

⁵³while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.

1 Early in the morning [Jesus] came again to **THE TEMPLE**. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. ³ The scribes and the Pharisees brought a **woman** who had been **CAUGHT IN adultery**; and making her stand before all of them, ⁴ they said to him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. ⁵ Now in the law Moses commanded us **TO STONE SUCH WOMEN**. Now what do you say?" ⁶ They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and **wrote with his finger on the ground**. ⁷ When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." ⁸ And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹ When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" ¹¹ She said, "No one, sir." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again."]]

Language Notes & Textual Connections

THE TEMPLE: : This was the central place of worship, and also of all Jewish life – commerce, law, education and social thinking. The belief that God had resided within the inner sanctum, or holy of holies, portrayed the Temple as a place where the heavens (the realm of God) touch the earth.

woman :: she must have been married or betrothed as the Law is more concerned with the unfaithfulness of part of the wife, and not with affairs between husbands and unmarried women.

Deuteronomy 22

²² If a man is caught lying with the wife of another man, both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman as well as the woman. So you shall purge the evil from Israel.

²³ If there is a young woman, a virgin already engaged to be married, and a man meets her in the town and lies with her, ²⁴ you shall bring both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death, the young woman because she did not cry for help in the town and the man because he violated his neighbor's wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

²⁵ But if the man meets the engaged woman in the open country, and the man seizes her and lies with her, then only the man who lay with her shall die.

Leviticus 20: 10

¹⁰ If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.

CAUGHT IN: according to Deuteronomy 19 to be convicted of a crime there must be at least two witness. But none seem to come forward. Why? ¹⁵ A single witness shall not suffice to convict a person of any crime or wrongdoing in connection with any offense that may be committed. Only on the evidence

¹² Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life." ¹³ Then the Pharisees said to him, "You are testifying on your own behalf; your testimony is not valid." ¹⁴ Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid because I know where I have come from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going." ¹⁵ You judge by human standards; I judge no one. ¹⁶ Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is valid; for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. ¹⁷ In your law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is valid. ¹⁸ I testify on my own behalf, and the Father who sent me testifies on my behalf." ¹⁹ Then they said to him, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." ²⁰ He spoke these words while he was teaching in the treasury of **THE TEMPLE**, but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- **What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in the text?**
- **This story is only told by John. Why?**
- **The goal of keeping the Law or commandments was to maintain a righteous relationship with God. The opposite of that is "sin." Who is guilty of sin in the story? Why?**
- **Imagine yourself in the story. With whom do you most identify? Why? How?**
- **What do the pharisees and scribe see?; not see? And the woman, what does she see?; not see?**
- **How is the Spirit of God inviting you to *flourishing* faith through this text?**

...of two or three witnesses shall a charge be sustained. ¹⁶

If a malicious witness comes forward to accuse someone of wrongdoing, ¹⁷ then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days, ¹⁸ and the judges shall make a thorough inquiry. If the witness is a false witness, having testified falsely against another, ¹⁹ then you shall do to the false witness just as the false witness had meant to do to the other. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

adultery: curiously the Law is more concerned with the unfaithfulness of part of the wife, and not with affairs between husbands and unmarried women. But the man was still guilty. Why is no man brought forward here for condemnation and judgment?

TO STONE SUCH WOMEN:: Ezekiel 16 seems to confirm that stoning was the common established punishment for adultery.

³⁸ I will judge you as women who commit adultery and shed blood are judged, and bring blood upon you in wrath and jealousy. ³⁹ I will deliver you into their hands, and they shall throw down your platform and break down your lofty places; they shall strip you of your clothes and take your beautiful objects and leave you naked and bare. ⁴⁰ They shall bring up a mob against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords.

wrote with his finger on the ground:: What did Jesus draw or write on the ground with his finger? A tradition from the 10th century says Jesus wrote the sins of the accusers of the woman. Another scholar points out that Roman legal practice involved the judge first writing the sentence then reading it aloud. Some think that Jesus wrote the words of Jeremiah 27:13 "O hope of Israel! O Lord! All who forsake you shall be put to shame; those who turn away from you shall be recorded in the underworld, for they have forsaken the fountain of living water, the Lord." Others think he may have written Exodus 22:3 "You shall not spread a false report. You shall not join hands with the wicked to act as a malicious witness." and others think that maybe he simply traced lines on the ground while he was thinking.