

"From the cowardice that shrinks from new truth, from the laziness that is content with half-truths, from the arrogance that thinks it knows all truth, O, God of Truth, deliver us."



A Controversial Newsletter "The Printed Voice of Summit Theological Seminary"

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George L. Faull, Editor

Dear Brother Faull,



It has come to my attention that the story of the woman caught in adultery, recorded in **John 8** is said not to be authentic but has been added to the Bible text. It is not in many of the older manuscripts and furthermore differs in

John's regular vocabulary. Your opinion please.

ANSWER:

I am especially interested in this as we just had a visiting professor, James Snapp Jr., come and give us a great seminar on "Biblical Criticism". He discussed this particular verse with great expertise. He pointed out that it is true that some of the manuscripts do not have it, but many do.

He also pointed out that the event is referred to by persons in writings that are older than the manuscripts that do not contain the history of the woman. He is very gifted in the science of Biblical criticism and I suggest you contact James by visiting his website at <http://www.curtisvillechristianchurch.org/BasicTC.htm>.

My answer to this will be simpler as I am very simple.

First - Let's look at the context and leave out **John 7:53 - 8:11**, which is the alleged interpolation that has been added to John's writing.

In the preceding verses there is an argument among the Pharisees about Jesus. He is not there for they are angry that He was not brought to them. Since the interpolation would not be there, the next verses have Jesus speaking in another building, namely the temple, but the text reads that Jesus spoke unto them again, "I am the light of the world!!!" Wait, he was not speaking to them in **Chapter 7:26-52**; He was not even there where they were arguing among themselves.

However, with the supposed addition left in, **John 7:53's** text tells us that they went home and **John 8:1-2** says Jesus went into the Mount of Olives and the next morning

He was teaching in the temple. It is then that they brought unto Him the woman who had been caught in the very act of adultery.

Without the alleged interpolation the context of the narrative is without any continuity. (I have noticed this is true of many of the narratives which supposedly are not in the text.

For example, **John 5** allegedly does not have the last part of verse 3 and verse 4 about the moving of the water by an angel. However, **John 5:7** is without explainable meaning without the explanation given in verses 3, and 4.

Again, **Mark 16:9-20** is allegedly unreliable and so the Gospel of Mark would end with the women trembling, amazed and afraid, and disobedient to Jesus who told them to go tell what they had seen. What a way to end a book!!!!

But this supposed addition is a perfect and sensible way to end the Gospel. In it you have how the apostle found out that Jesus was alive, their response, and the disbelief of some of the disciples. You have Jesus' rebuke of their unbelief and His command and promise, ending with Mark's divine commentary of the results of their obedience in obeying His command and the fulfillment of His promise in confirming His Word.

Second - The method that uses statistic to determine authorship is relatively new and should be very suspect. It is based upon the number of times a vocabulary word or phrase is used by the writer. It should be rejected as a valid method because of the following simple reasons:

- Scholars say to have any scientific reliability at all would require a minimum of ten thousand words; not the 174 of the text we are concerned with here.
- When this method is tested on manuscripts which are definite of the authorship, it fails to be a reliable test.
- When done on other ancient manuscripts, we find that authors such as Cicero also must have had additions to their text and one wonders why anyone would bother to fool with Cicero's writings. It is only the Bible, or books such as Josephus, which mention Jesus or confirm Bible narratives that skeptics want to

make suspect as they wish to shake people's faith in the Word of God.

Thirdly – Still stranger are those who argue that the words in this passage do not contain some of the words that John ordinarily used as proof that he was not the author of the passage of the adulterous woman. Is this scholarship? Is this science? Is it even rational? Should we question these 74 words because John never used some words he uses elsewhere? Whatever happened to the concept that the author may differ in vocabulary in a paragraph due to the subject on which he is writing?

John is recording an event in history. He did not choose the words of the participants of this historical event. In this narrative, the accusers spoke, the woman spoke, and the Lord spoke. He recorded those words and their actions. To require him to not write their words and use only his own words would require that he not be an accurate recorder of an historical event. He thinks, this speaks more of the intellect of the skeptic than the integrity of the text.

One thing is interesting to note - John often adds comments on the events he is recording more than the other authors of the other three Gospels. (Watch for my article on the nature of John's personal comments in his Gospel)

In this narrative he explains in **verse 6** why they brought the woman to Jesus. He wrote, "This, they said, tempting Him that they might accuse Him." Now those are John's own words in this narrative and the only words by which he should be judged.

I kind of doubt from these ten words that statistics are going to be very helpful in deciding the recorder of an event that is in hundreds of manuscripts, though missing in some, but also recorded in the writings of some non-Biblical texts written before the manuscripts that does not contain the wonderful event.

One other thought. Jesus said to the woman, "Where are your accusers? Hath no man condemned you?" To which she replied, "No man, Lord". Why did He say, "Neither do I condemn you."? He could not condemn her!!! He could not cast a stone even though He was without sin. Why? Because the Law required that the witnesses cast the first stone, and they were gone. **Deuteronomy 17:6-7**

I also note that He never forgave her, as she never expressed any remorse. He merely said all He could say. He said, "Go and sin no more". He could not judge her legally but only pronounced what she did as sin and instructed her not to do it again.

Many of the ancients believed that Jesus was too easy on her and therefore left this event out of the manuscripts as they felt it would promote infidelity. If so, **Revelation 22:18-19** was violated.

However, this event neither excuses adultery, nor sanctions it. It rebukes it and teaches those who have committed it, not to repeat it.

As to what He wrote in the sand that convicted the accusers, I can only conjecture that from the oldest to the youngest He wrote the names of the women with whom they had been immoral. He said, "Let him without sin cast the first stone" and they dropped the stones.

They would have known that He knew they were without moral purity themselves. He who reads the hearts of men and women must never be accused of sanctioning sin without some kind of rebuke. The men were rebuked for their hypocrisy and she for her adultery.

Only the man with whom she committed adultery got away without a rebuke due to the prejudice of those who sought to tempt Him because they never brought him to Jesus with the woman.

If they could get Him to forbid stoning her, He would have been untrue to Moses. If He told them to stone her they would have accused him of breaking the Roman Law which forbade the Jews to practice capital punishment, as they were under Roman jurisdiction.

They here, foiled again. They had been outwitted by Him who knew their hypocrisy and treachery.