

Having been away from this book for some months, let me briefly remind you of the purpose of the book—John tells us the purpose of the book in 20:30-31—"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name..."

Thus—the foremost purpose of the book is to portray Christ as God's eternally begotten Son, that sinners would be saved, and saints encouraged and strengthened in their faith—now, if you notice, John says he selected specific miracles for the serve his primary purpose—"but these are written"—and in fact we know, that he selected 7 signs (miracles), that intentionally vindicate His identity as God's Son, and illustrate His work of salvation...

Now—most of you will remember, that in addition to these 7 selected signs, John also records 7 I AM statements, that often follow the miracles and relate to them—for example, after our Savior fed the multitudes He says of Himself—"I AM the Bread of Life" and after He raised Lazarus, He says—"I AM the Life and Resurrection"—thus, the 7 sign miracles and 7 I AM statements, work together to show His person and work as the Christ...

- I. Jesus Tested by the Scribes and Pharisees—vv1-6a
- II. Jesus Confronts the Scribes and Pharisees—vv6b-9
- III. Jesus Forgives the Adulterous Woman—vv10-11

I. Jesus Tested by the Scribes and Pharisees—vv1-6a

1. Verse 1 is in contrast to the last verse of ch.7—"And everyone went to his own house. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives..."
2. In contrast to the multitudes our Savior, went to the Mount of Olives, where according to Luke (21:37), He slept...
3. Lk.21:37—"And in the daytime He was teaching in the temple, but at night He went out and stayed on the mountain called Olivet..."
4. V2—"Now early in the morning He came again into the temple, and all the people came to Him; and He sat down and taught them..."
5. Let me just mention in passing, here we are reminded both of our Savior's humility, as well as His work ethic...
6. His humility because—"Foxes have holes and birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay *His* head (Lk.9:58)..."
7. His work ethic because, He woke up early and returned again to the temple, where He again taught the people...
8. V3—"Then the scribes and Pharisees brought to Him a woman caught in adultery"—the Scribes and Pharisees were the religious leaders...
9. If you remember, these have been seeking for any form of evidence, that would lead to His arrest and death...
10. This is again their goal, v6—"This they said, testing Him that they might have something of which to accuse Him..."
11. In other words, this entire incident had a single goal—to somehow trick our Savior in saying something that could be used against Him...
12. The Scribes and Pharisees—"brought to Him a woman caught in adultery"—who this woman is we are not told...
13. Neither are we told how the scribes and Pharisees caught her—as you can imagine, many scenarios have been suggested...
14. But—what we do know is that she was an adulteress woman, a woman having relations with a man not her husband...

15. V3b—"And when they had set her in the midst, they said to Him, Teacher, this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act..."
16. Thus—whoever this woman was, one thing is for sure, she was an immoral woman, who violated her marriage covenant...
17. V5—"Now Moses, in the law, commanded us that such should be stoned But what do You say"—this is very crux of the matter...
18. Lev.20:10—"The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death..."
19. Now—I find it interesting that these scribes and Pharisees bring the woman but fail to bring with her the man...
20. For according to the law of Moses, both the adulterer (man) and the adulteress (woman) were to be put to death...
21. Now—humanly speaking, it would appear the scribes and Pharisees have cornered our Savior from two angels...
22. [1] If He agrees the woman should be put to death—then He would be judged a liar, as He's described His kingdom as gracious...
23. Furthermore, it would put Him at odds with the Roman government, who didn't allow the Jews to exercise capital punishment...
24. [2] If He denies the woman should be put to death—then He would be judged as despising the law of Moses...
25. Augustine—"They said in themselves, Let us put before Him a woman caught in adultery; let us ask what is ordered in the law concerning her; if He shall bid stone her, He will not have the name of gentleness: if He give sentence to let her go, He will not keep righteousness..."
26. Thus—at the heart of this dilemma is the basic question—how can God's justice and mercy be harmonized together...
27. This is a question I want to return to, but let me simply suggest, it's in the gospel, where this dilemma is addressed (and it's the primary point of passage)...
28. A.W. Pink—"The problem presented to Christ by His enemies was no mere local one. So far as human reason can perceive it was the profoundest moral problem which ever could or can confront God Himself. That problem was how justice and mercy could be harmonized..."

II. Jesus Confronts the Scribes and Pharisees—vv6b-9

1. Because the motive of these men was wicked, our Savior doesn't even directly answer their deceitful question...
2. V6b—"But Jesus stooped and wrote down on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear (that is their question)..."
3. In other words—He was well-aware of their motives, and in such times, He often refused to directly answer...
4. Thus, instead of providing a direct answer, our Savior puts His finger on the true issue, their sin of hypocrisy...
5. [1] He confronts them with WRITING, v6b—"But Jesus stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger, as though He did not hear..."
6. What precisely our Savior wrote on the ground isn't told us—the possibilities suggested have been numerous...
7. [a] Some have suggested He wrote the Ten Commandments, underscoring the fact they too were guilty of sin...
8. Thus, Arthur Pink makes a connection between God writing the law with His finger, and Christ writing on the ground...
9. [b] Some have suggested He wrote a list of their own sins, and perhaps, a list of women they too sinned with...
10. [c] Some have suggested He wrote nothing of true substance, but instead, merely doodled (scribbled) in the sand...

11. William Hughes—"Perhaps our Savior bent down to hide the look of grief on His face, as He sees what sin has done to this woman and these men..."
12. Personally, I think it's best not to speculate, but simply admit the Holy Spirit hasn't chosen to make this known...
13. [2] He confronts them with WORDS, v7—"so when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up and said to them, He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first..."
14. It seems likely our Savior is referring to Deut.17:7, where the law commanded eye-witnesses to throw the first stones...
15. Deut.17:7—"The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people..."
16. If you notice, technically speaking, our Savior doesn't forbid them to stone her, but appeals to their hypocrisy...
17. V9—"Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest even to the last. And Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst..."
18. They felt conviction within their consciences, which caused them to depart—not one of them was without sin...
19. John records—they left "the oldest even to the last"—the older ones, no doubt, having committed more sins...
20. But—here's the point—they all realize that they were no better than this woman, and thus depart in shame...
21. Now—obviously this doesn't mean they were converted, it means they felt a measure of common conviction...
22. The conscience is God's ally in the soul, and condemned them over their own sins, and perhaps even their hypocrisy...
23. The final works of 9 are highly meaningful—"And Jesus was left alone"—He alone was without sin and worthy to condemn...
24. And thus, the scribes and Pharisees leave in shame, leaving the sinless Savior and the guilty adulteress woman...

III. Jesus Forgives the Adulterous Woman—vv10-11

1. V10—"When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?..."
2. [1] A question—"Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?"—this is obviously rhetorical...
3. Our Savior desired for the woman to consciously see and know, that all of her accusers, had been silenced...
4. [2] A pronouncement—"Neither do I condemn you"—that is, just as her accusers no longer condemned her, neither did He...
5. The only one without sin, the only one able to condemn, doesn't—instead, the assumption is, He acquits her...
6. To acquit is the very opposite of condemn—because He refuses to condemn her, He necessarily acquits her...
7. In other words, as we shall in a moment, it best to understand this guilty woman, as being justified by faith...
8. This is hinted at in v11—"No one, Lord"—this Greek word rendered "Lord" can merely mean "sir" in a general sense...
9. But—here it's likely used in a more theological sense, as a divine title—she came to embrace Him as her Lord...
10. Furthermore, as we shall see next week, our Savior's I AM statement in v12, seems to indicate her darkness was remedied...
11. V12—"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying (that is, those He was teaching), I AM the light of the world..."

12. [3] An exhortation—"go and sin no more"—that is, go forth as a new creature, a changed woman, a forgiven sinner...
13. "Go and sin no more"—no longer commit this sin, no longer live in any sin, but live a holy and righteous life...
14. Thus our Savior isn't merely telling her to go and live better, but He first justifies her and then sanctifies her...
15. That is—He sends her forth forgiven and changed—He sends her forth into the world with His Spirit in her...
16. Thus—what He commands (sin no more), He makes provision for (by His Spirit)—He gives what He commands...

IV. Three Lessons

A. A gross case of hypocrisy

1. If the first century Jewish leadership was guilty of anything, they were grossly guilty of the sin of hypocrisy...
2. In fact I suggest—the sin of these men, was far more heinous than that of this woman, hypocrisy is greater than adultery...
3. Now—this of course, in no way, lessens the severity of adultery—this is a sin of the greatest wickedness and evil...
4. But my dear friends, surely you are well-aware, that our Savior never spoke of sinners as He did of hypocrites...
5. Now—unfortunately, I fear most of us have heard unbelievers or nominal Christians appeal to this passage as a cloak for sin...
6. V7b—"He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first"—that is, don't point out my sin...
7. Because none of us is without sin, some would have us believe, we can never point out the sins of other people...
8. But—this of course is a distortion of our Savior's point—His point is, don't mention other people's sins, if you're not dealing with yours...
9. Matt.7:2-3—"For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye..."
10. John Calvin—"Christ is not forbidding people to do their duty in correcting the sins of others; but by this word he only reproves hypocrites, who mildly flatter themselves and their vices, but are excessively severe, and even act the part of felons, in censuring others..."
11. Thus—having made this clarification, I want to suggest three descriptions of hypocrisy as found in the scribes and Pharisees...
12. [1] They failed to grieve for sin as against God's law—these men were not offended because she broke God's law...
13. This is a sure sign of hypocrisy—to be concerned with someone's sin, but not concerned with the honor of God...
14. For example, think of the sin of sodomy—when you're offended by that sin (and you should be), why are you offended...
15. Are you offended because it's an offense to God, because it's a transgression of His law, because it dishonors Him...
16. These scribes and Pharisees were offended by this ladies adultery, but not because it violated God's holy law...
17. [2] They failed to mingle their indignation with compassion—these men evidently had no concern for her salvation...
18. This is a sure sign of hypocrisy—hypocrites fail to have any genuine love and compassion for the souls of sinners...

19. My friends, Christians understand that they are no better by nature—it's only God's grace that makes us to differ...
20. I mean think of this woman—yes she was a wicked sinner, an adulteress, trampling upon her covenant vows..
21. But she's a person, a lady with a real story, a lady who by her sin is hurting people, but who is also, a hurting person...
22. Brethren, I think fewer things are more relevant to our day than this, as we live in an openly wicked culture...
23. All of us are going to be increasingly confronted with wicked people, and will need to respond in a proper way...
24. How do we respond—first, by calling evil behavior what it is—wickedness—but we must mix this with compassion...
25. I think most of us have interacted with Christians who describe wickedness in a way that grieves our hearts...
26. What they're saying is likely true, but their condemnation of people, lacks humility and a genuine compassion...
27. For example, what if we lived under the OC, and had the tragic responsibility to cast stones at a guilty sinner...
28. Under the OC, the eye-witnesses were to throw the first stones, and let's put our feet in the sandals of an OT saint...
29. You know what, let me tweak the illustration slightly, and suggest that this OT saints had to stone his own son...
30. Under the OC, an older child who blasphemed God and cursed his parents, died at the hands of his own parents...
31. That is, his father and mother, as eye-witnesses, were to be the first people to cast stones at the guilty sinner...
32. Now, let me ask you, how do you think they would do this—with mocking, joking, laughter, and indifference...
33. I assure you dear brethren, they did so with great sorrow and compassion—with broken and grieving hearts...
34. So too, we must be willing to speak the truth (in this sense cast the first stone), as we plainly identify sin as sin...
35. But brethren, we must speak these things with humility and compassion, remembering that sinner is someone's son or daughter...
36. Every sinner is a real person with real dreams and real family, who will spend eternity either in heaven or hell...
37. [3] They failed to aggressively deal with their sins and transgressions—they obviously had their OWN sins...
38. Now—this is obviously a characteristic of a hypocrite, condemning in others, what they are doing in private...
39. I've been a Christian for over 20 years, and because of where I worked for the first 10 years, I've been around allot of blatant hypocrites...
40. And do you know what used to strike me the most—how they would openly condemn in others, what they were secretly doing themselves...
41. Mark it down brethren as a fact, if you openly condemn in others what you're also guilty of—you are a hypocrite...
42. But—it doesn't even have to be the same sin—it can be any sin that you're not dealing with by the grace of God...

B. A change of covenants

1. There's always been a lot of controversy over this passage, and what it says about the relation of the old and new covenants...

2. Now—in order to understand this lesson, I must begin with what I hope is merely a review of the two covenants...
 3. The OC was made with God and the physical nation of Israel—it was typical and temporal in nature—it pointed to Christ and spiritual realities...
 4. The NC is made with God and His new or true Israel (the church), and it fulfills all that the OC shadowed...
 5. Thus—in the OC God added to the TC, ceremonial and civil laws—that all pointed to their need of a Savior...
 6. The ceremonial laws concerned the sacrificial system, dietary and grooming restrictions—they all pointed to Christ...
 7. The civil laws concerned the specific applications of the TC to individual situations (providing various punishments)...
 8. The strictest punishment was that of death, which was mandated for every gross violation of the Ten Commandments...
 9. Those who blasphemed, worshipped idols, trampled the Sabbath, curse their parents, murdered, and committed adultery were put to death...
 10. In most cases—they were stoned to death, and then their dead bodies were hung on a tree for all to see and fear...
 11. This would symbolize the fact that they were cursed by God—rejected from His people and under His wrath...
 12. Now—it's very important to realize that this stoning was a part of the OC, and thus restricted to physical Israel...
 13. In other words—it too was intended to teach the nation about the wages of sin, and to point them to Christ...
 14. Let me put this as plan as I can—capital punishment under the OC, pointed to Christ, just as the sacrificial system...
 15. Gal.3:13-14—"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith..."
 16. Now—the phrase—"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" is a reference to the law of Moses (Deut.21:22-23)...
 17. Deut.21:22-23—"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God..."
 18. Why don't we practice this law—why don't we stone those who are guilty of the sins of adultery and fornication...
 19. My friends, I suggest to you, we don't stone adulterers for the very same reason we don't offer physical sacrifices...
 20. And this is how we reconcile what the law of Moses said about stoning adulterers and Jesus not condemning this woman...
 21. The only way He can uphold both is—if He Himself is stoned in her place—if He bears God's curse for her...
 22. Thus—we learn that God's grace in the GOSPEL, in no way ignores or belittles His righteousness in the LAW...
 23. Well my friend, obviously, His mercy is not contrary to His justice, both attributes must equally find expression...
 24. Thus—it's in Christ and especially the cross, where these attributes meet, and are both glorified and satisfied...
 25. Richard Phillips—"It is the cross that solves the dilemma between justice and mercy, to the glory of God in the highest. It is there at Calvary that Psalm 85:10 can be spoken: 'Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other..'"
- C. A picture of amazing grace

1. Though this passage illustrates the sin of adultery and hypocrisy, it underscores something greater, Christ's love for sinners...
2. My dear friends, the world needs to be confronted of its sin, and Christians must humbly make this known...
3. But—Christians have to remember, the gospel is good news, and from this passage, there are two elements to it...
4. [1] Salvation from condemnation, v10—"Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you? v11—"Neither do I condemn you..."
5. Christ came into the world to save it, not to condemn it, and the reason being, the world is already condemned...
6. We are all condemned by nature, that's why Christ came—He came to take our condemnation for us in our place...
7. Jn.3:17—"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved..."
8. Martin Luther—"If you have tasted the Law and sin, and if you know the ache of sin, then look here, and see how sweet, in comparison, the grace of God is, the grace which is offered to us in the Gospel..."
9. [2] Motivation for obedience, v11—"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more"—you are forgiven and accepted, now go and live like it...
10. Notice the order—Neither do I condemn you (that's forgiveness), go and sin no more (that's a call to holiness)...