

# Bite Size Bible Study

## Caught in Adultery pt 2 #180

By Pastor Lee

As we saw in the last study water was an integral part of the Feast of Booths (Tabernacles). On the last day of this feast the Pharisees brought a woman accused of adultery to Jesus to trap Him into teaching something contrary to the Torah.

What bothers many people when reading this is that the man that was purportedly involved in this adultery is nowhere to be seen. Which begs the question, "is the accusation true or false?"

There is a lot of food and drink at these feasts. Wine and even stronger drinks are a part of any feast, especially this feast.

During this feast everyone is living in a temporary dwelling called a *sukkah*. Throughout the feast, meals are eaten inside the *sukkah* and many people sleep there as well.

The condition of this woman the Pharisees choose to accuse is not known. It is possible that she was inebriated, even possible she had passed out in someone's *sukkah* that did not belong to her own family. A person in that condition could easily be convinced that she had been engaged in inappropriate behavior.

But since we don't know (and probably don't need to know) many scenarios could be constructed.

The accused woman is brought to Jesus to test whether He will choose grace or law for the woman. If He chooses grace, He will be accused of breaking the Law (Torah) that requires that the woman be stoned to death. If He chooses the Law, He is breaking the Roman law that only Rome can pronounce the death penalty. It's a "rock and a hard spot" for Jesus, but Jesus is a master of finding a way through these situations.

So what was Jesus writing in the dirt? It is a given that we cannot know what Jesus was writing but from my reading I believe that He was quoting Jeremiah.

*On that day, those killed by Adonai will be strewn from one end of the earth to the other; they will not be mourned or gathered or buried, but will lie on the ground like dung.*

*"Wail, shepherds! Cry!  
Wallow in the dust, you lords of the flock!  
For the days for your slaughter have come.  
I will break you in pieces,  
and like a prized vase you will fall."*

Jeremiah 25:33-34 CJB

Remember these were Pharisees and they knew the scriptures by heart and one only needed to say a portion of the scripture and they would be able to fill in the whole idea of that scripture. Also they considered themselves the shepherds of the flock of Israel.

I feel that what Jesus wrote was "*Wail, shepherds! Cry! Wallow in the dust, you lords of the flock!* Remember in Hebrew this would only take a few Hebrew letters (no vowels). Easily done in the dirt. Those who recognized it first would likely be the elder ones who were most familiar with the Writings of the Prophets (*Nevi'im*).

In these few words Jesus is telling them that they have failed their purpose as shepherds and teachers of Israel and that they are in danger of God's judgment. Telling them this would not set well with them. It would be convincing evidence that their accusations of this woman were false and that their trap had failed.

This leads us to a deeper truth that John was probably alluding to about the condition of Israel during this time.

Israel was in covenant with God as His chosen people. They were to keep His commandments and not chase after other gods. Sadly this is exactly what Israel did, time and time again. They would be true to God for a time and then go off following other gods and pagan practices. God would forgive them and for a while all would be well.

*I thought that after she had done all this she would return to me but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery.* Jeremiah 3:7-8 NIV

Once the Pharisees had recognized the reference to Jeremiah 25, no doubt these verses would come to mind as well. They and their forefathers had failed and failed miserably: to teach and care for the flock of Israel. They were worse than the woman they accused of adultery.

And what does Jesus tell the woman?

*"Woman (Israel, my assumption), where are they? Has no one condemned you?"*

*"No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."*

John 8:11 NIV

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