

# Exposition of the Gospel of John CHAPTER 28 CHRIST AND THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN

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## Transcript

Exposition of the Gospel of John

CHAPTER 28

CHRIST AND THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN

John 8:1-11

We begin with the customary Analysis:— 1. Jesus retires to the mount of Olives: verse 1. 2. Jesus teaching in the temple: verse 2. 3. The Pharisees confront Him with an adulterous woman: verses 3-6. 4. Christ turns the light upon them: verses 6-8. 5. The Pharisees overcome by the light: verse 9. 6. The woman left alone with Christ: verse 10. 7. The woman dismissed with a warning: verse 11. In this series of expositions of John's Gospel we have sedulously avoided technical matters, preferring to confine ourselves to that which would provide food for the soul. But in the present instance we deem it necessary to make an exception. The passage which is to be before us has long been the subject of controversy. Its authenticity has been questioned even by godly men. John 7:53 to 8:11 inclusive is not found in a number of the most important of the ancient manuscripts. The R.V. places a question mark against this passage. Personally we have not the slightest doubt but that it forms a part of the inspired Word of God, and that for the following reasons: First, if our passage be a spurious one then we should have to pass straight from John 7:52 to 8:12. Let the reader try this, and note the effect; and then let him go back to John 7:52 and read straight through to John 8:14. Which seems the more natural and reads the more smoothly? Second, if we omit the first eleven verses of John 8, and start the chapter with verse 12, several questions will rise unavoidably and prove very difficult to answer satisfactorily. For example: "Then spake Jesus"—when? What simple and satisfactory answer can be found in the second part of John 7? But give John 8:1-11 its proper place, and the answer is, Immediately after the interruption recorded in verse 3. "Then spake Jesus again unto them" (verse 12)—unto whom? Go back to the second half of John 7 and see if it furnishes any decisive answer. But give John 8:2 a place, and all is simple and plain. Again in verse 13 we read, "The Pharisees therefore said unto him": this was in the temple (verse 20). But how came the Pharisees there? John 7:45 shows them elsewhere. But bring in John 8:1-11 and this difficulty vanishes, for John 8:2 shows that this was the day following. In the third place, the contents of John 8:1-11 are in full accord with the evident design of this section of the Gospel. The method followed in these chapters is most significant. In each instance we find the Holy Spirit records some striking incident in our Lord's life, which serves to

introduce and illustrate the teaching which follows it. In chapter 5 Christ quickens the impotent man, and makes that miracle the text of the sermon He preached immediately after it. In John 6 He feeds the hungry multitude, and right after gives the two discourses concerning Himself as the Bread of life. In John 7 Christ's refusal to go up to the Feast publicly and openly manifest His glory, is made the background for that wondrous word of the future manifestation of the Holy Spirit through believers—issuing from them as "rivers of living water." And the same principle may be observed here in John 8. In John 8:12 Christ declares, "I am the light of the world," and the first eleven verses supply us with a most striking illustration and solemn demonstration of the power of that "light." Thus it may be seen that there is an indissoluble link between the incident recorded in John 8:1-11 and the teaching of our Lord immediately following. Finally, as we shall examine these eleven verses and study their contents, endeavoring to sound their marvelous depths, it will be evident, we trust, to every spiritual intelligence, that no uninspired pen drew the picture therein described. The internal evidence, then, and the spiritual indications (apprehended and appreciated only by those who enter into God's thoughts) are far more weighty than external considerations. The one who is led and taught by the Spirit of God need not waste valuable time examining ancient manuscripts for the purpose of discovering whether or not this portion of the Bible is really a part of God's own Word. Our passage emphasizes once more the abject condition of Israel. Again and again does the Holy Spirit call our attention to the fearful state that Israel was in during the days of Christ's earthly ministry. In chapter 1 we see the ignorance of the Jews as to the identity of the Lord's forerunner (John 1:14), and blind to the Divine Presence in their midst (John 1:26). In chapter 2 we have illustrated the joyless state of the nation, and are shown their desecration of the Father's House. In chapter 3 we behold a member of the Sanhedrin dead in trespasses and sins, needing to be born again (John 3:7), and the Jews quibbling with John's disciples about purifying (John 3:25). In chapter 4 we discover the callous indifference of Israel toward their Gentile neighbors—"the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans" (John 4:9). In chapter 5 we have a portrayal of God's covenant people in the great multitude of impotent folk, "blind, halt and withered." In chapter 6 they are represented as hungry, yet having no appetite for the Bread of life. In chapter 7 the leaders of the nation send officers to arrest Christ. And now in chapter 8 Israel is contemplated as Jehovah's unfaithful wife—"adulterous." "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives" (John 8:1). This points a contrast from the closing verse of the previous chapter. There we read, Every man went unto his own house. Here we are told, "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives." We believe that this contrast conveys a double thought, in harmony with the peculiar character of this fourth Gospel. All through John two things concerning Christ are made prominent: His essential glory and His voluntary humiliation. Here, the Holy Spirit presents Him to us as the eternal Son of God, but also as the Son come down from heaven, made flesh. Thus we are given to behold, on the one hand, His uniqueness, His peerless excellency; and on the other, the depths of shame into which He descended. Frequently these are placed almost side by side. Thus in chapter 4, we read of Him, "wearied with his journey" (verse 6); and then in the verses that follow, His Divine glories shine forth. Other examples will recur to the reader. So here in the passage before us. "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives" (following John 7:53) suggests the elevation of Christ. But no doubt it also tells of the humiliation of the Savior. The foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, but the Son of man had not where to lay His head (Matthew 8:20): therefore, when "every man went unto his own house," "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives," for He "owned" no "house" down here. He who was rich for our sakes became poor. "And early in the morning he came again into the temple" (John 8:2). There is nothing superfluous in Scripture. Each one of these scenes has been drawn by the Heavenly Artist, so we may be fully assured that every line, no matter how small, has a meaning and value. If we keep steadily before us the subject of this picture we shall be the better able to appreciate its varied tints. The theme of our chapter is the outshining of the Light

of life. How appropriate then is this opening word: the early "morning" is the hour which introduces the daylight! "And early in the morning he came again into the temple." This word also conveys an important practical lesson for us, inasmuch as Christ here leaves an example that we should follow His steps. In the first sermon of our Lord's recorded in the New Testament we find that He said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33), and He ever practiced what he preached. The lesson which our Redeemer here exemplified is, that we need to begin the day by seeking the face and blessing of God! The Divine promise is, "They that seek me early shall find me" (Prov. 8:17). How different would be our lives if we really began each day with God! Thus only can we obtain that fresh supply of grace which will give the needed strength for the duties and conflicts of the hours that follow. "And all the people came unto him" (John 8:2). This is another instance where the word "all" must be understood in a modified sense. Again and again is it used relatively rather than absolutely. For example, in John 3:26 we read of the disciples of John coming to their master in complaint that Christ was attracting so many to Himself: "all come to him," they said. Again, in John 6:45 the Lord Jesus declared, "They shall be all taught of God." So here, "all the people came unto him." These and many other passages which might be cited should prevent us from falling into the errors of Universalism. For example, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all unto me" (John 12:32), does not mean all without exception. It is a very patent fact that everybody is not "drawn" to Christ. The "all" in John 12:32 is all without distinction. So here "all the people came unto him" (John 8:2) signifies all that were in the temple, that is, all kinds and conditions of men, men of varied age and social standing, men from the different tribes. "And he sat down, and taught them" (John 8:2). Jesus stood; Jesus walked; Jesus sat. Each of these expressions in John's Gospel conveys a distinctive moral truth. Jesus "stood" directs attention to the dignity and blessedness of His person, and it is very solemn to note that in no single instance (where this expression occurs) was the glory of His person recognized: cf. John 1:26; 7:37 and what follows; John 20:14, 19, 26; 21:4. Jesus "walked" refers to the public manifestation of Himself: see our notes on John 7:1. Jesus "sat" points to His condescending lowliness, meekness and grace: see John 4:6; 6:3; 12:15. "And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him" (John 8:3-6). Following the miscarriage of their plans on the previous day—through the failure of the officers to arrest Christ (John 7:45)—the enemies of Christ hit upon a new scheme: they sought to impale Him on the horns of a dilemma. The roar of the "lion" had failed; now we are to behold the wiles of the "serpent." The awful malignity of the Lord's enemies is evident on the surface. They brought this adulterous woman to Christ not because they were shocked at her conduct, still less because they were grieved that God's holy law had been broken. Their object was to use this woman to exploit her sin and further their own evil designs. With coldblooded indelicacy they acted, employing the guilt of their captive to accomplish their evil intentions against Christ. Their motive cannot be misinterpreted. They were anxious to discredit our Lord before the people. They did not wait until they could interrogate Him in private, but, interrupting as He was teaching the people, they rudely challenged Him to solve what must have seemed to them an unsolvable enigma. The problem by which they sought to defy Infinite Wisdom was this: A woman had been taken in the act of adultery, and the law required that she should be stoned. Of this there is no room for doubt, see Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22.[1] "What sayest thou?" they asked. An insidious question, indeed. Had He said, "Let her go," they could then accuse Him as being an enemy against the law of God, and His own word "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew verse 17) had been falsified. But if He answered, "Stone her," they would have ridiculed the fact that He was the "friend of publicans and sinners." No doubt they were

satisfied that they had Him completely cornered. On the one hand, if He ignored the charge they brought against this guilty woman, they could accuse Him of compromising with sin; on the other hand, if He passed sentence on her, what became of His own word, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17)? Here, then, was the dilemma: if Christ palliated the wickedness of this woman, where was His respect for the holiness of God and the righteousness of His law; but if He condemned her, what became of His claim that He had come here to "seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10)? And yet of what avail was their satanic subtlety in the presence of God manifest in flesh! Ere passing on it may be well to notice how this incident furnishes an illustration of the fact that wicked men can quote the Scriptures when they imagine that it will further their evil designs: "Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned." But what cared they for the law? They were seeking to turn the point of the Spirit's "sword" against the One they hated; soon they were to feel its sharp edge of themselves. Let us not be deceived then and conclude that every one who quotes Scripture to us must, necessarily, be a God-fearing man. Those who quote the Scriptures to condemn others are frequently the guiltiest of all. Those who are so solicitous to point to the mote in another's eye, generally have a beam in their own. But there is far more here than meets the eye at first glance, or second too. The whole incident supplies a most striking portrayal of what is developed at length in the epistle to the Romans. It is not difficult to discern here (skulking behind the scenes) the hideous features of the great Enemy of God and His people. The hatred of these scribes and Pharisees was fanned by the inveterate enmity of the Serpent against the woman's "Seed." The subject is profoundly mysterious, but Scripture supplies more than one plain hint that Satan is permitted to challenge the very character of God—the book of Job, the third of Zechariah, and Revelation 12:10 are proofs of that. No doubt one reason why the Lord God suffers this is for the instruction of the unfallen angels—cf. Ephesians 3:10. 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. The law of righteousness imperatively demands the punishment of its transgressor. To set aside that demand would be to introduce a reign of anarchy. Moreover, God is holy as well as righteous; and holiness burns against evil, and cannot allow that which is defiled to enter His presence. What, then, is to become of the poor sinner? A transgressor of the law he certainly is; and equally manifest is his moral pollution. His only hope lies in mercy; his salvation is possible only by grace. But how can mercy be exercised when the sword of justice bars her way? How can grace flow forth except by slighting holiness? Ah, human wisdom could never have found an answer to such questions. It is evident that these scribes and Pharisees thought of none. And we are fully assured that at the beginning Satan himself could see no solution to this mighty problem. But blessed be His name, God has "found a way" whereby His banished ones may be restored (2 Sam. 14:13, 14). What this is we shall see hinted at in the remainder of our passage. Let us observe how each of the essential elements in this problem of all problems is presented in the passage before us. We may summarize them thus: First, we have there the person of that blessed One who had come to seek and to save that which was lost. Second, we have a sinner, a guilty sinner, one who could by no means clear herself. Third, the law was against her: the law she had broken, and the declared penalty of it was death. Fourth, the guilty sinner was brought before the Savior Himself, and was indicted by His enemies. Such, then, was the problem now presented to Christ. Would grace stand helpless before law? If not, wherein lay the solution? Let us attend carefully to what follows. "But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground" (John 8:6). This was the first thing that He here did. That there was a symbolical significance to His action goes without saying, and what this is we are not left to guess. Scripture is its own interpreter. This was not the first time that the Lord had written "with his finger." In Exodus 31:18 we read, "And he

gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God." When, then, our Lord wrote on the ground (from the ground must the "tables of stone" have been taken), it was as though He had said, You remind Me of the law! Why, it was My finger which wrote that law! Thus did He show these Pharisees that He had come here, not to destroy the law, but to fulfill it. His writing on the ground, then, was (symbolically) a ratification of God's righteous law. But so blind were His would-be accusers they discerned not the significance of His act. "So when they continued asking him" (John 8:7). It is evident that our Lord's enemies mistook His silence for embarrassment. They no more grasped the force of His action of writing on the ground, than did Belshazzar understand the writing of that same Hand on the walls of his palace. Emboldened by His silence, and satisfied that they had Him cornered, they continued to press their question upon Him. O the persistency of evil-doers! How often they put to shame our lack of perseverance and importunity. "So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7). This, too, has a far deeper meaning than what appears on the surface. God's Law was a holy and a righteous one, and here we find the Lawgiver Himself turning its white light upon these men who really had so little respect for it. Christ was here intimating that they, His would-be accusers, were no fit subjects to demand the enforcement of the law's sentence. None but a holy hand should administer the perfect law. In principle, we may see here the great Adversary and Accuser reprimanded. Satan may stand before the angel of the Lord to resist "the high priest" (Zech. 3:1), but, morally, he is the last one who should insist on the maintenance of righteousness. And how strikingly this reprimanding of the Pharisees by Christ adumbrated what we read of in Zechariah 3:2 ("The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan") scarcely needs to be pointed out. "And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground" (John 8:8). Profoundly significant was this, and unspeakably blessed. The symbolic meaning of it is plainly hinted at in the word "again": the Lord wrote on the ground a second time. And of what did that speak? Once more the Old Testament Scriptures supply the answer. The first "tables of stone" were dashed to the ground by Moses, and broken. A second set was therefore written by God. And what became of the second "tables of stone"? They were laid up in the ark (Ex. 40:20), and were covered by the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat! Here, then, Christ was giving more than a hint of how He would save those who were, by the law, condemned to death. It was not that the law would be set aside: far from it. As His first stooping down and with His finger writing on the ground intimated, the law would be "established." But as He stooped down and wrote the second time, He signified that the shed blood of an innocent substitute should come between the law and those it condemned! "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last" (John 8:9). Thus was "the strong man bound" (Matthew 12:29). Christ's enemies had thought to ensnare Him by the law of Moses; instead, they had its searching light turned upon themselves. Grace had not defied, but had upheld the law! One sentence from the lips of Holiness incarnate and they were all silenced, all convicted, and all departed. At another time, a self-righteous Pharisee might boast of his lastings, his tithes and his prayers; but when God turns the light on a man's heart, his moral and spiritual depravity become apparent even to himself, and shame shuts his lips. So it was here. Not a word had Christ uttered against the law; in nowise had He condoned the woman's sin. Unable to find any ground for accusation against Him, completely baffled in their evil designs, convicted by their consciences, they slunk away: "beginning at the eldest," because he had the most sin to hide and the most reputation to preserve. And in the conduct of these men we have a clear intimation of how the wicked will act in the last great Day. Now, they may proclaim their self-righteousness, and talk about the injustice of eternal punishment. But then, when the light of God flashes upon them, and their guilt and ruin are fully exposed, they shall, like these Pharisees, be speechless. "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out." There is a

solemn warning here for sinners who may be exercised in mind over their condition. Here were men who were "convicted by their own conscience," yet instead of this causing them to cast themselves at the feet of Christ, it resulted in them leaving Christ! Nothing short of the Holy Spirit's quickening will ever bring a soul into saving contact with the Lord Jesus. "And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst" (John 8:9). This is exceedingly striking. These scribes and Pharisees had challenged Christ from the law. He met them on their own ground, and vanquished them by the law. "When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee" (John 8:10, 11). The law required two witnesses before its sentence could be executed (Deut. 19:15), yet, those witnesses must assist in the carrying out of the sentence (Deut. 17:7). But here not a single witness was left to testify against this woman who had merely been indicted. Thus the law was powerless to touch her. What, then, remained? Why, the way was now clear for Christ to act in "grace and truth." "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11). No doubt the question occurs to many of our readers, Was this woman saved at the time she left Christ? Personally, we believe that she was. We believe so because she did not leave Christ when she had opportunity to do so; because she addressed Him as "Lord" (contrast "Master" of the Pharisees in verse 4); and because Christ said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee." But, as another has said, "In looking at these incidents of Scripture, we need not ask if the objects of the grace act in the intelligence of the story. It is enough for us that here was a sinner exposed in the presence of Him who came to meet sin and put it away. Whoever takes the place of this woman meets the word that clears of condemnation, just as the publicans and sinners with whom Christ eats in Luke 15, set forth this, that if one takes the place of the sinner and the outcast, he is at once received. So with the lost sheep and the lost piece of silver. There is no intelligence of their condition, yet they set forth that which, if one take, it is representative. To make it clear, one might ask, 'Are you as sinful as this woman, as badly lost as that sheep or piece of silver?'" (Malachi Taylor)

"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." How striking and how blessed is this sequel to what has been before us! When Christ wrote on the ground the second time (not before), the "accusers" of the guilty departed! And then, after the last accuser had disappeared, the Lord said, "Neither do I condemn thee." How perfect the picture! And to complete it, Christ added, "Go, and sin no more," which is still His word to those who have been saved by grace. And the ground, the righteous ground, on which He pronounced this verdict "Neither do I condemn thee," was, that in a short time He was going to be "condemned" in her stead. Finally, note the order of these two words of Christ to this woman who owned Him as "Lord" (1 Cor. 12:3). It was not, "Go and sin no more, and I will not condemn thee," for that would have been a death-knell rather than good news in her ears. Instead, the Savior said, "Neither do I condemn thee." And to every one who takes the place this woman was brought into, the word is, "There is therefore now no condemnation" (Rom. 8:1). "And sin no more" placed her, as we are placed, under the constraint of His love. This incident then contains far more than that which was of local and ephemeral significance. It, in fact, raises the basic question of, How can mercy and justice be harmonized? How can grace flow forth except by slighting holiness? In the scene here presented to our view we are shown, not by a closely reasoned out statement of doctrine, but in symbolic action, that this problem is not insoluble to Divine wisdom. Here was a concrete case of a guilty sinner leaving the presence of Christ un-condemned. And it

was neither because the law had been slighted nor sin palliated. The requirements of the law were strictly complied with, and her sin was openly condemned—"sin no more." Yet, she herself, was not condemned. She was dealt with according to "grace and truth." Mercy flowed out to her, yet not at the expense of justice. Such, in brief, is a summary, of this marvelous narrative; a narrative which, verily, no man ever invented and no uninspired pen ever recorded. This blessed incident not only anticipated the epistle to the Romans, but it also outlines, by vivid symbols, the Gospel of the grace of God. The Gospel not only announces a Savior for sinners, but it also explains how God can save them consistently with the requirements of His character. As Romans 1:17 tells us, in the Gospel is "the righteousness of God revealed." And this is precisely what is set forth here in John 8. The entire incident is a most striking amplification and exemplification of John 1:17: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The grace of God never conflicts with His law, but, on the contrary, upholds its authority, "As sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 5:21). But as to how grace might reign "through righteousness" was a problem which God alone could solve, and Christ's solution of it here marks Him as none other than "God manifest in flesh." With what blessed propriety, then, is this incident placed in the fourth Gospel, the special design of which is to display the Divine glory of the Lord Jesus! Perhaps a separate word needs to be said on verse 7, in connection with which some have experienced a difficulty; and that is, Do these words of Christ enunciate a principle which we are justified in using? If so, under what circumstances? It is essential to bear in mind that Christ was not here speaking as Judge, but as One in the place of the Servant. The principle involved has been well stated thus, "We have no right to say to an official who in condemning culprits or in prosecuting them is simply discharging a public duty, 'See that your own hands be clean, and your own heart pure before you condemn another'; but we have a perfect right to silence a private individual who is officiously and not officially exposing another's guilt, by bidding him remember that he has a beam in his own eye which he must first be rid of" (Dr. Dods). The "scribes and Pharisees" who brought the guilty adulteress to Christ must be viewed as representatives of their nation (as Nicodemus in John 3 and the impotent man in John 5). What, then, was the spiritual condition of Israel at that time? It was precisely that of this guilty woman: an "evil and adulterous generation" (Matthew 12:37) Christ termed them. But they were blinded by self-righteousness: they discerned not their awful condition, and knew not that they, equally with the Gentiles, were under the curse that had descended upon all from our father, Adam. Moreover; they were under a deeper guilt than the Gentiles—they stood convicted of the additional crime of having broken their covenant with the Lord. They were, in fact, the unfaithful, the adulterous wife of Jehovah (see Ezekiel 16; Hosea 2, etc.). What, then, did Jehovah's law call for in such a case? The answer to this question is furnished in Numbers 5, which sets forth "the law of jealousy," and describes the Divinely-ordered procedure for establishing the guilt of an unfaithful wife. We cannot here quote the whole of Numbers 5, but would ask the reader to turn to and read verses 11-31 of that chapter. We quote now verses 17, 24, 27:—"And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water... And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter... And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people!" What light these verses cast upon our Lord's dealings with the Pharisees (representatives of Israel) here in John 8. "Water" is the well-known emblem of the Word (Eph. 5:26, etc.). This water is here termed "holy." It was to be in an earthen vessel (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7). This water was to be mixed with "the dust which is in the floor of the tabernacle."—Thus the water becomes

"bitter water," and the woman was made to drink it. The result would be (in case she was guilty) that her guilt would be outwardly evidenced in the swelling of her belly (symbol of pride) and the rotting of her thigh—her strength turned to corruption. Now put these separate items together, and is it not precisely what we find here in John 8? The Son of God is there incarnate, "made flesh," an "earthen vessel." The "holy water" is seen in His holy words—"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." In stooping down and writing on the floor of the temple, He mingled "the dust" with it. As He did this it became "bitter" to the proud Pharisees. In the conviction of their consciences we see how "bitter," and in going out, one by one, abashed, we see the withering of their strength! And thus was the guilt of Jehovah's unfaithful wife made fully manifest! The following questions bear upon the next chapter:— 1. What is meant by "the world" in verse 12? Do not jump to conclusions. 2. What kind of light does "the world" enjoy? verse 12 3. What is "the light of life"? verse 12. 4. To what "witness of the Father" was Christ referring? verse 18. 5. What does "die in your sins" (verse 21) prove concerning the Atonement? 6. What is the meaning of verse 31? 7. What does the truth make free from? verse 32. ENDNOTES:

[1] Where the form of death was not specified, it was by stoning.

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