those residing in the land.

I share this example as it pertains to a citizen of one country who resides in a different country. The laws of the country you come from are not applicable to the country you reside in. Therefore, the punishment of stoning for adultery is not applicable in any other country. Thus Torah is also Isra'el's constitution as it pertains to the laws of the land. We must be careful not to apply that which is not applicable in other nations yet is also the law of the Kingdom. It will be Adonai who judges on those grounds.