

John 8

1 Everyone went to their own home but Jesus does not have a home. Foxes have holes, birds of the air have nests...(Matthew 8:20) He often resorted to the Mount of Olives where He had access to someone's olive grove. It was probably surrounded by a rock wall with an entrance gate and may have had a keeper who knew Jesus was allowed. There is a cave there in which an olive press was kept. It could provide some shelter from the elements.

2 From the last verse of the last chapter through verse 11 is not in many of the ancient manuscripts. The Feast of Tabernacles is over, but Jesus remains to teach the crowds.

3-5 The scribes and Pharisees have come up with another trap for Jesus. (Luke 11;53-54) Leviticus 20:10 orders the execution of those taken in adultery. The Roman law did not allow Jews to carry out executions. Jesus had earned a reputation as the friend of sinners. The crowds flocked to hear Him partially because of His message of mercy and grace for the simple people. If Jesus denies she should be stoned, He speaks against the Law. If He orders her stoned, the Roman army can arrest Him and there goes His reputation for grace and mercy. They were looking for approval to condemn not reclaim.

6 There are many suggestions as to why Jesus wrote on the ground. He may have been asking the Father for the appropriate answer. One suggestion comes from the word used here in Greek for writing. To write is *graphein*. Here the word is *katagraphein* – to write down or write against. Some suggest that Jesus is writing down the sins of the accusers. The finger of God has written accusations before. (Daniel 5:5) Still they pressed Him for an answer.

7 Finally Jesus straightens up and gives them the ok, but the one who is *anamartetos*, without sinful desire, is to cast the first stone. Jeremiah 23:29
Romans 2:21-24 Remember Jesus' definition of adultery (Matthew 5:28)?

8-11 The older the person is, the more likely they are aware of their many shortcomings. The woman stands before the Rabbi wondering if He will condemn her. He is the only sinless One that could throw a stone. He chooses to give her another chance. He is the God of second chances, the One who has come that we might start again, this time with His life. The religious leaders had come to condemn and find fault; Jesus turns it into restoration and hope. He didn't say her sin was ok, He told her to be changed. John 3:17; Ezekiel 18:30-32; Romans 2:4
Do you see yourself as the woman? Consider James 4:4. Jesus is just as compassionate and hopeful toward you.

Barclay's comments as to the validity of the text: To many this is one of the loveliest and the most precious stories in the gospels; and yet it has great difficulties attaching to it.

The older the manuscripts of the New Testament are, the more valuable they are. They were all copied by hand, and obviously the nearer they are to the original writings the more likely they are to be correct. We call these very early manuscripts the Uncial manuscripts, because they are written in capital letters; and we base the text of the, New Testament on the earliest ones, which date from the fourth to the sixth century. The fact is that of all these early manuscripts this story occurs only in one, and that is

not one of the best. Six of them omit it completely. Two leave a blank space where it should come. It is not till we come to the late Greek manuscripts and the medieval manuscripts that we find this story, and even then it is often marked to show that it is doubtful.

Another source of our knowledge of the text of the New Testament is what are called the versions; that is, the translations into languages other than Greek. This story is not included in the early Syriac version, nor in the Coptic or Egyptian version, nor in some of the early Latin versions.

Again, none of the early fathers seems to know anything about it. Certainly they never mention it or comment on it. Origen, Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Cyril of Alexandria on the Greek side do not mention it. The first Greek commentator to remark on it is Euthymius Zigabenus whose date is A.D. 1118, and even he says that it is not in the best manuscripts.

Where, then, did this incident come from? Jerome certainly knew it in the fourth century, for he included it in the Vulgate. We know that Augustine and Ambrose both knew it, for they comment on it. We know that it is in all the later manuscripts. It is to be noted that its position varies a great deal. In some manuscripts it is put at the end of the fourth gospel; and in some it is inserted after [Lk 21:38](#).

But we can trace it even further back. It is quoted in a third century book called The Apostolic Constitutions, where it is given as a warning to bishops who are too strict. Eusebius, the Church historian, says that Papias tells a story "of a woman who was accused of many sins before the Lord," and Papias lived not very long after A.D. 100.

Here, then, are the facts. This story can be traced as far back as very early in the second century. When Jerome produced the Vulgate he, without question, included it. The later manuscripts and the medieval manuscripts all have it. And yet none of the great manuscripts includes it. None of the great Greek fathers of the Church ever mentions it. But some of the great Latin fathers did know it, and speak of it.

What is the explanation? We need not be afraid that we shall have to let this lovely story go; for it is guarantee enough of its genuineness that we can trace it back to almost A.D. 100. But we do need some explanation of the fact that none of the great manuscripts includes it. Moffatt, Weymouth and Rieu print it in brackets; and the Revised Standard Version prints it in small type at the foot of the page.

Augustine gives us a hint. He says that this story was removed from the text of the gospel because "some were of slight faith," and "to avoid scandal." We cannot tell for certain, but it would seem that in the very early days the people who edited the text of the New Testament thought that this was a dangerous story, a justification for a light view of adultery, and therefore omitted it. After all, the Christian Church was a little island in a sea of paganism. Its members were so apt to relapse into a way of life where chastity was unknown; and were forever open to pagan infection. But as time went on the danger grew less, or was less feared, and the story, which had always circulated by word of mouth and which one manuscript retained, came back.

It is not likely that it is now in the place where it ought to be. It was probably inserted here to illustrate Jesus' saying in [Jn 8:15](#): "I judge no man." In spite of the doubt that the modern translations cast on it, and in spite of the fact that the early manuscripts do not include it, we may be sure that this is a real story about Jesus, although one so gracious that for long men were afraid to tell it.

—Barclay's Daily Study Bible (NT)