

The Woman taken in Adultery (Pericope de Adultera)

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Thought upon "Pericope Adultera" last night after watching "The Merchant of Venice" (an excellent production starring Jeremy Irons & Al Pacino) and how it illustrates the saying, "a greater than Solomon is here". Solomon displayed his great wisdom by his judgment in the extremely difficult case of the two prostitutes who each claimed to be the mother of a child which was smothered inadvertently while they were all sleeping in the same house. Each woman claimed the other had smothered her own child accidentally while sleeping, and then switched her dead child for the other's living child. (*See 1 Kings 3:16-28.*)

The story of the woman taken in adultery (John 7:53-8:11) is such an account. The Pharisees are said to have been testing Jesus by this confrontation with a supposed conundrum: The Law was supposed to demand that the woman be stoned to death; Jesus was supposed to oppose the Law of Moses and support mercy unconditionally.

Some people claim this account is not part of John's original Gospel. The oldest Greek manuscripts lack it. Most Peshitta Aramaic mss. lack it. One Peshitta ms. has it, as do eleven other Aramaic manuscripts. Most Greek mss. contain the passage, as do the ancient versions.

Some say the passage contradicts the Law of Moses and that Jesus would not have done what the account attributes to him.

What the account illustrates to an extraordinary degree is precisely what its detractors lack: wisdom.

Consider the following excerpts: "But the Scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been seized in adultery, and when they stood her in the midst"- John 8:3

Where was the man? Did the woman sin alone? The Old Testament books of Leviticus 20:10 and Deuteronomy 22:22 say that the adulterer and the adulteress should both be put to death. This is a very suspicious case, legally, since only the woman was arrested, when, according to the Pharisees, "this woman was taken openly in the act of adultery." John 8:4

Well, if that was so, there was a guy involved as well. Where was he? It appears that this was not a matter of legal concern to these men, but rather it was a political ploy to embarrass Jesus publically.

"But as they persisted asking him, he stood up and he said to them, "He among you who is without sin, let him first cast a stone upon her." – chapter 8,verse 7

This judgment reveals a wisdom so great that it could only be divine. It also is above the heads of many self professed wizards of smart who simply cannot think on a high enough level to grasp the wisdom and beauty of it.

The former exposition leads me to say this: Our age has become one which boasts of intelligence and yet is peopled by educated fools. We have almost no concept left of wisdom. We are flooded with

information and facts, but we do not even think anymore. We have lost knowledge and reason. The explanation for this is that we have lost contact with God as a society.

"He among you who is without sin, let him first cast a stone upon her."

God did not give us the Law so that we could be judges and stone people to death. He gave it to us to teach us that we are all sinners who deserve to be stoned to death. "But we know that whatever things The Written Law has said, it has said to those who are into The Written Law, that every mouth may be shut and the whole universe may be guilty before God, because by works of The Written Law no one is justified before him, for by The Written Law sin has been made known". – Romans 3:19, 20

Do not speak against each other, my brethren, for he who speaks against his brother or judges his brother speaks against The Written Law, and judges The Written Law; if you judge The Written Law, you are not a doer of the law, but its judge. One is he who lays down The Written Law and judgment, who is able to give life and to destroy. Who are you who are judging your neighbor? - James 4:11,12

But until the faith would come, The Written Law had kept us while we were closed off to the faith that was going to be revealed. The Written Law was therefore a guide for us to The Messiah that we would be made right by faith. But when the faith came we were not under a guide. – Galatians 3:23-25

The Law was given to teach us humility and our need for The Christ; for the Jews, it had almost universally the opposite effect. They boasted in the Law and sought to establish their own righteousness, being ignorant of the righteousness of God. – Romans 10:3

The Law of Moses (The Torah) teaches us the need for mercy! Justice is what we do not want, for if we require justice for others, we are requiring it for ourselves. Shakespeare's character Shylock, in "Merchant of Venice", who demanded a pound of flesh as payment from his borrower who could not repay what he borrowed, learned that requiring justice for another without mercy kills both parties involved. You don't want to go there.

The account of John 8:1-11 cries out, "Mercy!" It is God's answer to the legalists, whether Jews or Gentiles. It is the wisdom of God responding to man's sin.

The Law required the death of the adulterer and the adulteress; that was not being considered or pursued, hence, even the Law of Moses was not the central concern to the Jewish leaders who had brought this woman to Jesus.

The Law requires sinlessness and assumes that the penalty for its infraction will be executed by Law keepers: "*He who is sinless among you*".

De 27:26 **Cursed is everyone who shall not affirm the words of this Law and do them**, and all the people shall say. Amen.

Galatians 3:10 "For those who are of the works of The Written Law are under a curse, for it is written: "**Cursed is everyone who shall not do all that is written in this Law.**"

Otherwise, we sanction hypocrisy. We cannot have the accursed executing the accursed. God will not sanction hypocrisy.

Damned is the man who damns mercy for another. "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven," said Jesus.

"The Written Law was therefore a guide for us to The Messiah that we would be made right by faith." So the story of John illustrates this. The adulteress was brought to The Christ by the Law and by its professed adherents, though they were sinners as she.

“For The Messiah is the consummation of The Written Law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”
– Romans 10:4

“And stooping down again, he wrote on the ground. But when these heard, they were exiting, one by one, beginning from the Elders, and the woman who had been in the midst was left alone”. – John 8:8,9

The Apostle James wrote: “One is he who lays down The Written Law and judgment, who is able to give life and to destroy. Who are you who are judging your neighbor?” We are all undone and unworthy to judge another soul.

“And the woman who had been in the midst was left alone”.-v.9

The end of the Law had been achieved. There is the picture of life’s purpose unveiled:

One soul in the presence of The Christ.

Our Lord stood up and spoke to the woman: “Where are they? Has no man condemned you?”
“No man, **LORD GOD**”, she said.

Reading this in Aramaic is a shocking revelation. “La enash, Marya”. – “No man, **LORD JEHOVAH**”.
According to the Aramaic, the language Jesus and the Jewish people spoke, the woman confessed Jesus to be God Himself!

The Greek manuscripts have merely, “Kurios” - “Lord” or “Sir”.

“No person can say **Jesus is LORD JEHOVAH** (Yeshua hu Marya) except by The Holy Spirit.” -1 Cor. 12:3
Perhaps this was the stumbling block to some who exclude this account from John’s Gospel. Perhaps the account was accidentally omitted in the 1st century Peshitta copy made of the original manuscript John wrote, as I show in the appendix to my plain English translation of the Aramaic New Testament.

This woman would have been the first person to confess Yeshua as The Lord God. Her eyes had been opened by The Spirit of Holiness and her heart had received the gift of faith and revelation in the knowledge of Him. She believed in her heart and confessed with her mouth Jehovah Yeshua, and received eternal Life.

“Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more”. Only The **LORD GOD** could speak so. **No man** had condemned, **neither did He, indicating that He was speaking as God, not just a man.** “Neither do I” implies He is in a category separate from man. “Go and sin no more” is an assertion of divine authority and power never uttered by any mere Prophet or Priest. It is a command which would be sheer presumption and blasphemy on the lips of anyone but God Himself. Such words would also be powerless to her who heard them, unless she was convinced that he who uttered them was The Eternal God **JEHOVAH** of Hosts.

“Go and sin no more”. Sheer presumption and naivete would cause a man to speak so to a sinful woman; but this was no mere man speaking. He was who she confessed he was. He is The **LORD** of Heaven and Earth, in whose hand all things are upheld. His word is the power that created the universe and holds it together every moment. He is the **LORD JEHOVAH** of Hosts who appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and to all the Prophets.

No man would dare speak as this man spoke, and be a sane man, unless that man were God.

The words of the text prove themselves divine. No mortal could have invented them.

For The Messiah is the consummation of The Written Law for righteousness to everyone who believes.

For Moses wrote in this way of the righteousness which is in The Written Law: "Whoever shall do these things shall live in them." But the righteousness which is in faith says thus: "You shall not say in your heart, 'Who ascended to Heaven and sent down The Messiah?', 'and who went down to The Abyss of Sheol and brought up The Messiah from among the dead?'" But what does it say? "**The answer is near your mouth and your heart.**" This is the word of the faith that we preach.

And if you will confess with your mouth Our Lord Yeshua, and you will believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall have life.

For the heart that believes in him is made right, and the mouth that confesses him has life.

For the Scriptures say, "Everyone who believes in him will be unashamed."

And he makes no distinction in this, not for the Jews, neither for the Aramaeans, for he is The One LORD JEHOVAH to all of them, who is rich with everyone who calls to him.

For everyone who will call the name of THE LORD JEHOVAH shall be saved." - Romans 10:4-13

The Old Testament book of Moses, Deuteronomy, is what Paul was quoting in Romans 10. Here are the verses in Deuteronomy:

De 30:11 ¶ For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off.

De 30:12 It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

De 30:13 Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?

De 30:14 But **the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.**

According to the Apostle Paul, the word of God and the Law of God is The Messiah: *'Who ascended to Heaven and sent down The Messiah, and who went down to The Abyss of Sheol and brought up The Messiah from among the dead?'*- Romans 10:6,7

The word of God is not merely written on manuscripts and paper. It is in your heart and in your mouth, in The Spirit of God. When you truly recognize the word of truth by The Spirit, you will recognize Him as a Person. You will know Him when you hear Him and when you read Him, and when you confess Him and call upon Him, you will receive Life eternal.

Criticizing Bible texts is a very dangerous business, spiritually. We are much safer submitting ourselves to being criticized by the Bible, instead of standing in judgment over it, as if we are God's judges. All of us have the truth within us. We must, however, acknowledge and obey the truth in order to receive Life. Ultimately we shall all answer to God's Living Word- The LORD Christ, for what we did with the Truth.

"I said to you that you shall die in your sins, for unless you shall believe that I AM THE LIVING GOD, you shall die in your sins."

Yeshua spoke again to them : "When you have lifted up The Son of Man, then you shall know that I AM THE LIVING GOD, and I do nothing for my own pleasure, but just as my Father has taught me, so I am speaking.

"And you will know the truth, and that truth will set you free."- John 8:26,28,32

“Neither do I condemn you.
Go and sin no more.”