

THESIS ABSTRACT

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

Adventist University of Africa

Theological Seminary

Title: THE WOMAN CAUGHT IN ADULTERY IN VIEW OF THE
RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LAW AND GRACE: AN EXEGETICAL
AND THEOLOGICAL STUDY OF JOHN 7:53-8:11

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This thesis attempts to address the issue of the relationship between law and grace from the perspective of the story of the woman caught in adultery. The study seeks to highlight that justice and mercy are congruent and interdependent terms as opposed to being antagonistic. Also it is argued in this research that the pericope adulterae (that is the passage of the adulteress) is inspired, canonical, Johannine and smoothly fitting in its traditional position. However, this does not suggest being oblivious to the challenges surrounding the passage's absence in some early manuscripts. The abbreviation PA will be used from now onward to refer to pericope adulterae.

An exegetical and theological study of the PA is the method used in this research. Hence the observations that ensued are that the way Jesus dealt with the accusers and also with the adulteress has a bearing on the link between law and grace. Jesus did not antagonize Moses' Law as was planned by His accusers, instead He upheld it. This Christ did by allowing them to have the sinless (non-malicious) one

among them to cast the first stone. In the same vein, He uplifted the Decalogue by acknowledging the woman's guilt and instructing her not to continue in sin. Similarly, it has been noted that Jesus pardoned the woman caught in adultery, thus showering her with undeserved mercy. Therefore, the injunction given to the adulteress by Jesus showed how one who is saved is required to keep the law. Jesus, in this pericope, solved the jigsaw puzzle of how both law and grace met in Him. Being under grace does not necessitate libertinism, instead one lives according to the dictates of the commandments as a result of being saved not as a precursor of the same.

In conclusion, it has been pointed out how crucial it is in the modern day not to dichotomize justice and mercy or law and grace, but show them as they are: complementary and intertwined terms. It is recommended that the PA be freely used in researches, sermons and lessons as any other inspired text.

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A thesis

presented in partial fulfillment

of the requirements of the degree

Master of Arts in Biblical and Theological Studies

by

Farai Chitura

March 2017

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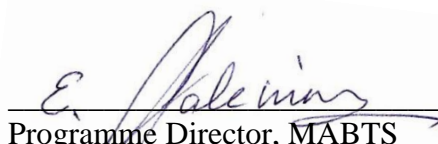
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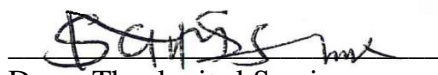
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I dedicate this study to my lovely wife, Tsitsi, for her untiring support as I struggled with this study, to my parents, Pastor and Mrs L. Chitura, and my siblings who groomed me spiritually and in my ministry, not forgetting Chivhu and Headlands Districts that I served respectively as I did this study.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The ever-increasing emphasis on grace at the expense of obedience after one is saved in many of the mushrooming churches nowadays requires a revisit on the topic of the relationship between the law and grace.¹ In discussing with the clergy and members alike of such denominations, it will become evident that there is a conviction that the availability of grace frees people from keeping God's commandments.

Commenting on John 7:53-8:11, some scholars who come close to the topic under study argue on whether Jesus forgave the woman or not. Examples include Lightfoot,² and Barnabas Lindars who argued that Jesus' word to the woman "merely shows that he, too, dismisses the case."³ Not to leave E. C. Hoskyns who writes, "In some sections of the church the supposed leniency of the words 'neither do I condemn thee' which are, however, not lenient at all, must have occasioned scandal." There is "no condoning of adultery, for the woman's action is roundly denounced as sinful,

¹Steve Hill, "The Great Lies in the Church Today," *Charisma Magazine*, accessed 27 February 2017, <http://www.charismamag.com/spirit/spiritual-growth/17093-the-7-great-lies-in-the-church-today>, and "The 'Pentecostal' and 'Charismatic' Movement" *Present Truth Magazine*, vol. 1, art. 4, accessed 27 February 2017, <http://www.presenttruthmag.com/archive/1/1-3.htm>.

²R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel* (Oxford, 1956), 348.

³Barnabas Lindars, *The Gospel of John* (London: Oliphants, 1972), 312.

here also is no forgiveness of sin, for the woman expresses neither faith nor repentance.”⁴

It is ironic though that Hoskyns is not consistent in that when Christ uttered the same words “go and sin no more” to the man with an infirmity, he believes Jesus forgave him (John 5:14).⁵ On a further extreme, Venkat actually views Jesus as a ruthless and merciless figure who left the adulteress at the mercy of the accusers and the mob’s decision.⁶ It does not seem farfetched to assume that such critics would not agree to any lesson of law and grace being derived from the passage of the woman caught in adultery.

On the other hand, Wiersbe sees it differently and argues that Jesus forgave the woman. He believes the Savior’s gracious forgiveness would motivate the woman to live a holy and obedient life.⁷ Cole concurs that this story teaches that God’s grace does not negate His truth or justice but is a basis for holy living.⁸ This gives a hint on the different perspectives over this story and its link to the topic of mercy and justice.

To add to such differing views over this topic, there also has been a general dichotomy perceived between law and grace which has come a great way back. It stretches even as far as the first century during the rise of Gnosticism (a belief that “Christianity was a secretive and privileged message that only the learned

⁴E. C. Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel*, 2d rev. ed., ed. F. N. Davey (London: Faber & Faber, 1947), 570.

⁵Ibid., 267.

⁶Kalavai Venkat, *The Adulteress or the Misogyny of Jesus* (2015), accessed 7 February 2016, <https://www.indiafacts.org/The-Adulteress-or-the-Misogyny-of-Jesus.html>.

⁷Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989), John 8:11.

⁸Steven, J. Cole, *Lesson 45: Caught in the Act (John 7:53-8:11)* (Bible.org, 2014), accessed 21 February 2017, <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-45-caught-act-john-753-811>.

understood).⁹ Among other things, from this belief came the idea that Christians (or those who are saved) are freed from keeping any law, including the Decalogue.¹⁰

During reformation era, there was a resurgence of this teaching and Luther coined a term for it and named it Antinomianism.¹¹

The challenge is that such libertinism is rife and prevalent even in today's world, and churches are not spared. Forge puts it as follows, "Antinomianism is a prevailing modern heresy. That everyone should have the right to 'do their own thing' seems virtually to be the dogma of the age. If laws and norms get in the way, they can be discredited as relics of an outmoded 'lifestyle' and changed to fit what we call contemporary-lived experience. Antinomianism is the spiritual air we breathe."¹²

As if it is not enough, there is yet another belief today in the name of Dispensationalism, which shows that in the Old Testament, people were saved by keeping the law, while in the New Testament, they are saved by grace, and the whole law inclusive of the Ten Commandments is done away with.¹³ Hence it propounds an idea that law and grace are mutually exclusive. This makes Gerstner's words plausible as he says, "I have shown at length that Dispensationalism is antinomian. To depart from antinomianism is to depart from Dispensationalism."¹⁴ This dichotomy being advocated between forgiveness and obedience is just a miniature of the grand and vast

⁹Daniel Ciofani, *Antinomianism, The Soft Heresy*, accessed 12 February 2016, http://www.americanthinker.com/articles/2012/12/antinomianism_the_soft_heresy.html.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Augustus Lawrence Graebner, "Antinomianism," *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (New York: Scribner, 1899), 18.

¹²Gerhard O. Forde, "Fake Theology Reflections on Antinomianism Past and Present" (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 246.

¹³Theopedia, *Dispensationalism*, accessed 12 February 2016, <http://www.theopedia.com/dispensationalism>.

¹⁴John H Gerstner, *Wrongly Duiding the Word of Truth* (Brentwood, TN: Wolgemuth & Hyatt, 1991), 231.

widespread arguments that have ever been there concerning the connection between justice and mercy.

With such foreknowledge, it is necessary to have a relook into the topic of the relationship between the law and grace from a different perspective from the one usually pursued in most researches. This will be achieved by looking into a passage that has been less used exegetically to tackle this debate.

This will all come down to whether the modern day individual who is under grace needs to keep the Moral Law or is now free to indulge in licentiousness. The relevance of the Mosaic Laws after salvation will also be considered. It helps to answer the question of whether it will still remain relevant for the contemporary folks who have been forgiven and are enjoying the grace of the risen Savior, to keep the Ten Commandments or not.

Statement of the Problem

A lot has been written over the narrative of Jesus and the adulteress. However, it seems most of the research done borders on the story's canonicity and authenticity.¹⁵ Others dwell much on what Jesus wrote on the ground or rather the significance of that act.¹⁶ But the topic of law and grace has not been extensively dealt

¹⁵Zane C. Hodges, "The Woman taken in Adultery (John 7:53-8:11): the Text," *Bibliotheca Sacra* October-December (1979), 318-322, and Allen Paul Wikgren, "The lectionary text of the pericope, John 8:1-11," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 53 no 2 (1934), 188-198, accessed 22 February 2017, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?sid=028d7ff2-a43c-467e-859d-7b7f2bea7f1b%40sessionmgr4007&vid=0&hid=4214&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#db=rh&AN=ATLA0001339388>.

¹⁶E. Power, "Writing on the Ground (John 8:6, 8)," *Bib* 2 (1921), 54-57, accessed 20 February 2017, http://tmcDaniel.palmerseminary.edu/Power_Jn8.pdf, Chris Keith, "Jesus Began to Write: Literacy, the *Pericope Adulterae*, and the Gospel of John." Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2008, 1-246.

with from this passage. To those who attempted it, they simply made a couple of statements on it or at most a page.¹⁷

Similarly, this topic of law and grace has been greatly debated and many see great disparity between these two concepts.¹⁸ It is believed by such proponents that God's grace and his law cannot be reconciled and that these concepts run parallel to each other.¹⁹ To add to this quagmire, the unprecedented mushrooming of churches and ministries worldwide in this era being founded on the basis of dichotomizing justice and mercy warrant a relook on the subject.²⁰ This research then seeks to synthesize this hot issue on how the law and grace are two sides of the same coin from the standpoint of the passage of the woman caught in adultery.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to highlight the relationship between law and grace through exegesis of John 7:53-8:11. It was prompted by the fact that some critics like James, Bernard and Clarke do not see any forgiveness and mercy in the PA.²¹ Thus the

¹⁷Gail, R. O'day, "John 7:53-8:11: A Study in Misreading," *JBL* 111/4 (1992), 631-640, accessed 22 February 2017, <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=47a23131-5f83-44db-8296-1e422b595d41%40sessionmgr102&vid=1&hid=116>; Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989), John 8:11, and Steven, J. Cole, *Lesson 45: Caught in the Act (John 7:53-8:11)* (Bible.org, 2014), accessed 21 February 2017, <https://bible.org/seriespage/lesson-45-caught-act-john-753-811>, and "Why did Jesus tell People to 'Go and Sin No More' if Sinlessness is Impossible?" (Got Questions Ministries, 2002-2017), accessed 13 March 2017, <https://www.gotquestions.org/go-and-sin-no-more.html>.

¹⁸H. A. W. Meyer, "Matthew," *Commentary on the New Testament* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), 1: 120, A. S. Peake, "Colossians," *The Expositor's Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 3:527, and Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Craig, 1977), quoted in Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "God's Promise," 289.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Steve Hill, "The Great Lies in the Church Today," *Charisma Magazine*, accessed 27 February 2017, <http://www.charismamag.com/spirit/spiritual-growth/17093-the-7-great-lies-in-the-church-today>, and "The 'Pentecostal' and 'Charismatic' Movement," *Present Truth Magazine*, vol. 1, art. 4, accessed 27 February 2017, <http://www.presenttruthmag.com/archive/I/1-3.htm>.

²¹Stephen A. James, "The Adulteress and the Death Sentence Penalty," 46; J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, ed. Alan Hugh McNeile

research tries to address this issue from a passage that seems popular even in those denominations that do not see a link between these two terms.

Significance of the Study

In this era where the relationship between grace and law has become blurred,²² this research will aid the reader to have a balanced view of this subject. The researcher will also benefit from this rigorous but fruitful exercise in dealing with the passage of the woman caught in adultery and how Jesus' actions and response address the issue of law and grace. Thirdly, this study is aimed at also stimulating a desire for further study.

Delimitations

The topic of salvation by grace in relation to the law is wide; it is contained in a number of passages in the Bible. It is evident that one cannot do justice to all these passages in one document. Therefore, this study will only focus on how this issue is addressed from the standpoint of John 7:53-8:11.

Also, it is not within the scope of this research to discuss the aspects of Justification, faith and sanctification, though it might be contended that some of these might be inferred from the passage. This study though will only stick to the relationship of the law and grace as it will be derived from the PA.

(New York: C. Scribner' Sons, 1929), 2:721, and Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke Commentary* (Electronic Database: Biblesoft, Inc., 1996), John 8:11.

²²Compare C. L. Blomberg, "Critical Issues in New Testament Studies for Evangelicals Today," *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture* (ed. P. E. Satterthwaite and D. F. Wright; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 57, and Mark W. Karlberg, "The Search for an Evangelical consensus on Paul and the Law," *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Society* 40/4 (December 1997): 566, accessed 16 April 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs40-4-pp563-579_JETS.pdf.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this research was that of an Exegetical (Historical Grammatical)-Theological study. The tools used included lexicons, syntactical books, Bible Dictionaries, and scholarly journals and literature. The passage of the woman caught in adultery was exegeted in view of how grace and law relate as follows: Chapter 1 dealt with problem identification and topic development. Chapter 2 was on literature review from scholarly work. Chapter 3 tackled Exegetical-Theological study of John 7:53-8:11, and finally Chapter 4 was on summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The interpretation of the passage of the woman caught in adultery since the early church fathers up to modern times will be reviewed. Also, there will be a look into the contributions of this pericope on the topic of law and grace from different scholars.

It does not seem an overstatement to agree with Karlberg's proposal that the relevance of the law beyond the cross is one of the greatly debated of all times.¹ Even the methodology to be used in tackling it appears to be brewing tensions. For instance, Blomberg proposes that to curb a one-sided thesis; there should be a synthesis of all the work already done on this subject while avoiding many false dichotomies.² Karlberg rebuts synthesis and suggests that the present morass will be curtailed by a comprehensive critique of the "various proposals, especially the Biblico-theological and dogmatic presuppositions at work" in every interpretation.³

Varied schools of thought mushroom in a bid to explain the relationship between law and grace as listed by Martin,⁴ and his list is as follows: the first one is

¹Mark W. Karlberg, "The Search for an Evangelical consensus on Paul and the Law," *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Society* 40/4 (December 1997): 566, accessed 16 April 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs40-4-pp563-579_JETS.pdf.

²C. L. Blomberg, "Critical Issues in New Testament Studies for Evangelicals Today," *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture* ed. P. E. Satterthwaite, and D. F. Wright (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) 58–59.

³Mark W. Karlberg, "The Search," 566.

⁴Brice L. Martin, "Paul on Christ and the Law," *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Studies* 26/3 (September 1983): 271, 272, accessed 16 April 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/26-3-pp271-282_JETS.pdf.

the “messianic age view” which states that the law ceases when the messianic age begins.⁵ Hence, it suggests that the Messiah’s grace did away with the necessity of stipulations and regulations of any sort.⁶ Thus the age of the law and bondage belonging to the Old Covenant is perceived as having ended at the cross with the ushering of the New Covenant. Following is the cosmological view which perceives the law as “belonging to the natural world and the rule of angels.”⁷ It focusses on the natural law of cause and effect, stating how the universe is held up and operate by natural laws and no room for exceptions.⁸ Due to lack of exceptions, it is viewed as failing to deal with some other moral decisions in day to day living.⁹

The third is the salvation-history ideology which asserts the abolishment of the law due to our attainment of salvation.¹⁰ Smith tells us, “The law is even intended to function to increase sin in the world. The law, in other words, prepared for Christ, and once it has fulfilled this purpose it becomes salvation-historically obsolete.”¹¹ Thus, a believer is said to be free from the Mosaic and any other law, except the law of love

⁵H. J. Schoeps, *Paul* (London: Lutterworth, 1961), 171-175, and J. A. Fitzmyer, “Saint Paul and the Law,” *The Jurist* 17 (1967), 18-36, quoted in Brice L. Martin, “Paul on Christ and the Law,” *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Studies* 26/3 (September 1983): 271, 272, accessed 16 April 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/26-3-pp271-282_JETS.pdf.

⁶James, D. G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (London: A & C Black, 1993), 147.

⁷Brice L. Martin, “Paul on Christ and the Law,” *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Studies* 26/3 (September 1983): 271, 272, accessed 16 April 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/26-3-pp271-282_JETS.pdf.

⁸David L. Bergman and Glen C. Collins, *The Law of Cause and Effect: Dominant Principle of Classical Physics*, accessed 12 February 2016, http://www.commonssencescience.org/pdf/articles/law_of_cause_and_effect_fos_v7n3_causality.pdf.

⁹*Philosophy of Religion and Ethics*, AQA AS Religious Studies, 7061/1 (2017), 11, 12, accessed 12 February 2016, <http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/rs/AQA-70611-SMS.PDF>.

¹⁰H. Conzelman, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1969), 223-228; E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 496-497, and F. Hahn, “Das Gesetzverständnis im Römer- und Galaterbrief,” *ZNW* 67 (1976), 50, quoted in Martin, “Paul on Christ,” 272.

¹¹Barry D. Smith, *Pauline Studies: Paul and the Law* (Canada: Crandall University, 2014), accessed 11 June 2016, <http://www.mycrandall.ca/courses/pauline/Law.htm>.

“do unto others as you would have them do to you” which is accomplished by the indwelling of the Spirit.¹²

Not to forget the “end of a misused law view,”¹³ which advocates that Christ ended the legalistic misunderstanding of the law.¹⁴ That is the Savior died to do away with the illusions over the law. Hence this view as posited by Cranfield, upholds the perpetuity of the law after the cross.¹⁵ Though another view of this by Hubner is that only that law that was misused is done away with.¹⁶

Lastly, there is the existential view stating that “Christ is the end of the law that he gives man ‘the freedom to live on a future basis and to live for the future released from his past and from himself.’”¹⁷ This school of thought posits that humanity has freedom to live without restrictions, laws or principles, but instead has to create its own life’s meaning.¹⁸

In spite of the above proposals, the belief in the law being in full force after the cross is also propagated. Siegfried H. A. Roeske puts it this way, “salvation and

¹²John, M. G. Baclay, *Obeying the Truth: Paul’s Ethics in Galatians* (Britain: Regent College, 2005), 126-35, and Hans Hubner, *Law in Paul’s Thought: A Contribution to the Development of Pauline Theology* (London: T & T Clark International 2004), 36-46.

¹³H. Hubner, “Das Gesetz als elementares Thema einer Biblischen Theologie,” *KD* 22 (1976), 250-276, quoted in Martin, “Paul on Christ,” 272.

¹⁴Hubner, *Law*, 138.

¹⁵C. E. B. Cranfield, “St Paul and the Law,” *STJ* 17 (1964), 42-68, accessed 12 February 2016, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/26/26-3/26-3-pp271-282_JETS.pdf.

¹⁶Hubner, *Gesetz*, 118-129.

¹⁷Rudolf Bultmann, “Christ the end of the Law,” *Essays Philosophical and Theological* (London: SCM, 1955), 36-66, quoted in Martin, “Paul on Christ,” 272.

¹⁸Walter Lowrie, *Kierkegaard’s attack upon Christendom* (New Jersey: Princeton, 1969), 37-40.

law are so bound up together they cannot, if understood correctly, be separated.”¹⁹

Hence his view is that grace is interwoven with the law.

Having noted all these divergent ideologies, it seems that the topic of law and grace has not been extensively looked upon from the viewpoint of the woman caught in adultery. In light of this, then, this study will focus on John 7:53-8:11 to deal with this subject.

Woman Caught in Adultery and the Church Fathers From the Ante-Nicene to Post Nicene Era

When discussing about the passage of the adulteress, Papias comes to mind. He is said to have been a hearer of the apostle John. He (Papias) tells of a story of a woman who was accused of many sins before the Lord, which he points as being found in the Gospel according to the Hebrews.²⁰

The story of the woman caught in adultery is alluded to in the *Didascalia Apostolorum* (Constitutions of the Holy Apostles). Bishops are being exhorted to graciously accept the repentant as did Jesus to the woman brought to him.²¹ In this regard, the PA is understood to be portraying Jesus’ mercy towards one who had transgressed God’s Law. Similarly, Jennifer Knust, wrote, “In the third century, the writer of the church order the *Didascalia Apostolorum* invoked Jesus’ treatment of the adulteress to illustrate God’s exceptional mercy.”²²

¹⁹Siegfried Herman A. Roeske, “A Love Affair with the Law,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 3/1 (1992): 52, accessed 16 April 2015, http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file_A_Love_Affair_with_the_Law.pdf.

²⁰Papias *The Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord: Fragments of Papias* 6.1 (ANF 1.153, 155, trans. Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson).

²¹*Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions* 2.3.24 (ANF 7.408, ed. James Donaldson).

²²Jennifer Knust, *The Woman Caught in Adultery* (Columbia University Press, 2005), accessed 16 April 2015, <http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/passages/main-articles/woman-caught-in-adultery>.

Furthermore, the grievous nature of adultery is exemplified in the Apostolic Constitution. It stipulates how the married after having fulfilled their conjugal rights even before washing, were clean and could pray without reservations. But after an adulterous intercourse, one though he would wash in an ocean or all of earth's rivers was still deemed unclean.²³ Thus it can be assumed that the Apostolic Constitution which was written way after Jesus' death, still advocated that the Moral Law be upheld.

The PA seems to be alluded to by Eusebius (d. 340) who reports how Papias (c. 60-130) related to him this story of the woman slanderously accused of many sins brought to Jesus.²⁴ More so Didymus the Blind (circa 313–398 C.E.), an Egyptian theologian exhorted bishops to be merciful when dealing with the erring.²⁵ He did so by quoting Jesus' response to the woman caught in adultery. Didymus said that this story was found in "certain Gospels."²⁶

Not to leave the oldest Latin attestation of Pacian (c. 370), a Spanish Father who is thought to have been a contemporary of the Scribes responsible for making the Codex Sinaiticus.²⁷ He spoke in disfavor of going to extremes in discipline. He is noted to have supported his standpoint by making use of the PA. Pacian rhetorically queried whether his addressees the Novatians were not willing to read of how the

²³*Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions* 2.5.24 (ANF 7.408, ed. James Donaldson).

²⁴Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16 (NPNF 2.1.173, trans. Cruse).

²⁵Jennifer Knust, *The Woman Caught in Adultery* (Columbia University Press, 2005), accessed 16 April 2015, <http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/passages/main-articles/woman-caught-in-adultery>.

²⁶Didymus the Blind, *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (Tura Papyrus, 1942), accessed 15 May 2016, <http://textualcriticism.scienceontheweb.net/FATHERS/Didymus.html>.

²⁷Patrick, "Woman Caught in Adultery," *Catholic Answers Forums* (2004), accessed 16 May 2016, <http://forums.catholic.com/showthread.php?t=818614>.

Lord forgave the sinful woman.²⁸ In like manner, Rufinus appeals in his apology to the PA's account in a bid to advocate for the forgiveness of Origen.²⁹

Augustine of Hippo (354–430 C.E.) is said to have been against divorce even if a spouse committed adultery. He accused those opposed to him as having removed the PA from the canon.³⁰ In the same vein, Ambrose (around A.D. 386) adds that the story of the adulteress was famous³¹ and how controversial it was because some critics thought it took a light view of sin. Later, around A.D. 394, he castigated such critics as unskilled and he defends that one should not entertain the thought that Christ could have erred in his dealing with the woman.³² It is apparent that the critics were wrong in claiming that Jesus palliated with sin in forgiving the adulteress. Nevertheless, one common thing seems to be that Augustine and his critics all took it as a given that grace on the cross had not done away with the law, or else there was no need for such an argument if the opposite was true.

The PA is commented in detail in Augustine's homilies. He believes that the accusers' trap aimed either at Jesus' inconsistency on his messages of love (in allowing the woman's death) or breaking Moses' Law (in freeing her). Jesus' response that one without sin be the first to stone her is explained to be a voice of

²⁸Pacian, *Epistle 3.39*, quoted in *Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Latina, vol. 13, col. 1077, quoted in Edward F. Hills, "The Woman Caught in Adultery," *The King James Version Defended*, 4th ed. (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1984), 150-159.

²⁹Rufinus *The Apology of Rufinus* 1:44 (NPNF 2.3.459, trans. Henry Freemantle).

³⁰Augustine, quoted in Jennifer Knust, *The Woman Caught in Adultery* (Columbia University Press, 2005), accessed 16 April 2015, <http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/passages/main-articles/woman-caught-in-adultery>.

³¹Ambrose *Letter 26*, quoted in Kyle Pope, *Is John 7:53-8:11 Inspired?* Accessed 28 January 2016, <http://www.olsenpark.com/Bulletins15/FS17.34.html>.

³²Ambrose *Letter 26*, quoted in Brent MacDonald, *Disputed passage in the Gospel of John (John 7:53-8:11), Sinful woman forgiven by Jesus. Is this passage Scriptures?* (Discipleship Training Institute / Lion Tracks Ministries), 2009, accessed 7 February 2016, <http://www.notjustanotherbook.com/disputedjohn.htm>.

justice. Hence Jesus was allowing the sinner to be punished, but not by transgressors of the law. When no one stood to the challenge then there was a voice of mercy from Jesus to the woman. Hence Jesus is noted to have condemned her sin not the sinner.³³

Augustine continues,

Neither will I condemn you. What is this, O Lord? Do you therefore favor sins? Not so, evidently. Mark what follows: Go, henceforth sin no more. Therefore the Lord did also condemn, but condemned sins, not man. For if He were a patron of sin, He would say, Neither will I condemn you; go, live as you will: be secure in my deliverance; how much so ever you will sin, I will deliver you from all punishment even of hell, and from the tormentors of the infernal world. He said not this.³⁴

It can be explicitly seen how Augustine nails it home by showing a striking balance between God's Ten Commandments and His grace. He articulates clearly how grace is not a leeway to the transgression of the law.

To add on, in his second letter to the bishops of Gaul, Pope Callistus has this to say, "Man, therefore, is cleansed of his sin, and rises again by the grace of God though he has fallen, and abides in his first position, according to the above-cited authorities. Let him see to it that he sin no more, that the sentence of the Gospel may abide in him: Go, and sin no more."³⁵ As stated, one who is saved and under grace is to discontinue the way of sin and lawlessness.

In line with this view, Stephen A. James appeals to prominent interpreters throughout Christian history. He lists Augustine, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Tertullian as samples and conclude that the Church Fathers are unanimous in perceiving the PA

³³Augustin *Homiletics on the Gospel of John, Homilies on the First Epistle of John, Soliloquies*, 33.4-8 (NPNF 1.7.197-200), ed., Philip Schaff.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Pope Callistus *Pope Callistus' Second Letter 2* (ANF 8), trans. S.D.F. Salmond, ed., Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature, 1886), revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight, accessed 14 February 2017, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/0835.htm>.

as showing Jesus' pardoning grace to the sinful woman.³⁶ Though some Church Fathers like Origen and Nonnus did not comment on the PA,³⁷ it seems those who did agree that the woman was guilty of breaking the law, hence the need of a Savior to forgive her. From this, it can be shown that the role of the law is to point one's sin, and the transgressor finds pardon only at the feet of Christ. No mercy was to be afforded to the adulteress had she not been convicted by the law first.

During the Church Fathers' era, strict moral observance was advocated. The perpetuity of the Ten Commandments and the need for believers who were under grace to adhere to them was greatly emphasized. In the council of Ancyra A.D. 314, the adulterer and the adulteress were sentenced to seven years of penance and could be restored only at the expiration of that period. The Synod is said to have punished every offender in this regard whether male or female. To those who committed fornication and killed the child or those who made drugs used in abortion, the initial decree was that they were excommunicated to the day of their death. However, it was revised and the duration was reduced to ten years before one could be restored. The 69th canon of Elvira lessened the punishment of penance to five years to those guilty of adultery for the first time.³⁸

Likewise, a deacon who fornicated was to be deposed not excommunicated, since they reasoned out that a single crime could not be punished twice. An

³⁶A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, ed., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956), P. Schaff, ed., *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, 14 vols (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1956; and P. Schaff and H. Wace, ed., *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series, 14 vols (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), quoted in Stephen A. James, "The Adulteress and the Death Sentence Penalty," *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Studies* 22/1 (March, 1979): 45, 46, accessed 12 February 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/22-1-pp045-053_JETS.pdf.

³⁷Gary M. Burge, "A Specific Problem in the New Testament Text and Canon: The Woman Caught in Adultery," *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Studies* 27/2 (June 1984) 142-3, accessed 12 February 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/27-2-pp141-148_JETS.

³⁸*The Seven Ecumenical Councils: The Council of Ancyra* 20-21 (NPNF 2.14.73. ed., Philip Schaff and Henry Wace).

excommunicated layman could be restored but a deposed clergy could not.³⁹ Also when one belonging to the canon (clergyman, monk, and deaconess) fornicated, it was not to be regarded as marriage, but the two were forced to part.⁴⁰

Therefore, it can be summed up that during the era of the Apostolic Fathers, the story of the woman caught in adultery was known. There is not much attestation though during this period of this passage since some Church Fathers (like Origen and Nonnus) did not comment on it. In spite of this, however, in the few instances that it was cited as noted above, it was in a bid to advocate for mercy on the part of the sinners. In addition, the church took Jesus' instruction to the woman to go and sin no more to imply that she was not to continue in her lawlessness after being thus saved. The need for believers to uphold the Moral Law while at the same time showing kindness to sinners was emphasized during this patristic period.

Woman Caught in Adultery from the Medieval Period to the Reformation Era Writings

The middle age period is not silent on the PA. During the renaissance onwards, it was common to find some art of Jesus writing on the ground. The artists Pieter Bruegel (1525-1569) and Rembrandt (1644) are among those who painted such images.⁴¹ Not to forget the codex Egberti (A.D. 10th C.) which also portrays the image from the PA story.⁴² It is remarked that these drawings showed God's forgiveness to

³⁹*The Seven Ecumenical Councils: The First Canonical Epistle of Our Holy Father Basil, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia to Amphilochius, Bishop of Iconium* 3 (NPNF 2.14.604).

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 6 (NPNF 2.14.604).

⁴¹Ralph F. Wilson, "Artwork of Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery," *Joyful Heart Ministries* (1985), accessed 17 May 2016, http://www.joyfulheart.com/jesus/artwork_adulteress.htm.

⁴²Codex Egberti (A.D. 10th C.), "Life of Christ," *Society of Biblical Literature* (Library of Trier, Germany, 2016), accessed 17 May 2016, <http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/tools/image-gallery/c/codex-egberti.aspx>.

sinner.⁴³ The content of Jesus' writing was speculated to be *terra terram accusat* ("earth accuses earth") from Jeremiah 17:13 as was suggested by Ambrose.⁴⁴

Even in both the Middle Ages and Reformation periods, the Decalogue was held in high regard. During the late medieval period, two laws were enacted in France against extramarital intercourse. The first canonical rule was for the cheating spouse to be enclosed in a monastery. Secondly the cheated spouse was forbidden from killing the one who had cheated even if caught red handed. It is noted how cheating women were whipped, head shaved, paraded through the streets before being enclosed. The enclosed wife would either be left to stay there till death or be later taken back by the cheated husband.⁴⁵ During the same period, in England, the adulteress would have her nose and ears cut off and paraded in streets. Later in the 1500s such would be hanged.⁴⁶

During the Middle Ages, Justinian stipulated that a woman's adulterous affair was tantamount to a criminal case. Hence when caught she was to suffer infamy of loss of civil rights and legal protection.⁴⁷ On the other hand, a caught adulterous man was to do penance for seven years if it is another's betrothed or married wife, or a

⁴³*The National Gallery* (Trafalgar Square, London, 2016), 17, accessed 12 May 2016, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/rembrandt-the-woman-taken-in-adultery>.

⁴⁴Ambrose *Epistle* 68 (Beyenka, FC, 26), quoted in Jennifer Krust, and Tommy Wasserman, "Earth Accuses Earth: What Jesus wrote on the Ground," *Harvard Theological Review*, October 01, 2010, accessed 22 January 2016, http://www.academia.edu/991221/_Earth_Accuses_Earth_Tracing_Jesus_Writing_on_the_Ground_.

⁴⁵Sara McDougall, *Adultery in Late-Medieval Northern France*, Fourteenth International Congress of Medieval Canon Law, Medievalists (Toronto, Canada, 2016), accessed 17 May 2016, <http://www.medievalists.net/2012/08/10/adultery-in-late-medieval-northern-france/>.

⁴⁶Anna, *The Price of Adultery* (2005), accessed 18 May 2016, <http://fascinatinghistory.blogspot.co.ke/2005/05/price-of-adultery.html>.

⁴⁷Mommsen and Krueger, *The Digest of Justinian*, 662-663, quoted in David LaGuardia, *The Iconography of Power: The French Nouvelle at the End of the Middle Ages*, 164, accessed 17 May 2016 https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=tI_nkAW6HtMC&pg=PA164&lpg=PA164&dq=woman+caught+in+adultery+medieval+period&source=bl&ots=6pZPzrM2t&sig=-oQ-LIpkcaek6M313Mywg7L5MI&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=woman%20caught%20in%20adultery-medieval%20period&f=false.

nun. Then if it was a single lady, it would be for two years or if a widow, for one year.⁴⁸

Moving on to the Protestant Reformation period, Martin Luther concurs with the Church Fathers' assertion that Jesus pardoned the adulteress. He uses the passage to advocate for true satisfaction of God's requirements and wrath as embodied in Jesus' words "Go and sin no more" (John 8:11). He opposes penance and body torture as a way of attaining forgiveness.⁴⁹ Though Luther always emphasized salvation by grace, he knew the balance between justice and mercy. By Jesus' instruction for the woman to sin no more, Luther understood that the adulteress had to keep the Ten Commandments after she had been forgiven.⁵⁰

Thus Luther was against the wrong use of the law (that is trying to get saved through keeping it), but he understood the role of the Decalogue to an already saved believer.⁵¹ He is noted as stating that the "Ten Commandments have their place not only 'before' but also 'after' justification; thus they not only exercise the Christian in the theological function of the law but also lead him to a right knowledge of the good he ought to do according to God's will."⁵² No truth can be further than that.

⁴⁸John T. McNeill, and Helena M. Gamer, ed., and trans., *Medieval Handbooks of Penance: A Translation of the Principal Libri Poenitentials and Selections from Related Documents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1938), 317-18, quoted in LaGuardia, *The Iconography of Power*, 164.

⁴⁹Martin Luther, Weimar Ausgabe (WA 6.548, 33-549, 14, Cologne: Bohlau, 1883); Luther's Work (LW 36.90, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), quoted in Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, Lubomir Batka, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014), 319, accessed 18 May 2016, https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=wrYoAAQBAJ&pg=PA319&lpg=PA319&dq=Martin+Luther-woman+caught+in+adultery&source=bl&ots=Ka3eB_y0mC&sig=xyVuTxyjMNNnd_lh_mVSBj8GUL0&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Martin%20Luther-woman%20caught%20in%20adultery&f=false.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says* (Canada: Concordia, 2006), 3:1501.

⁵²Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1963), 272.

Calvin believes that the passage does not specify the forgiveness of this woman.⁵³ In as much as he mentions this; nevertheless, his comments seem to concur that Jesus graciously pardoned her.⁵⁴ He further reasons out that to try and use the PA as supporting abrogation of punishments for crimes would be similar to trying to abolish inheritance laws just because Jesus refused to arbitrate it between the two brothers (Luke 12:13).⁵⁵

It can be summed up that a sense of the perpetuity of the Decalogue could be seen even in the medieval era Civil laws concerning adultery and its punishments. This showed the abhorrent nature with which sexual immorality was regarded. More so, the samples of the individuals from the medieval times mentioned suggest to us that the PA was known during this period. Sermons and lessons were derived from this passage. It has been highlighted how the woman became a recipient of unmerited favor, while at the same time charged to uphold the law. Hence the union of love and truth in the PA can be gleaned from this era.

Woman Caught in Adultery in Modern Period Writings

There is an ongoing antagonism among contemporary literature over the passage of the woman caught in adultery.⁵⁶ It ranges from whether the pericope is of Johannine origin,⁵⁷ the correctness of its placement in the current position,⁵⁸ its

⁵³John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries* (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2004), John 8:11, accessed 17 May 2016, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/calvin/john/8.htm>.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶For contrasting ideas over the PA, see Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of John*, vol. 2, ed. Frederick Crombie (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1875), 1-3; and E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Gospel of St John*, Vol. 1, Clark's Foreign Theological Library (London: T&T Clark, 1865), 417-19, 418; contrast with William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 2:35.

apostolic origin to whether it should be included in our Bibles or be removed.⁵⁹ Of course, some of the questions posed here will be addressed in Chapter 3 of this research. To this, Dave Miller states that, “One of the most misused, mishandled, and misapplied passages in the Bible is the narrative of the woman caught in adultery, recorded in John 8:1-11.”⁶⁰

The passage mentions that the woman’s accusers brought her to test Jesus. It may be rightly asked how this was to be a trap to Jesus. Wil Pounds thus puts across that the snare that the Scribes and Pharisees were laying before Jesus was for them to see what he would do between killing the woman or the Law of Moses. It was to check whether he would bend his standards or terminate the woman’s life.⁶¹ By so doing then, they would find ground for accusing him.

As suggested by Borchert,⁶² the Scribes and Pharisees tried to corner Jesus to pass the death sentence, thereby inviting the wrath of the Romans upon himself (since they had removed the death sentence from the Jewish jurisdiction).⁶³ Capital punishment is noted to have been under the Roman authority.⁶⁴ Still if Jesus pardoned

⁵⁷Ehrman sees the PA as unJohannine, Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 65.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹For contrasting ideas over the PA, see Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical*, 1-3; and Hengstenberg, *Commentary*, 417-19, 418; contrast with Hendriksen and Kistemaker, *Exposition*, 2:35.

⁶⁰Dave Miller, *The Adulteress Woman* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 2003), accessed 7 February 2016, <http://www.truthaccordingtoscripture.com/documents/apologetics/adulterous.php#.VrbUd63AqDA>.

⁶¹Wil Pounds, *Neither do I Condemn you* (The Lockman Foundation, 1999), accessed 16 April 2015, <http://www.abideinchrist.com/links/helps.html>.

⁶²Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, vol. 25A, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 373.

⁶³*Sanhedrin* 41a, 52b, accessed 22 January 2016, <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-death-penalty-in-jewish-tradition/>.

⁶⁴J. Jeremias, “Zur Geschichtlichkeit der Verhörs Jesu vor dem Hohen Rat,” *ZNW* 43 (1950–51): 148–50, quoted in Borchert, *John 1-11*, 373.

her, he would consequently attract the indignation of the Jews since he would be charged with opposing Moses.⁶⁵

On a different note though, Wiersbe views the trap as a contention between law and grace. The critics hoped for Jesus' failure to show grace hence lose his popularity with the commoners (if he would permit the death of the woman). Or in him breaking the Law of Moses (if he would set her free), hence either way Jesus would stand condemned.⁶⁶ Likewise, Knowles thinks the snare lay in whether Jesus would strictly uphold the Mosaic Law and allow the death penalty or he would excuse sin in letting her live.⁶⁷

When asked over the woman's fate, Jesus remains silent. In a Muslim article by Kalavai Venkat, the PA is seen as neither teaching the upholding of any worthy law nor advocating for grace for sinners. Instead, it is perceived as perpetrating "barbaric Biblical laws" of stoning.⁶⁸ Venkat rather portrays Jesus as the villain put in a quandary thereby leaving the accused woman at the mercy of the crowd while indifferently doodling on the ground in silence and ignoring the woman. It is suggested that possibly the adulteress' hands could have been tied when brought to him.⁶⁹

Venkat questions Jesus' credentials as a merciful Messiah who leaves judgement in the hands of the angry mob which generally does not operate on

⁶⁵Borchert, *John 1-11*, 373.

⁶⁶Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989), John 8:11.

⁶⁷Andrew Knowles, *The Bible Guide* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 2001), 514.

⁶⁸Kalavai Venkat, *The Adulteress or the Misogyny of Jesus* (2015), accessed 7 February 2016, <https://www.indiafacts.org/The-Adulteress-or-the-Misogyny-of-Jesus.html>.

⁶⁹Ibid.

morality or conscience. Ironically, he projects the mob as the heroes who showed mercy in the PA since they left the adulteress unharmed.⁷⁰

Jesus' response of one who is sinless to be the first to cast a stone is shown in a negative light by Venkat. He asks what would have happened if one of the accusers had responded that Jesus was sinless. He believes Jesus would have been left with no option but to stone the woman. Or if one would have presumed that he was sinless, he could have started the stoning. So the mob gets praised for acting rationally.⁷¹ Nothing can be further from a twisted hermeneutic than that of Venkat whose arguments are pinned on his hypothesized probabilities of what could have happened if things had gone this or that way. In response, one cannot successfully base their research on possibilities that never occurred.

The significance of Jesus' silence and his choice to write down instead, is attempted by Patrick Grant as well. According to him, the "omission of any information about the words suggests that content is not the important thing." He believes Jesus' writing was part of his accusation to the accusers.⁷² Still another different view on the issue is given by Keith. He suggests that Jesus' writing was first and foremost a confirmation of his literacy. Keith assumes that possibly this was a response to the previous Johannine chapter where Jews question how Jesus knew letters, having been unschooled (7:15).⁷³

In addition, there are speculations held over why Jesus wrote on the ground. Ambrose is the earliest known interpreter of Jesus' writing, who in turn shares with us

⁷⁰Venkat, *Misogyny*, <https://www.indiafacts.org.The Adulteress or the Misogyny of Jesus.html>.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Patrick Grant, *Reading the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), 68, 69.

⁷³Keith, "Jesus Began to Write," 168.

how Jesus had used a finger to write on the ground just as he had done on the Decalogue.⁷⁴ Augustine too, holds the same opinion.⁷⁵ Then Ambrose adds how sinners (Jesus' critics) had their names written on the earth as compared to the saints whose names are written in heaven⁷⁶ and Augustine echoes the same view.⁷⁷

A totally different perspective is suggested by A. Watson who opines that Jesus' writing on the ground was his way of creating time for reflection—both for him on the question that had been posed to him and also for his critics. He goes on to presume that the woman caught was a married divorcee whose former husband coupled with Jesus' critics to challenge Jesus on his standpoint on divorce and remarriage (Matt 5:31, 32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-9).⁷⁸

Thus Watson believes that the woman was not caught in the very act per se but that she was simply remarried; hence they were probing Jesus on how far he could defend his position on the topic and whether the remarried woman was supposed to die. If he passes her death sentence then he would have indirectly attacked Herod who had taken a brother's wife. Jesus could then meet the same fate with John the Baptist. Therefore, Jesus' address "the one without sin" is noted to be in singular and thus directed only to the man who had divorced this woman. That is since he was the one to be the first to cast the stone, Jesus was quizzing him whether he was guiltless in divorcing his wife and complicit in making her to commit adultery.⁷⁹

⁷⁴Ambrose *Epistle* 68 (FC, 26, trans. Beyenka).

⁷⁵Augustine *Tract. Ev. Jo.* 33.5.2 (FC trans. Rettig).

⁷⁶Ambrose *Job* 4.5.20 (FC trans. McHugh).

⁷⁷Augustine *Cons.* 4.17 (trans. Salmond).

⁷⁸Alan Watson, "Jesus and the Adulteress," *Biblica* 80 (1990): 100-108, accessed 26 March 2017, https://www.bsw.org/biblica/vol-80-1999/jesus-and-the-adulteress/314/?_e_pi_=7%2CPAGE_ID10%2C8473651714.

⁷⁹Ibid.

One can credit Watson for at least bringing in a new dimensions on the PA absent in researches dealing with this chapter. However, in spite of this, one should be quick to mention that his conclusions leave a lot to be desired. He admits that his thesis is based on speculations. One might find it difficult to agree with the notion that Jesus could simply scribble on the ground to find time for reflection. Accepting this seems to be putting doubt on his divinity. He who understood men's thoughts even before they verbalized them, could not be cornered by mere humans to the extent of needing to reflect on how to answer.

Secondly, it can be queried that if Jesus' critics were referring to the question of divorce and remarriage, could they have failed to specifically quote Jesus' speech on that issue just as they cited Moses' statements on punishment for adultery? (John 8:5). This is in spite of the fact that Watson tries to draw some intertextual allusions between the PA and Jesus' divorce and remarriage statements. Let alone the connection between the critics' trap with Herod which seems farfetched since it is a guess from silence.

The surmise that the woman was a married divorcee hence was not caught in the very act, assumes too much. It seems as a bid to rewrite a new story altogether different from the one presented in the Gospel. It takes all the unnecessary pains of trying to deny the clear statements in the pericope that show that the woman was caught. Even the silence of the woman to the accusations suggests she was really caught in the very act of adultery. In a bid to avoid the question of the whereabouts of the man who had "married this divorcee," Watson tries to hide behind a finger and suggests that the story as we have it today was altered and that it shows that it was unrealistic.

On another note, Craig S. Keener gives two suggestions on what Jesus wrote. The first point being Jesus could have been scribbling down as a way to while up time until the accusers depart.⁸⁰ Secondly we are reminded of how the Decalogue was written by God's finger (Exod 31:18; Deut 9:10). So possibly in the PA Jesus wrote on the ground with his finger the "first line of the tenth commandment in the Septuagint of Exodus 20." It prohibits coveting a neighbor's wife which Keener says they all were guilty of (Matt 5:28).⁸¹ Not to forget E. Power's surmise that Jesus' act of writing suggested his unwillingness to give the desired answer to the accusers, also his anger at his enemies' hypocrisy and lastly as a sign of his anxious sympathy for woman.⁸² However, Jesus' action of writing the second time coupled with the flight of the critics seem to leave a lot to be desired from all of the above conjectures.

The point of Jesus' writing as reminiscent of the writing with a finger on the two tables of stone (Exod 31:18) is well appreciated by Keith. He dwells more on the relationship between Jesus' writing on the ground and the writing of the Ten Commandments. He believes Jesus' writing in the PA is an allusion of the writing of the Decalogue. He makes use of Allison's indices which highlight factors that outline how to check whether there is an allusion between two verses. Two of the indices declare,

In the absence of explicit citation or undeniable borrowing an allusion will not be credible unless text and intertext share some combination of the following: common vocabulary, common word order, common theme(s), similar imagery, similar structure, similar circumstance(s) ... (and the other index says), similar vocabulary and word order are only corroborative evidence when not commonplace.⁸³

⁸⁰Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 1993), 284, 285.

⁸¹Keener, *The IVP Bible*, 284, 285.

⁸²Power, "Writing on the Ground," http://tmcDaniel.palmerseminary.edu/Power_Jn8.pdf.

⁸³Allison, *Intertextual Jesus*, 11, quoted in Keith, 175.

Keith accordingly proceeds to argue using the first index that the theme between Exodus 32:15 (were Moses carried the *written law*) and John 8:6, 8 (where Jesus *wrote* on the ground), is the same. The former, illustrating the writing of the law, while the latter portraying an offender who has transgressed that law. Secondly, he believes that in the Exodus story, Moses is shown as the interpreter of the law, while in John, Jesus is cornered to oppose Moses.

Thirdly, the two verses are perceived as having grammatical and syntactical similarity. He affirms occurrence of matching vocabulary and word order in both verses as far as the verbs of writing are concerned as follows, “In both cases, the compound *καταγράφω* (*katagrapho*ὸ) precedes the simple *γράφω* (*grapho*ὸ) and the two refer to the exact same action. ... Exodus 32:15 describes the stones as ‘κατα-written,’ and then simply ‘written;’ John 8:6, 8 claims Jesus was first ‘κατα-writing’ and then simply writing.”⁸⁴

Lastly, basing on Allison’s second quoted index that similar vocabulary and word order must not be commonly used for there to be allusion, Keith admits that “*καταγράφω* (*katagrapho*ὸ) occurs nowhere else in the NT besides John 8:6. Second, beyond the fact that Exodus 32:15 is the only LXX location where the compound verb precedes the simple verb as it does in John 8:6, 8, Exodus 32:15 also is the only text where the compound and simple verbs are used to describe the *exact* same action.” One might want to agree that some insightful research was done by Keith.

Another view goes on to object that the Pre-incarnate Christ tabulated the Decalogue with His finger on stone on Mt. Sinai but now He wrote it on erasable ground, implying that “the law no longer condemns offenders in the church of

⁸⁴Chris Keith, “Jesus Began to Write: Literacy, the *Pericope Adulterae*, and the Gospel of John,” 175. Please note, transliteration is mine.

Christ”⁸⁵ However, Burgeon and Lightfoot are of the opinion that Jesus was writing that the accusers though they professed to be strict law keepers, they had not followed the procedure of going to the priest to have him verify their testimony (Num 5:17).⁸⁶

To add to all these arguments, the meaning of Jesus’ statement, “he who has no sin” brings no less dissention. Some even go ahead to interpret that by his statement, Jesus meant that one had to be entirely sinless to be the first to cast a stone.⁸⁷ These also advocate that here Jesus was doing away with capital punishment. So it is supposed that it was the accusers’ general not particular sins that disqualified them from executing judgement on the woman.⁸⁸ Therefore, such an argument would imply a state of general sinlessness as a prerequisite for meting judgement on another.⁸⁹

On the other hand, Stephen A. James responds by first admitting that the basic meaning of the word *anamartetos* is “without sin,” and then he draws us to consider the context of the passage for us to understand the real connotations of Jesus statement. He supports the notion that to perceive this term to denote complete faultlessness “goes beyond the original intent of the word, which is basically

⁸⁵*John 8: The Woman Caught in Adultery-Dealing with Capital Offenses Lawfully*, accessed 7 January 2016, <http://www.oocities.org/theonomistic/adultry.html>.

⁸⁶Burgeon and Lightfoot, quoted in *John 8: The Woman Caught in Adultery-Dealing with Capital Offenses Lawfully*, accessed 7 January 2016, <http://www.oocities.org/theonomistic/adultry.html>.

⁸⁷John Howard Yoder, Charles S. Milligan, and G. H. Clark, “Capital Punishment and the Bible,” *Christianity Today* 4 (1959-1960), 349, 351, quoted in Stephen A. James, “The Adulteress and the Death Sentence Penalty,” *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Studies* 22/1 (March, 1979): 45, accessed 12 February 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/22-1-pp045-053_JETS.pdf, and Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 882-891.

⁸⁸*John 8: The Woman Caught in Adultery-Dealing with Capital Offenses Lawfully*, accessed 7 January 2016, <http://www.oocities.org/theonomistic/adultry.html>.

⁸⁹Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Meyer's NT Commentary*, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/8-7.htm>.

secular.”⁹⁰ Instead, he affirms Calvin who declares: “none, then, must let his own sins stop him from correcting the sins of others and even punishing them when necessary, so long as he hates, both in himself and in others, what is to be condemned.”⁹¹

The same conclusions are reached at by Charles P. Baylis. He explains that had Jesus meant witnesses had to be totally sinless, then he would have actually opposed Moses’ writings. In so doing he would have succumbed to the accusers’ trap and that they would not have failed to highlight it. Baylis believes that in the Old Testament people had personal sins, but still prosecutions for the guilty would be carried out.⁹²

He further defends that Jesus was calling into question the legitimacy of the witnesses. In Deuteronomy 22:23, 24, God had ordered the prosecution of adultery. Baylis highlights that Jesus was in line with Mosaic Law which gave preference to the eye witness to be the first to stone the guilty (Deut 17:7). Nevertheless, Jesus is said to have added another qualifier from Moses’ writings, that of legitimacy on the part of the witness (Deut 19:16-19, 21). In this light, the phrase, “without sin” would be seen in terms of non-maliciousness on the part of the witnesses.⁹³

A glimpse on the contemporary scholars’ view on the PA as has been highlighted above gives an impression that there is no consensus among them over this passage. There is no agreement on whether this pericope teaches the perpetuity of

⁹⁰“Anamartetos,” *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976).

⁹¹J. Calvin, *Calvin’s Commentaries: John* (ed. D. W. Torrance and T. F. Torrance, trans. T. H. L. Parker; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), 208, quoted in Stephen A. James, “The Adulteress and the Death Sentence Penalty,” 49.

⁹²Charles P. Baylis, “The Woman Caught in Adultery: A Test of Jesus as the Greater Prophet,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 146 number 582 (Apr - Jun 1989), 172, <http://www.dts.edu/> accessed 19 January 2016, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=2024532e-6a66-4fb5-94b3-3ca47e91bdb2%40sessionmgr4003&vid=25&hid=4201>.

⁹³*Ibid.*

the law or not, let alone the relationship of law and grace. Also evidenced was the contention on whether the passage can be interpreted as portraying grace or rather indifference to the adulteress. Similarly disagreement ensued as highlighted already over the qualifying qualities demanded by Jesus from the critics to fit them to execute punishment on the woman.

The Pericope Adulterae in Relation to Law and grace in Contemporary Scholarship

The import of Jesus' words, "neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more," (John 8:11) raises several questions. It might be inquired whether it connotes the woman as guiltless, or that Jesus overlooked her guilt.⁹⁴ Further still, it can be asked if this statement was actuated due to lack of witnesses after their flight from the scene.⁹⁵

A probe may also be made as to whether the PA teaches that Jesus pardoned this woman. Stephen, A. James puts it that "the modern commentators like Bernard, Godet, Hoskyns, Morris and Westcott, are unanimous in noting that the text does not say that Jesus forgave her."⁹⁶ He further bolsters this idea by stating that Jesus' words, "go and sin no more" were just some good advice from Jesus.⁹⁷ Bernard too, supports this view and informs us that Jesus' reply to the woman is not to be taken to mean forgiveness on her part.⁹⁸ This denotes that these critics do not perceive Christ as

⁹⁴Beauford H. Bryant and Mark S. Krause, *John*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1998), John 8:9.

⁹⁵Jon Courson, *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 507.

⁹⁶ Stephen A. James, "The Adulteress and the Death Sentence Penalty," 46.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, ed. Alan Hugh McNeile (New York: C. Scribner' Sons, 1929), 2:721.

having pardoned the woman. Ultimately, it seems such a standpoint winds up in the idea that the PA does not teach the striking combination of truth and undeserved love.

Clarke, as well, does not see any link between grace and law in Jesus' injunction to the adulteress. He states that Jesus neither forgave nor acquitted her, but totally refused to get involved juridically in the whole affair. So Jesus' instruction to her is understood as his refusal to be entangled in legal matters and simply his exhortation as a righteous teacher. Meaning, Jesus was just cautioning her to avoid the future punishment she had escaped in case she gets caught again.⁹⁹ On the contrary, Jesus' non-condemnatory statement is equally interpreted to mean he was acknowledging that he was neither a witness nor a judge, but a Savior of sinners.¹⁰⁰

Another view is that Jesus did not condemn the woman partly because there were no longer any witnesses and partly because she was forgiven. Such a claim stems from the belief that she had repented because she did not run away after the departure of the accusers.¹⁰¹ Whitlock, however suggests that "condemn" is a legal term used in a court ruling. Hence Jesus did not condemn the sinner because the accusers had not followed the lawful procedures that warrant capital punishment.¹⁰²

However, Knowles sees it differently and believes that Jesus' admonition to the woman was proof that he was a perfect judge, thus being the only one worthy to

⁹⁹Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke Commentary* (Electronic Database: BibleSoft, Inc., 1996), John 8:11.

¹⁰⁰Donald C. Fleming, *Concise Bible Commentary*, Also Published Under Title: The AMG Concise Bible Commentary (Chattanooga, TN: AMG, 1988), 430.

¹⁰¹*King James Version Study Bible.*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1988), John 8:11.

¹⁰²Luder G. Whitlock, R. C. Sproul, Bruce K. Waltke and Moiss Silva, *Reformation Study Bible: Bringing the Light of the Reformation to Scripture: New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1995), John 8:11.

pronounce them.¹⁰³ Similarly, Bernard argues that it does not mean that Jesus did not pass judgement, even in his mind, but that he simply did not condemn her judicially or take the judge's role.¹⁰⁴ Bryant and Krause are of the same disposition, and decipher in Jesus' words his role as a judge, though ruling "from the bench."¹⁰⁵

A different school of thought depict how the Moral Law and grace perfectly intersect in the PA. The inseparable nature of both the Decalogue and grace in the PA is strikingly outlined by Macdonald and Farstad who propose that grace shines through in Jesus' words "neither do I condemn you," while truth (the Moral Law) is evident in his words that followed, "go, and sin no more."¹⁰⁶ Pink shares the same position, as he sees grace and truth meeting in this incident. He points that the dilemma of reconciling mercy and justice was "not insoluble to Divine Wisdom."¹⁰⁷ In the same vein, Paulien sees it as Jesus' ability to uphold the legal punishment for adultery at the same time revealing the vitality of compassion and mercy.¹⁰⁸

Hughes posits that Jesus pointed sin for what it was but at the same time forgave the woman's sin. He clarifies that Jesus did not give license for her to sin. Hence Hughes does not see the Savior's pardon as passport to break God's Law.¹⁰⁹ Richards agrees and suggest that the PA teaches the principles of grace as opposed to

¹⁰³Knowles, *The Bible Guide*, 514.

¹⁰⁴Bernard, *John*, 2:721.

¹⁰⁵Bryant and Krause, *John*, John 8:9.

¹⁰⁶William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), John 8:11.

¹⁰⁷Arthur Walkington Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Swengel, PA: Bible truth depot, 1923-45), 416.

¹⁰⁸Jon Paulien, "John: the Beloved Gospel?" *Adult Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly*, ed. Clifford Goldstein (England: Stanborough Press, 2004), 183.

¹⁰⁹Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, The Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 2001), 474.

legalistic morals.¹¹⁰ In a similar manner, the conduct of one saved and under grace is explained by Carson. He says, “The proper response to mercy received on account of past sins is purity in the future.”¹¹¹

The grace motif in the PA is similarly seen by Johnson. He highlights that in the passage it is implied that Jesus rebuked the woman’s past sins and granted her forgiveness and a charge to start living a pure life.¹¹² It is thus summed up by Borchert, who highlights how Jesus’ verdict to the woman to go and sin no more was not only acquittal and non-condemnation. He believes that it was also a strict injunction for her to have a life transformation.¹¹³

Hence, in modern scholarship, some view no lesson of justice and mercy in the PA. However, as has been noted already, it is of interest to mention that the other school of thought argue that from this passage, one can derive the union of law and grace.

Summary

In summary, the PA is absent in some early manuscripts. However, it is attested of quite early during the apostolic era. The Constitutions of the Apostles, and Papias are among the evidences that the passage was known.¹¹⁴ In as much as some Church Fathers did not comment on it, those who did like Augustine and Pacian

¹¹⁰Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), 729.

¹¹¹D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 337.

¹¹²B. W. Johnson, *John: The New Testament Commentary*, vol. III (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1999), 136.

¹¹³Gerald L. Borchert, vol. 25A, *John 1-11*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 376.

¹¹⁴*Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions* 2.3.24 (ANF 7.408, ed. James Donaldson), and Papias *The Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord: Fragments of Papias* 6.1 (ANF 1.153, 155, trans. Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson).

spoke in its favor. They brought out how the law and grace met in Jesus as projected in this passage.¹¹⁵ The knowledge of this pericope in the medieval period up to the Reformation is likewise acknowledged. Drawings and paintings of the PA were done.¹¹⁶ During the Protestant Reformation era, Luther and Calvin while commenting on the PA showed how salvation from sin will not liberate one to throw away God's Commandments.¹¹⁷ In modern scholarship, there are divergent views on whether the PA shows the relationship between law and grace or not.¹¹⁸ Some scholars like James as shown earlier deny such a link between mercy and justice from the passage¹¹⁹ while others like Paulien realize it.¹²⁰

Conclusion

It can therefore be concluded that it seems there are more divergent opinions over the PA than there are scholars. A number of questions so far have been raised

¹¹⁵Pacian *Epistle* 3.39, quoted in Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Latina, vol. 13, col. 1077, quoted in Edward F. Hills, "The Woman Caught in Adultery," *The King James Version Defended*, 4th ed. (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1984), 150-159, and Augustine, quoted in Jennifer Knust, *The Woman Caught in Adultery* (Columbia University Press, 2005), accessed 16 April 2015, <http://www.bibleodyssey.org/en/passages/main-articles/woman-caught-in-adultery>.

¹¹⁶Ralph F. Wilson, "Artwork of Jesus and the Woman Taken in Adultery," *Joyful Heart Ministries* (1985), accessed 17 May 2016, http://www.joyfulheart.com/jesus/artwork_adulteress.htm.

¹¹⁷Martin Luther, Weimar Ausgabe (WA 6.548, 33-549, 14, Cologne: Bohlaus, 1883); Luther's Work (LW 36.90, Philadelphia: Fortress, 1958), quoted in Robert Kolb, Irene Dingel, Lubomir Batka, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2014), 319, accessed 18 May 2016, https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=wrYoAAQBAJ&pg=PA319&lpg=PA319&dq=Martin+Luther-woman+caught+in+adultery&source=bl&ots=Ka3eB_y0mC&sig=xyVuTxyjMNNnd_lh_mVSBj8GUL0&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Martin%20Luther-woman%20caught%20in%20adultery&f=false and John Calvin, *Calvin's Commentaries* (Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2004), John 8:11, accessed 17 May 2016, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/calvin/john/8.htm>.

¹¹⁸For contrasting ideas over the PA, see Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Gospel of John*, vol. 2, ed. Frederick Crombie (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1875), 1-3; and E. W. Hengstenberg, *Commentary on the Gospel of St John*, vol. 1, Clark's Foreign Theological Library (London: T&T Clark, 1865), 417-19, 418; contrast with William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, NTC (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), 2:35.

¹¹⁹Stephen A. James, "The Adulteress and the Death Sentence Penalty," 46.

¹²⁰Jon Paulien, "John," 183.

leading to contrasting answers. Different perspectives ensued in trying to respond to whether the acquittal of the adulteress meant the outdoing of the law by grace or simply a palliating with sin. The necessity of keeping the law after having been pardoned on the part of the woman also raised mixed feelings. Hence there is a quagmire on whether the PA teaches the relationship between law and grace or not. Also, the scholarly morass on whether grace is currently the replacement of the law cannot be hidden.

CHAPTER 3

EXEGESIS

Background information to the writing of the PA will be explored, as well as the establishment of the text under study. Some historical-cultural background of the passage will be undertaken, coupled with a Biblical and Theological analysis of the same.

The findings in textual criticism have brought in mixed feelings over the PA. On one hand is the quest to have it expurgated from the canon and not to be commented on¹ and on the other, to have it remain in the Bible but treated differently² (whatever that means). Some do not view it as part of the Word hence not to be used as the basis for building any point of doctrine unless confirmed in Scripture.³ The likes of Bultmann spoke from silence, that is he simply never commented on it “even in an appendix,” according to Bruner.⁴

Thus the following admission is to be esteemed: “In spite of all these considerations of the likely unreliability of this section, it is possible to be wrong on the issue, and thus it is good to consider the meaning of this passage and leave it in

¹Andreas J. Kostenberger, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2004), 248.

²Henry Alford, *Alford's Greek Testament, An Exegetical and Critical Commentary*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1844; reprint 1980), 784-5.

³*The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2039.

⁴Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2012), 508.

the text, just as with Mk 16:9–20.”⁵ Similarly, Lagrange⁶ is of the opinion that the PA should be retained in Scriptures, while at the same time being made use of without any reservation like any other Biblical passage.

Not only will the above different positions be reviewed, as pointed in the overview, this chapter will also include the isagogical study, establishment of the text and the historical-cultural background to the story of the woman caught in adultery. In addition, there will be a Biblical and Theological analysis of the PA in relation to both justice and mercy. An attempt will be made to tackle the issue of whether it (the PA) addresses the topic of grace and law. The arguments raised in the previous chapter over the relationship of these two concepts will be looked into. So this chapter will seek to delve into considering whether there is a disparity between law and grace or if these are simply two sides of the same coin.

Isagogical Study

The isagogy (which is the context or background information) surrounding the book of John from which the PA is located will be studied in this section. This will include primary recipients and location to which the book was written and the one who wrote it.

Author

The Fourth Gospel reveals that the Beloved Disciple is the one who wrote John (John 21:24). Traditional consensus point to John the son of Zebedee as the one

⁵*The MacArthur Study Bible: New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 1597.

⁶Lagrange, 221-226, quoted in Bruner, *John*, 508.

who is the source and author of this Gospel.⁷ For different arguments over the authorship of the fourth Gospel, check the sources outlined in the footnotes.⁸

Therefore, this research agrees with the traditional assertion of John the disciple on authorship.

Date

The date of writing for the Gospel of John has led to two divergent views.

There is an option of an earlier date,⁹ then that of a later one in the second century.¹⁰

For arguments posed over the date, please see the sources in the footnotes.¹¹ This study buys in to the early church tradition which dates it in the end of the first century,

⁷“Unlearned, Ignorant,” [Acts 4:13], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976-1980), 6:166; Beauford H. Bryant and Mark S. Krause, *John*, The College Press NIV Commentary (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1998), s.v. “Who is the Author;” “Authorship,” [John], *SDABC*, 5:891; Brown, *John*, XCI and J. H. Bernard and Alan Hugh McNeile, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John* (New York: C. Scribner' Sons, 1929), s.v. “Author.”

⁸Jo-Ann A. Brant, *John*, 5, 6; Bultmann, *John*, 1-20; Blomberg, *Jesus*, 194, 195; C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text (London: S. P. C. K., 1958), 88-92; Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, vol. 29 (New Haven, Yale University, 1966), XCI; *Apostolic Constitutions* 7.4.46 (ANF 07. 477-478, ed. Funk); R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John's Gospel* (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1942), 15, 16; Brown, *John*, XCI; Burkett, Delbert, *An introduction to the New Testament and the origins of Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 215 and Lindars, Barnabas; Edwards, Ruth; Court, John M., *The Johannine Literature* (A&C Black, 2000), 41, 42; Lagrange, 221-226, quoted in Bruner, *John*, 508; Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John*, trans. George R. Beasley-Murray, Gen. ed. (Westminster: Philadelphia, 1971), 483-484; John A. Sanford, *Mystical Christianity*, A Psychological Commentary on the Gospel of John (New York: The Crossroad, 1999), 8, 9; Suggestions of the Beloved Disciple range from Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, Thomas Didymus, to Nathaniel and John Mark from the following: De Boer 1996, Waetjen 2005, 18, Charlesworth 1995, and Catchpole 1998, quoted in Jo-Ann A. Brant, *John*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 5, 6, and Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I-XII*, vol. 29 (New Haven, Yale University, 1966), XCVI, XCVII, and William Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, New Testament Commentary 1 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953), “Author.”

⁹Kostenberger, *John*, 4.

¹⁰C. C. Torrey, *Our Translated Gospels*, x, and M. S. Enslin, *Christianity Beginnings* (New York and London, 1938), 448, quoted in Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 25.

¹¹Morris, *John*, 25; George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 36, 2nd ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999), lxxv, lxxvi; Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 197.

possibly around (AD 81-90) during Domitian rule when John was old and ministering in Ephesus.¹²

Audience

It is assumed in this research that in as much as John had envisioned similar to the other Gospels “a universal readership,”¹³ even for non-Christians, his primary audience could have been the Christians (both Jews and gentiles).¹⁴

During this period, the Pharisees had added to their customary prayer a curse¹⁵ called Birkat ha-Minim (cursed against the Minim) as expressed by J. Martyn in 1968 to the so called “sectarians” or “schismatics,” namely Jewish Christians.¹⁶ Ranko Stefanovic specifies that this curse was added by the Jews soon after the destruction of Jerusalem of A.D. 70.¹⁷ At the same time, the Romans were being suspicious of this sect of people who did not worship the emperor and also not subscribing to the Jewish religion.¹⁸ Suffice to conclude that, John’s audience was the growing Christians who had their faith pinned on the risen Lord, Jesus Christ.

¹²Blomberg, *Jesus*, 194; Irenaeus *Against Heresies* 3.1.1, 3.3.4 (ANF, 1.421, trans. Roberts and Rambaut); Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 5.2 (trans. Cruse, 182), and Beasley-Murray, *John*, lxxv, lxxviii.

¹³Kostenberger, *John*, 8.

¹⁴Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 183, and Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 1993), 261; R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel* (Columbus, OH: The Wartburg Press, 1942), 7.

¹⁵B. Talmud *Berakhot* 28b–29a.

¹⁶Joel B. Green, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic Press, 2013), 424.

¹⁷Ranko Stefanovic, *Revelation of Jesus Christ: Commentary on the Book of Revelation*, 2nd ed. (Michigan: Andrews University Press, 2009), 6.

¹⁸Ibid.

Theme and Purpose

John's central motif is generally noted as the incarnation of Christ. The importance of the coming of God the Son as a human has aided in the explanation of the link between theology and Christology in the Fourth Gospel.¹⁹ John's purpose of writing is summed up in the Gospel: "these things were written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31).²⁰

It can safely be rehearsed therefore that John's main theme was the Incarnation of God the Son in becoming equally human to save lost humanity and the purpose of the Johannine Gospel was to awaken in people a belief in Christ the Savior who had redeemed them.

Setting

The Gospel of John is believed to have been written in Ephesus. By the time of writing, Jerusalem had been destroyed some few years back (AD 70). It can therefore be asserted in summary that John wrote to the growing Christian church under castigation both from Jews and Romans. The temple in Jerusalem lay in ruins at this time and Christians were scattered all over the Roman Empire.²¹

¹⁹Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2007), 298; Leander E. Keck, Gen. ed. *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. IX (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 496, compare and with Robert A. Spivey, *An Anatomy of the New Testament: A Guide to its Structure and Meaning*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1974), 428.

²⁰Spivey, *Anatomy*, 428; Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. 5 (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1932), xx, xxi; "Theme" [John], *SDABC*, 5:891; Warren W. Wiersbe, *With the Word Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1991), John 1:1, and Apostolos Makrakis, *Interpretation of the Entire New Testament* (Decatur, Georgia: Bowen Press, 1949), 832, and Craig L. Blomberg, *Jesus and the Gospels: An Introduction and Survey* (Nashville, TN: B & H Academic, 2009), 184.

²¹Joel B. Green, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, 2nd ed. (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic Press, 2013), 424; Blomberg, *Jesus*, 194, 195; Green, *Dictionary of Jesus*, 422; Alexander, 1992 and Goodman, 1992, quoted in Kostenberger, *John*, 8; Hoskins, 2002 and Draper, 1997, 264-265, quoted in Kostenberger, *John*, 8.

Literary Analysis

It is befitting to submit from the onset that John is generally known by scholars to be in the Gospels category²² and that the story of the woman caught in adultery is noted to be a pericope (a passage of verses that form one coherent unit).²³ John is pointed to be different from the Synoptics in the style, content of Jesus' teaching, chronology and structure of Jesus' ministry and his writing style.²⁴

Establishing the Text

External Evidence against the Pericope Adulterae

The passage's origin is believed to be non-Johannine by Metzger. He reveals its absence from early manuscripts like: $\hat{\iota}^{66}$, $\hat{\iota}^{75}$, B L N T W X Y to mention but a few. He goes on to reveal that "Codices A and C are defective in this part of John" but he argues that the passage could not have fitted on the missing leaves.²⁵ He reports how the first Greek Church Father to comment was Euthymius Zigabenus (twelfth

²²Alfred Martin, *John*. (Chicago, IL: Moody Bible Institute: 1959), s.v. "Lesson 1: Different Emphasis in each Gospel;" J. Ramsey Michaels. *John*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 12; *Gospel of John Commentary: Who Wrote the Gospel of John and How Historical is it?* Biblical Archeological Society, accessed 17 February 2017, <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/new-testament/gospel-of-john-commentary-who-wrote-the-gospel-of-john-and-how-historical-is-it/> contrast with historical-critical scholars who try to reduce Gospels to mere community documents compiled by redactors, K. L. Schmidt, "Die Stellung der Evangelien in der allgemeinen Literaturgeschichte," in *Eucharisterion: Studien zur Religion und Literature des Alten und Neuen Testaments, 2: zur Religion und Literature des Alten und Neuen Testaments* (FRLANT 36/2) (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1923), 50-132, ET, *The Place of the Gospels in the General History of Literature*, trans. B. R. McCane (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press: 2002), and R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition* (FRLANT 29), (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1921), ET, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, trans. J. Marsh, rev. ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1972), 40-63.

²³C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: S. P. C. K., 1958), 490, contrast with Lindars, 308; Gnilka, 64, quoted in Beasley-Murray, *John*, 145, and Bultmann, *History*, 63; R. Schnackenburg, 2:169, and Becker, 281, quoted in George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, 245.

²⁴J. Ramsey Michaels. *John*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1989), 12, and Eusebius. *Hist. Eccl.* 6.14.6.

²⁵Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed., 4th rev. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1994), 187-88.

century).²⁶ Burge and Bruce are some of the scholars that are in agreement with these findings.²⁷

It is added by Burge how other early fathers are equally silent, and how Origen (d. 253) skips straight from John 7:52 to 8:12 in his Commentary. He (Burge) continues to tell us of Nonnus' paraphrase (c. 400) which similarly skips the PA, and lastly the works of Tertullian (*De Pudicitia*, c. 220) and Cyprian of Carthage (55th epistle, c. 250).²⁸ These dealt with legal guidelines in cases of adultery but they did not refer to Jesus and the adulterous woman. This silence by Nonnus is likewise thought as deserving notice by Tregelles.²⁹

Internal Evidence against the Pericope Adulterae

To further complicate the matter, Burge mentions how some manuscripts (like the Georgian and the Farrer) locate the passage in different positions in the Gospels.³⁰ Secondly, textual variants are brought to view as militating against the validity of the PA. Confusion is reported among some manuscripts over the identity of the group

²⁶Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 187-88.

²⁷These include Gary M. Burge, "A Specific Problem in the New Testament Text and Canon: The Woman Caught in Adultery," *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Studies* 27/2 (June 1984) 142-3, accessed 12 February 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/27-2-pp141-148_JETS and F. F. Bruce, *New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1943), quoted in M. V. Pereira, *A Textual Analysis of the Passage about the Adulteress*, 5, assessed on February 12, <https://www.google.com/search?q=A+Textual+Analysis+of+the+Passage+about+the+Adulteress+Pastor+M.+V.+Pereira+&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8#>.

²⁸Burge, "A Specific Problem," 142, 143.

²⁹Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* (London, 1852), accessed 15 May 2016, <http://textualcriticism.scienceontheweb.net/FATHERS/Didymus.html>.

³⁰Burge, "A Specific Problem," 143.

which brought the woman to Jesus. Also there are minor textual variants on what Jesus wrote on the ground.³¹

Due to such like reasons, the PA has been regarded as a marginal gloss which found its way through scribal error,³² or spurious, hence to be omitted from the Bible and commentaries.³³ In this light, according to Scrivener, it is unbecoming to preach on this passage because of its “uninspired nature” (Rev 22:18).³⁴ The PA is relegated to being simply some piece of historical literature and not canonical nor at par with the Holy Writ.³⁵ The moral position of this passage tends to be doubted and believed to be portraying Christ as palliating with sin.³⁶ On the contrary, J. S. Excell remarks that competent scholarship perceives no tendency for immorality being promoted.³⁷

The likes of Brant try to tour a middle ground by suggesting that the PA is canonical, however, it is seen as a Johannine interpolation which suits well in the Synoptics, especially the book of Luke.³⁸ It is surmised that it was inserted to show that Jesus could write since previously people had marveled how he knew letters when he was uneducated (7:15).³⁹ Similarly, it is held that the PA’s literary evidence

³¹Matthew Alexander Whiteford, “Anti-Judaic Glosses in the Pericope Adultera” (MA thesis, Oral Roberts University, Tulsa, Oklahoma, 2008), 3.

³²A. T. Robertson, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York, 1925), 154.

³³E. J. Goodspeed, *Problems of New Testament Translation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1945), 105-109.

³⁴F. H. A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (London, 1883), 610, accessed 16 May 2016, <https://archive.org/stream/aplainintroduc01scrigoog#page/n682/mode/2up>.

³⁵M. V. Pereira, *A Textual Analysis*, 35.

³⁶Joseph S. Excell, *John 8-21*, *The Biblical Illustrator*, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, n.d.), 1.

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸Brant, *John*, 141.

³⁹*Ibid.*

(style, syntax, and vocabulary) is not Johannine.⁴⁰ Phrases in this passage like “each man went off” (John 7:53), “Mount of Olives,”⁴¹ “at day break” and “Scribes and Pharisees”⁴² are rendered foreign to John and common in the Synoptics.

Murray still views this story as authentic while at the same time rejecting the notion that it was penned by any of the four Gospel Evangelists.⁴³ Hence it is treated as an authentic floating pericope that was later inserted into canon. So this adds to the above said arguments presented against the PA.

External Evidence for the Pericope Adulterae

During the Protestant Reformation, an interest arose to focus on Biblical manuscripts according to MacDonald. He shares how this consequently led to the discovery that the PA was missing in some of them. It is thus reported how this brought in the hot debates of the inspired nature of the passage.⁴⁴

However it can be cautioned that the passage cannot be dismissed so fast. Hills stands in defense of an early attestation of the PA. He cites its inclusion in the 5th C Greek manuscript D, and early Latin manuscripts (b, and e). Therefore, in some Old Latin witnesses (b, c, e, ff, j), in the vulgate and the Palestinian Syriac translation, the PA is located in the position it is found in many Bibles today (between John 7:52 and 8:12).⁴⁵ Likewise, he appeals to Jerome (c. 415) who highlighted the PA’s

⁴⁰Leander E. Keck, Gen. ed. *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, vol. IX (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 628.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Brown, *John*, 332-33.

⁴³Beasley-Murray, *John*, 143.

⁴⁴MacDonald, *Disputed passage*, <http://www.notjustanotherbook.com/disputedjohn.htm>.

⁴⁵William Hendricksen, *John*, New Testament Commentary (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1954), 34.

inclusion in many Greek and Latin manuscripts in John's Gospel.⁴⁶ It is also found in the Arabic, Coptic, Persian and Ethiopian versions.⁴⁷ Brent MacDonald gives much detail of those manuscripts that omit and those that include the PA, and even those in doubt over it.⁴⁸

The 3rd Century *Didascalia of the Apostles* and the 4th C. *Apostolic Constitutions* are also given as evidence which refer to the adulteress' story. Hills then quotes Tischendorf who admits that the *Apostolic Constitutions* does not mention that John wrote this story, nevertheless he admits that it was taken from John's Gospel.⁴⁹ The Codex Fuldensis (A.D. 546), also termed Victor Codex, is based on the Latin Vulgate⁵⁰ and it synchronizes the four gospels into one unbroken account following Tatian's Diatessaron. It (the Codex Fuldensis) specifically mentions the PA.⁵¹

More evidence in favor of the PA is acquired from Papias, a disciple of John who shows to have known the story of the adulteress. It is notable how Eusebius (d. 340) cited Papias (c. 60-130), as referring to a story contained in the Gospel according to the Hebrews, of how a woman caught for many sins was brought to Jesus.⁵² It has

⁴⁶Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina*, vol. 23, col. 579, quoted in Edwards Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1984), 150-159.

⁴⁷Excell, *John*, 1.

⁴⁸Brent MacDonald, *Disputed Passage in the Gospel of John (John 7:53-8:11): Sinful woman forgiven by Jesus. Is this passage Scriptures?* Discipleship Training Institute / Lion Tracks Ministries, 2009/2015, accessed 7 February 2016, www.NotJustAnotherBook.com.

⁴⁹N. T. Graece Tischendorf, vol. 1, 829, quoted in Edwards F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 150-159.

⁵⁰Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 108.

⁵¹K. Aland and B. Aland, *The text of the New Testament* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart 1989), 197.

⁵²Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16 (NPNF 2.1.173, trans. Cruse).

however been objected that this could have been another parallel story.⁵³ In spite of this objection, it can still be maintained that it seems most likely that he was referring to the adulteress' incident. Bart D. Ehrman gives us Didymus' writings of this narrative as well. He also goes on to extensively relate of Papias' slant towards oral tradition. He suggests that most likely, Papias could have heard the PA story orally and not in a written form.⁵⁴

Furthermore, the following Patristic contributions in favor of the PA's presence in the Fourth Gospel offer some helpful statements. Ambrose confirms a Johannine location while Jerome and Augustine confirm the specific location of John 7:53–8:11.⁵⁵ And Augustine went on to claim that the pericope had been removed from the Gospel.⁵⁶ It however can be pointed out that the certainty of this assertion cannot be proven with accuracy.

Also, Sanders includes Rufinus (A.D. 400) in his list of those who commented on the woman caught in the act of adultery but got pardon from Jesus.⁵⁷ In addition, Ambrosiaster, c. 370/380 comments on the PA⁵⁸ and categorically specified the

⁵³Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16 (NPNF 2.1.173, trans. Cruse).

⁵⁴Bart D. Ehrman, "Jesus and the Adulteress," *New Testament Studies* 34, no 1 (1988), 25, 29. Cambridge University Press, accessed 1 March 2006, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0028688500022189>.

⁵⁵Ambrose *Epistle* 74 (FC, 26, trans. Beyenka), Jerome *Against the Pelagians* 2.1-17 (NPNF 2.6.469, trans. W. H. Fremantle), and Augustine *Cons.* 4.1-17 (NPNF trans. Salmond).

⁵⁶Augustine *Cons.* 4.1-17 (NPNF trans. Salmond).

⁵⁷Sanders also mentions "Eusebius (400), Pacian (370), Faustus (400), Vigilius (484), and Gelasius (492)," as having commented on the PA. Jeff Sanders, "*John 7:53-8:11. . . the Story of the Adulterous Woman,*" (*A Defense Part 7*), accessed 28 January 2016, http://www.aproundtable.org/history-log/blog.cfm?ID=1328&AUTHOR_ID=9.

⁵⁸Ambrosiaster *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* 102 (PL 35.2307//CSEL 50.199), quoted in Kyle Pope, *Is John 7:53-8:11 Inspired?* accessed 28 January 2016, <http://www.olsenpark.com/Bulletins15/FS17.34.html>.

woman as a harlot.⁵⁹ He is said to be silent about the location of this story in the canon unlike Ambrose, although he quotes it as fully authoritative Scripture.⁶⁰

Chris Keith sums up by mentioning the existence of many extra-biblical quotes from the Church Fathers of the story of the woman caught in adultery.⁶¹ He writes how Papias, Didymus, Pacian and Bede support the notion that this was one of the most popular stories in the early Church from at least the post-apostolic period and continued to be at every stage of Church history down to the present.”⁶² Likewise, there is an inclusion of a phrase in Apocryphal literature of how Jesus set free a woman condemned to death by the Jews.⁶³

It is of note that the Church from early years read John 7:37-8:12 as a lesson for every Pentecost.⁶⁴ However the portion of the adulteress would be skipped. Hills, MacDonald and Burgon defend this omission to have been due to the fact that the PA account would not fit to be read as part of Pentecost lesson.⁶⁵ They therefore contend that the idea of the story not being read at Pentecost is not a strong argument in trying to discard its canonicity.⁶⁶

⁵⁹Ambrosiaster *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* 102 (PL 35.2307//CSEL 50.199), quoted in Chris Keith, “Jesus Began to Write: Literacy, the *Pericope Adulterae*, and the Gospel of John” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2008), 2.

⁶⁰Ibid., 122.

⁶¹Chris Keith, “Jesus Began to Write,” 5, 6.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, Syriac Documents (ANF 8, trans. Roberts et al., 2003, Biblesoft, Inc, PC Study).

⁶⁴Hills, “The Woman Caught in Adultery,” 150-159.

⁶⁵ Hills, “The Woman Caught in Adultery,” 150-159; MacDonald, *Disputed passage*, <http://www.notjustanotherbook.com/disputedjohn.htm>; John William Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Tradition Text of the Holy Gospels*, ed., Edward Miller (London: George Bell and Sons, 1896), 259-260.

⁶⁶Ibid.

The above quoted trio goes on to reveal the Eastern Church's practice concerning the passage of the woman caught in adultery. Nine verses of the PA would be read publicly every year on October 8 (4th C), which was St. Pelagia's day. Hence they contend for an early knowledge of this story which was found in the Byzantine text despite the general silence of most early Greek scholars.⁶⁷ This serves to notify how this passage was held in high esteem in the Eastern Church.

The silence of some Church Fathers like Origen, Chrysostom and Nonnus⁶⁸ is not to be used decisively against the authenticity of the PA. To those Fathers who comment on it, it seems they are in its favor. To those who are silent, it can be remarked that in as much as they do not say anything in favor of the passage, they also do not say anything against it.⁶⁹ Trying to have reasons of the quietness of some Church Fathers, seems to be venturing upon an uphill task of arguing from silence.

Calvin highlights in his introduction that this text was unknown to the ancient Greek Churches. He points how some surmise that it was inserted in the canon, but he concludes by affirming it as having apostolic authority hence to be applied to our advantage. This is in spite of the fact that Tregelles wants to paint a picture that Calvin has doubts on the PA.⁷⁰

Therefore, it can be asserted that there is some handy evidence in favor of this pericope as was presented above from the Church Fathers and even from the Middle

⁶⁷Hills, "The Woman," 150-159, MacDonald, *Disputed Passages*, and Burgon, *Causes*, 259-260.

⁶⁸A. Tholuck, *A Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, trans. A. Kaufman (Boston, MA: Perkins and Marvin, 1836), 200.

⁶⁹Excell, *John*, 1.

⁷⁰John Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, 8:1, quoted in Samuel P. Tregelles, *An Account of the Printed Text of the Greek New Testament* (London, 1854), pages 236-243.

Ages. Those who commented on the PA as shown seem to have been accepting its authenticity.

Internal Evidence for the Pericope Adulterae

In response to the argument of the different locations of the PA in the manuscripts, Keith advocates for its traditional place for three reasons. He tells us that this location (John 7:53–8:11) is, by far, the majority location for the PA in the manuscripts. He shows that 95.9% (1370 out of 1428) Greek Manuscripts that have the PA, place it in its traditional location.⁷¹ Secondly he says that “John 7:53–8:11 is the earliest demonstrable location for PA in both the manuscript tradition and extra-biblical citations of the story.”⁷² Hence those few manuscripts in comparison that show different locations for the PA are of a later date. Thirdly, it is remarked that “of the late alternative PA locations, at least some are due to the impact of lectionary readings.”⁷³

The argument that the PA’s literary form is not Johannine, hence an interpolation is championed by Colwell. He advocated that the New Testament had to be determined verse by verse. This technique has been called the eclectic method.⁷⁴ Robert Morgenthaler used it extensively to discredit the Johannine authorship of the PA because of its seemingly foreign linguistic form.⁷⁵

⁷¹Chris Keith, “Jesus Began to Write: Literacy, the *Pericope Adulterae*, and the Gospel of John” (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2008), 113,114.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Ernest Cadman Colwell, “Biblical Criticism: Lower and Higher,” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, LXVII (1948), 4.

⁷⁵Robert Morgenthaler, *Statistics of New Testament Vocabulary* (*Statistik Des Neutestamentlichen Wortschatzes*, 1958), 60-62, 187, quoted in Alan, F. Johnson, *A Stylistic Trait of the Fourth Gospel in the Pericope Adulterae?* 92, *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society*, 92, accessed 12 February 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/9/9-2/BETS_9_2_91-96_Johnson.pdf.

This method was used on Pauline letters by P. N. Harrison and led to conclusions that the Pastoral Letters were not written by Paul due to the differences in them.⁷⁶ The eclectic technique fails when it is applied to other non-New Testament literature. Purser is said to have used it on Cicero's works and it led to a misleading conclusion that he (Cicero) was not the author.⁷⁷ So Blomberg believes that it is the rigorous eclecticism that errs by being highly subjective at the expense of external evidence. He shows that it might lead one to choose a corrupted reading that has been edited by a scribe in a bid to smoothen and harmonize a "concept with the rest of the author's work."⁷⁸

Johnson unlike Blomberg discredits the eclectic method totally by outlining the findings of G. Udney Yule, a professional statistician and reader of statistics at the University of Cambridge. He argued that it takes at least "10 000 words to form any solid statistical basis for authorship."⁷⁹ Thus due to only 174 words in the PA, this method proves unreliable. This method has been critiqued as "proving too much," to the extent that it can be used on portions of a known author but it can prove that it was a different author who wrote.⁸⁰

Lastly a comparison is made by Johnson between the PA and John 2:13-17 which is an undisputed Johannine passage. Surprisingly, by using this method, the PA had 16% hapax legomena (words occurring only in this passage but nowhere in the

⁷⁶P. N. Harrison, *The Problem of the Pastoral Epistles* (Oxford: At the University Press, 1921); More recently by K. Grayston and G. Herdan, "The Authorship of the Pastorals in the Light of Statistical Linguistics," *New Testament Studies*, VI (October, 1959): 1-15, quoted in Johnson, 93.

⁷⁷Donald Guthrie, *The Pastoral Epistles and the Mind of Paul* (London: The Tyndale Press, 1956), 9, quoted in Johnson, 93.

⁷⁸Craig L. Blomberg and Jennifer Foutz Markley, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 25.

⁷⁹G. Udney Yule, *The Statistical Study of Literary Vocabulary*, quoted in Johnson, 93.

⁸⁰Johnson, *A Stylistic Trait*, 93.

Gospel of John) while 2:13-17 had 30%. In addition, the PA had 17% preferred Johannine words while 2:13-17 had only 9%.⁸¹ Being faithful to this method would warrant discrediting John 2:13-17 as having been penned by another author and not John. This proves the futility of the eclectic method in trying to reject Johannine authorship of the PA. In the same vein, it can be argued that Heil sees the wording in the PA as characteristically Johannine.⁸² He even goes on to explain the reasons for the presence of those words termed “unJohannine” in this passage to show how they fit in with the context of the PA.⁸³

Even if Kostenberger seems to give credit to Morgenthaler’s use of this method for the PA, he admits that “word statistics should not be accorded definitive status in the present argument.”⁸⁴ Excell brings the point home by cautioning us when dealing with inspired writings. He points out that “an inspired writer may occasionally use words and constructions and modes of expression which he generally does not use, and that it is no proof that he did not write a passage because he wrote it in a peculiar way.”⁸⁵ Blomberg admits that an author can use “something contrary to his usual diction or style to emphasize a point.”⁸⁶

⁸¹Johnson, *A Stylistic Trait*, 93-4.

⁸²Heil, “The Story of Jesus,” 184, quoted in Whiteford, “Anti-Judaic Glosses, 29, even Köstenberger highlights some of the words in the PA that are Johannine, though he thinks they are interpolations. Andreas J. Köstenberger, *John*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 246.

⁸³Heil, *An Analysis of ‘Non-Johannine’ Vocabulary in John 7:53–8:11*, part 1, vol. 47, No 1 (2013), accessed 5 March 2017, <http://www.indieskriflig.org.za/index.php/skriflig/article/view/93/2122> and Heil, ‘*Non-Johannine*,’ part 2, <http://www.indieskriflig.org.za/index.php/skriflig/article/view/98/2081>.

⁸⁴Kostenberger, *John*, 245-6.

⁸⁵Excell, *John*, 1-2.

⁸⁶Blomberg and Foutz Markley, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis*, 25.

The assertion of the PA breaking the smooth flow in John's narration is to be brought to question. Hills proposes that the present location of the PA is perfect in that it aligns well contextually with the preceding passage.⁸⁷ And he is not alone in viewing it thus.⁸⁸ Heil clarifies, "Without the story of the adulteress the overall narrative of John 7-8, especially the irony involved in the attempt to kill Jesus, is poorer."⁸⁹ Jesus' declaration as the light (John 8:12), (after dispelling the woman's way of darkness) and also his succeeding address on how he does not judge anyone (8:15, 16) (since he had not judged her), fits the PA's context well.⁹⁰ Hoskyns concurs and believes that the PA "fits its surroundings theologically and not only pedagogically," (as a method of teaching).⁹¹

In a rebuttal to the idea of an unsmooth fitting of the PA in its current location, Burgon turns the critics' arguments upside down. He asserts that removing this story would lead to an unsmooth reading.⁹² Hills too, doubts the sagacity of rejecting this passage's traditional location. He remarks that "the reader is snatched from the midst of a dispute in the council chamber of the Sanhedrin back to Jesus in the temple without a single word of explanation." Hence he retorts how "such impressionistic writing might be looked for in some sophisticated modern book but not in a book of

⁸⁷Edward F. Hills, *The King James Version Defended*, 150-159.

⁸⁸Alison Trites, in the (*Bibliotheca Sacra* 1974), Zane C. Hodges and John Paul Heil, Quoted in Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset et al., *A Commentary, Critical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, 1997), John 8:1.

⁸⁹John Paul Heil, "The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress (John 7:53-8:11) Reconsidered," *Biblica* 72 (1991): 186-190, quoted in Whiteford, "Anti-Judaic Glosses, 29.

⁹⁰Clark Zane Hodges, "The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7:53-8:11): The Text," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 136, no. 544 (October 1979): 318-332. *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASeries, EBSCOhost* (19 November 2007), quoted in Whiteford, "Anti-Judaic Glosses, 28.

⁹¹Hoskyns, 571, quoted in Frederick Dale Bruner, *The Gospel of John, A Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2012), 510.

⁹²John William Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Tradition Text of the Holy Gospels*, 181, 182.

the sacred Scriptures.”⁹³ Thus Pink sums up how the removal of the PA from its traditional location creates more questions that are difficult to answer.⁹⁴

Therefore it can be mentioned that the story of Jesus and the adulteress suits well the context in which it is found in the traditional position. It can as well be proposed that of all the positions that are suggested for it, its present location seems the best and the most attested of them all as has been argued above. Not to forget the argument earlier on highlighted that the wording in the PA is characteristically Johannine.

Authenticity and Canonicity of the Pericope Adulterae

Having pointed out this, it is appropriate to mention that many scholars believe in the authenticity of the PA, including some of those who argue against its Johannine authorship. These are inclusive of Strauss, Ridderbos and Metzger.⁹⁵

On the other hand some out rightly declare that the PA is canonical and that it belongs to its traditional position in which it is found in most Bibles and fits linguistically Johannine authorship.⁹⁶ Similarly, even the authenticity of (John 8:6a) to the PA and Johannine provenance is affirmed by Johnson.⁹⁷ Unlike those like Wallace and Metzger who suggest (8:6a) was inserted to try and make the PA seem

⁹³Edward F. Hills, “The Woman Caught in Adultery,” *The King James Version Defended*, 4th edition (Des Moines, IA: Christian Research Press, 1984), 150-159.

⁹⁴Arthur Walkington Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Swengel, PA: Bible truth depot, 1923-45), 416.

⁹⁵Mark L. Strauss, *Four Portraits, One Jesus: A Survey of Jesus and the Gospels* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2007), 317; Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 285-7, and Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 188.

⁹⁶Johnson, *A Stylistic Trait*, 96; Kostenberger, *John*, 246, and Heil, “The Story of Jesus,” 184, quoted in Whiteford, “Anti-Judaic Glosses, 29. This does not go well with Burge who thinks it is not canonical. See Burge, “A Specific Problem,” 148.

⁹⁷Johnson, *A Stylistic Trait*, 96; Kostenberger, *John*, 246, and Heil, “The Story of Jesus,” 184, quoted in Whiteford, “Anti-Judaic Glosses, 29.

Johannine,⁹⁸ Heil believes otherwise. He tells us how such asides “they said this to test him” are characteristic of the Fourth Gospel. He then reports how also Jesus tested Phillip (6:6),⁹⁹ as can be illustrated below from the UBS:⁴

John 6:6: τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγεν πειράζων αὐτόν (*touto de elegen peirazoŌn auton*)

John 8:6: τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγον πειράζοντες αὐτόν (*touto de elegon peirazontes auton*).¹⁰⁰

It is befitting at this interval to mention that this research admits that there are many challenges connected to this passage. However, despite all that, it is posited in this study that this is an authentic text. As to why and how the complexities associated with manuscripts came to be, it would humbly be submitted that further light might need to be shed. Nevertheless, one can still strongly believe that the PA is inspired and canonical. The pericope’s Johannine authorship as well as its traditional location in chapter 8 can similarly be defended. Its inspired nature as the Word of God is likewise affirmed by J. V. McGee.¹⁰¹

With such a stance, one can therefore concur with Ryle who has some sobering opinions on the PA: He is of the conviction that God in His providence deliberated left some critical difficulties in the NT text to prove humanity’s faith and patience. “They serve to test the humility of those to whom intellectual difficulties are a far greater cross than either doctrinal or practical ones.”¹⁰² He continues and says

⁹⁸Daniel Wallace, “Reconsidering the Story of Jesus and the Adulteress Reconsidered,” *New Testament Studies* 39 (1993), 290-96, and Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 188.

⁹⁹Heil, “The Story of Jesus,” 184, quoted in Whiteford, “Anti-Judaic Glosses, 29.

¹⁰⁰Kurt Aland et al, ed., *The Greek New Testament*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 2012), 334, 347.

¹⁰¹J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, based on the Thru the Bible Radio Program, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1981), 4:414.

¹⁰²Ryle quoted in Excell, 2.

“To such minds it is trying, but useful, discipline to have occasional passages involving knots which they cannot quite untie, and problems which they cannot quite solve.” And he winds up by cautioning that “the text before us is ‘a hard thing’ it would be wrong to deny. But I believe our duty is not to reject it hastily, but to sit still and wait. In these matters, he that believeth shall not make haste.”¹⁰³

Archdeacon Farrar further paints a bold and striking picture in favor of the PA in his statements. He reasons out that the intrigue with which the story unfolds up to its end is so lofty and elevated that no human mind could have managed to make it up.¹⁰⁴ In so saying, it can be summarized that the PA is fully authentic, canonical and Johannine without refuting the presence of the difficulties that surround its attestation in manuscripts. Thus one might conclude that John 7:53-8:11 is the established text under study in this research.

Textual Analysis

John 7:53; καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν ἕκαστος εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ, 8:1; Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἐπορεύθη εἰς τὸ ὄρος τῶν Ἐλαιῶν. ² Ὁρθρου δὲ πάλιν παρεγένετο εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν καὶ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ἤρχετο πρὸς αὐτόν, καὶ καθίσας ἐδίδασκεν αὐτούς. ³ ἄγουσιν δὲ οἱ γραμματεῖς καὶ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι γυναῖκα ἐπὶ μοιχείᾳ κατελιημμένην καὶ στήσαντες αὐτήν ἐν μέσῳ ⁴ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Διδάσκαλε, αὕτη ἡ γυνὴ κατείληπται ἐπ’ αὐτοφώρῳ μοιχευομένη. ⁵ ἐν δὲ τῷ νόμῳ ἡμῖν Μωϋσῆς ἐνετείλατο τὰς τοιαύτας λιθάζειν. σὺ οὖν τί λέγεις; ⁶ τοῦτο δὲ ἔλεγον πειράζοντες αὐτόν, ἵνα ἔχωσιν κατηγορεῖν αὐτοῦ. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς κάτω κύψας τῷ δακτύλῳ κατέγραφεν εἰς τὴν γῆν. ⁷ ὡς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυσεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ’ αὐτήν βαλέτω λίθον. ⁸ καὶ πάλιν κατακύψας ἔγραφεν εἰς τὴν γῆν. ⁹ οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ἐξήρχοντο εἰς καθ’ εἷς ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ κατελείφθη μόνος καὶ ἡ γυνὴ ἐν μέσῳ οὔσα. ¹⁰ ἀνακύψας δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτῇ, Γύναι, ποῦ εἶσιν; οὐδεὶς σε κατέκρινεν; ¹¹ ἡ δὲ εἶπεν, Οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, [καὶ] ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε.

¹⁰³Ryle quoted in Excell, 2.

¹⁰⁴Archdeacon Farrar quoted in Excell, *John*, 2.

Of the few variant readings highlighted in the critical apparatus on the PA,¹⁰⁵ only the significant ones will be discussed here. John 8:6, Τοῦτο δὲ . . . αὐτοῦ (*touto de...autou*) is rated as certain.¹⁰⁶ It is stated by Metzger and Nestle Aland (NA²⁷) how some few manuscripts omit 8:6a and put it after 8:4 (D 1071) or 8:11 (M).¹⁰⁷ However, as can be noted from the critical apparatus, presence of 8:6a is the most attested in the manuscripts.¹⁰⁸ It reads, “This they said, tempting him that they might have to accuse him.”¹⁰⁹ Therefore both the UBS⁴ and Metzger support this traditional reading of having this first part of verse in its traditional position.

John 8:8; It is mentioned how several witnesses (U 73 331 . . . and arm^{mss}) after mentioning Jesus’ writing on the ground (γῆν-*geOn*) go on to add that he was writing “the sins of each of them.”¹¹⁰ Metzger remarks that it was an addition done to “satisfy pious curiosity concerning what it was that Jesus wrote on the ground.”¹¹¹ By this he shows that the content of what Jesus wrote is not known. Thus it can be admitted that these were a later addition made in the mentioned manuscripts. In the same vein, these above mentioned manuscripts are of a very late date ranging from the 9th c, upwards. Thus it seems highly unlikely that the PA has the contents of what

¹⁰⁵Please note that the critical apparatuses from the following will be used, UBS⁴, Nestle Aland 27 (NA²⁷), Tischendorf and Metzger.

¹⁰⁶UBS⁴, 347.

¹⁰⁷Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 189, and Nestle Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993), Electronic Database: Biblesoft/PC Study V5, Inc., John 8:6.

¹⁰⁸UBS⁴, 347. This includes the following manuscripts; E, G, H, S, A and many others.

¹⁰⁹*King James Version* (1988-2006), Electronic Database: Biblesoft/PC Study V5, Inc.

¹¹⁰Constantin von Tischendorf, *Tischendorf Critical Apparatus*, 18th ed. in 3 vols (1815-1874), in *BibleWorks 8* [CD-ROM] (Norfolk, VA: Bibleworks, 2009).

¹¹¹Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 190.

Jesus wrote. Nonetheless though, it can be argued that some inferences can be made over what Jesus could have been jotting down.

Lastly, verse 9, the critical apparatus favors “οἱ δὲ ἀκούσαντες ἐξήρχοντο εἰς καθ’ εἷς” (*hoi de akousantes exeōrkonto heis kath heis*)¹¹² translated, “And when they heard it, they *began* to go out one by one.” Some manuscripts (E G H 180 ... copt^{bopt}) add that these enemies of Jesus went away “being reproved by their conscience.”¹¹³ Metzger mentions that the Textus Receptus includes that statement.¹¹⁴ Also, this variant reading is the one followed by the King James Version and Young’s Literal Translation.¹¹⁵

It is interesting to note that on this verse, the UBS⁴ critical apparatus favors the reading from later manuscripts and discard that from earlier ones. Those manuscripts that do not mention that the accusers went away being reproved by their conscience begin with S and M (which are dated in the 9th c), followed by minuscules 28, dated 11th c and 597 dated 13th c to mention but a few.¹¹⁶ However, those manuscripts that have this phrase include Uncials E dated 8th c, G and H, in the 9th c. This study maintains that the phrase is authentic and to be retained in the canon.

Translation of the Established Text

John 7:53. And everyone went to his home. 8:1. But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2. And at daybreak, he came again to the temple; and all the people came

¹¹²UBS,⁴ 348.

¹¹³Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 189.

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, 190.

¹¹⁵*Young’s Literal Translation (YLT)* (2003), and *KJV* (1988-2006), Electronic Database: BibleSoft/PC Study V5, Inc.

¹¹⁶UBS⁴, 348.

to him, and having sat down he began teaching them. 3. And the Scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman having been caught in adultery, and having set her in the midst, 4. They said to him, Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of committing adultery. 5. And in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women, what then do you say? 6. But this they said tempting him, in order that they might have something to accuse him. But Jesus having bent down, he wrote with his finger on the ground. 7. And as they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, ‘the one without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.’ 8. And again having bent down, he began writing on the ground. 9. And having heard, and being convicted by their conscience, they began to go out one by one, starting with the eldest to the youngest. And he was left alone with the woman in the midst. 10. And having straightened up, Jesus said to her, woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you? 11. And she said, no one lord, and Jesus said to her, neither do I condemn you; go and from now, sin no more.

Grammatical and Lexical Analysis

Γυναῖκα ἐπὶ μοιχεία κατειλημμένην (*gunaika epi moicheia kateileōmmeneōn*) (John 8:3): κατειλημμένην (*kateileōmmeneōn*) is a participle perfect passive verb from καταλαμβάνω (*katalambanoō*),¹¹⁷ translated “to come upon someone, with implication of surprise, catch.”¹¹⁸ Hence it seems plausible to translate the phrase to show that the woman was brought to Jesus, “having been caught” unsuspectingly.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷William D. Mounce and Robert H. Mounce, eds., *Greek and English Interlinear New Testament: NASB/NIV*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2008), 384.

¹¹⁸Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG), 3 trans. and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, 2nd ed., rev. and augmented by F. Wilbur Gingrich and Frederick W. Danker (1979), s.v. “καταλαμβάνω.”

¹¹⁹Robert Young, *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, 22nd American ed., s.v. “κατειλημμένην.”

The two key Greek renderings of the terms (woman and adultery) in John 8:3 may give us a hint of the adulteress' status, that is, the one brought to Jesus.

The word γυναῖκα (woman) as found in the Bible, could be used to refer to any female¹²⁰ inclusive of virgins, a wife (Gen 2:24), a widow (1 Kings 7:2), and even a betrothed female (one whose bride price was paid) but still staying with her parents before the wedding (Gen 29:21).¹²¹ Similar conclusions are also given by Schneider.¹²² Γυναῖκα (appears 73 times in the Apocrypha, 220 times in the LXX and 52 in the NT, with 11 of those occurrences found in John).¹²³ Of course it can be admitted that most of its appearance in the Bible, it was pointing to a married woman. This holds true with texts like Matthew 5:31; Mark 10:2 that address the issue of divorcing a married woman (*gunaika*), and Luke 14:20 which shows one excusing himself from the feast because he had recently married his wife.

Μοιχεία-*moicheia* (adultery) is found in this form (once in the NT, in the PA, twice in the LXX, [Jer 13:27, and Hos 4:2], and once in the Apocrypha [Wis 14:26]). In both instances of the LXX, it is used figuratively to refer to Israel's unfaithfulness to God. In the NT and Apocrypha it designates sexual infidelity. The term μοιχείᾳ has been defined as having illicit relationship with another person's wife or husband.¹²⁴ This finds parallels in Exodus 20:10 which define μοιχευομένη (*moicheuomene*) as sexual intimacy with another's wife. It is important to underscore that the same word

¹²⁰Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (BDAG), s.v. "gunaika."

¹²¹Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889), s.v. "γυναῖκα."

¹²²Horst Balz and Gerhard Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (EDNT) (Stuttgart: Eerdmans, 1990), s.v. "γυνή."

¹²³*BibleWorks 8* [CD-ROM] (Norfolk, VA: Bibleworks, 2009).

¹²⁴Barbara Friberg, Timothy Friberg, and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), s.v. "μοιχεία."

μοιχευομένη is also in John 8:4 and is only found in these two texts in the whole Bible.

Arguably, in the LXX, adultery applied mostly to the married and betrothed women as in Jeremiah 29:23; Ezekiel 16:32 and Hos 4:13.¹²⁵ In contrast, πορνεία (*porneia*) which is fornication is defined as sexual immorality inclusive of those not betrothed or married. The verb μοιχεύω, (*moicheuo*ὸ), is found in the Bible in different forms (16 times in the LXX and 16 times in the NT as well).¹²⁶ Some of these occurrences (Lev 20:10; Luke 16:18) specify that the act of committing adultery is taking another's wife.

The OT did not specify the manner of death for the married, however according to the Rabbinic Literature, it was through strangulation.¹²⁷ Similar to the OT law, the Mishnah also proposed stoning for a betrothed woman who is caught.¹²⁸ In case of a married one, strangling was suggested.¹²⁹ The fact that the Scribes and the Pharisees quoted Moses' Law of stoning has led to the suggestion that possibly the adulteress was a betrothed woman. This is in spite of Blinzler who thinks it referred to a married woman and that the Mishnah's prescriptions for the acts of adultery were not yet in effect during Jesus' time. He reasons that the term woman (*gune*ὸ) was used and not engaged girl.¹³⁰

¹²⁵Elaine Adler Goodfriend, *Adultery*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), s.v. "Adultery."

¹²⁶*BibleWorks* 8 [CD-ROM] (Norfolk, VA: Bibleworks, 2009).

¹²⁷Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 11.1.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, 7.4, 9.

¹²⁹Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 7.4, 9; 11.1.

¹³⁰Blinzler, *Die Strafe für Ehebruch*, 34–47, quoted in Beasley-Murray, *John*, 145.

In response however, it can be noted that even Mary, though betrothed was likewise referred to by an angel as Joseph's wife (*gunaika*) in Matthew 1:20.

D. Razafiarivony adds more insight by stating how “a betrothed woman was considered as legally married. Betrothal infidelity fits well in Joseph's prospective divorce with Mary (Matt 1:18-20).”¹³¹ He further expounds that “unfaithfulness during betrothal period discovered before the consummation of the marriage or at the time the marriage is consummated calls for trial (death penalty in the OT and divorce in the NT time).”¹³²

Ὁ ἀναμάρτητος, (John 8:7): Jesus' challenge to the accusers was that the ἀναμάρτητος-*anamarteōtos* (guiltless or sinless/innocent)¹³³ be the first to cast a stone (ὁ μὴ πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτήν βαλέτω λίθον (*ho anamarteōtos humōn proōtos ep' auten baletō lithon*)).¹³⁴ This word ἀναμάρτητος is a hapax legomena in the NT,¹³⁵ hence context will determine its real meaning.

It is assumed that Jesus implied that the one who was not guilty of the same sin as the woman, was to be the first to throw a stone (called the “touchstone” thought to be another metaphorical name for Christ).¹³⁶ Elliot concurs and appeals to Luke 7:37, of the sinful woman who came to Jesus as he ate in a Pharisee's house, in a bid

¹³¹Davidson Razafiarivony, “‘But if She Departs:’ A Study on Paul's Teaching on Divorce and Remarriage (1 Cor 7:10-11) with Application for the Church Ethical Leadership” (International Conference on Ethical Leadership: Adventist University of Africa, 2015), 4, 5.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Barclay M. Newman, Jr., *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Stuttgart: UBS, 1993), s.v. “ἀναμάρτητος.”

¹³⁴“First,” [John 8:7], *SDABC*, 5:986.

¹³⁵Leander E. Keck, Gen. ed. *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. IX (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 629.

¹³⁶*John 8: The Woman Caught in Adultery - Dealing with Capital Offenses Lawfully*, accessed 7 January 2016, <http://www.oocities.org/theonomistic/adultry.html>.

to prove the immorality of the Jewish leaders.¹³⁷ He is not alone in assuming that Christ meant the accusers had committed adultery too at some point.¹³⁸

This standpoint, even though it is an inference, might as well be possible. If that proposal is correct, three possibilities would thus surface. Firstly, Jesus might have been challenging the accusers to be innocent in their motives in bringing the woman. Secondly, he might have been questioning the legitimacy of the procedures required in such cases, and how well they had followed them. Lastly, Christ might have challenged the Scribes and Pharisees to be guiltless of the same sin as the adulteress, too.

To say Jesus meant one who had never sinned misses the point since it would imply that Jesus was actually forbidding any earthly judges from administering justice because everyone has sinned.¹³⁹ On the contrary, it seems he was disqualifying these witnesses who most likely were guilty in being accomplices in the occurrence of this adulterous act.¹⁴⁰

It can be stated that John 8:11 is the focal point both exegetically and theologically of the relationship between law and grace. Jesus uttered an interesting phrase Οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω (*Oude ego se katakrino*)Ὁ, “Neither do I condemn

¹³⁷Elliot’s *Commentary for English Readers*, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/8-7.htm>.

¹³⁸Those who agree with Elliot on this point include: Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Concise Commentary*, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/8-7.htm>; Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/8-7.htm>; *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/8-7.htm>; Gill, *Gill’s Exposition of the Entire Bible*, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/8-7.htm>.

¹³⁹Charles P. Baylis, “The Woman Caught in Adultery: A Test of Jesus as the Greater Prophet,” *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 146 number 582 (Apr - Jun 1989), 172, <http://www.dts.edu/>, accessed 19 January 2016, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=2024532e-6a66-4fb5-94b3-3ca47e91bdb2%40sessionmgr4003&vid=25&hid=4201>.

¹⁴⁰Merrill C. Tenney, “John and Acts,” *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, vol. 9 (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1981), 90.

you.” *Katakrino*ὀ has been defined as an act of passing judgement after determination of guilty, condemning and as a legal technical term for pronouncing a sentence.¹⁴¹ Better stated as declaring someone (thing) wrong, whether in civil, ethical or religious relations.¹⁴² It is a hapax legomna in the whole Bible, however, κατέκρινεν (*katekrinen*), which is found in John 8:10, appears 4 times in the NT and once in the LXX.

In John 8:10, after the flight of the witnesses, Jesus rhetorically asked the woman if none of the accusers had condemned her. It has been interestingly remarked how “those who inconsistently pass judgement on others condemn themselves (Rom 2:1).”¹⁴³ In addition, to *katekrinen* there are also other inflections of *katakrino*ὀ laced in the Bible.¹⁴⁴ And in all these occurrences, the meaning of judgement or condemnation is similarly present.

*Katakrino*ὀ is in the indicative mood, present tense, first person singular and active voice.¹⁴⁵ The indicative is generally a mood of assertion, or presentation of certainty,¹⁴⁶ and specifically in the PA, the phrase *Oude ego*ὀ *se katakrino*ὀ suggests that *katakrino*ὀ is a declarative indicative (that is, one is simply making a statement). Also the tense is specifically an Instantaneous (Punctiliar) Present which shows completed action by the time of speaking and occurs only in the indicative.¹⁴⁷ Thus it

¹⁴¹Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (BDAG), s.v. “Κατακρίνω,” and Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, s.v. “Κατακρίνω.”

¹⁴²ISBE Bible Dictionary, s.v. “Condemn.”

¹⁴³Moises Silva, rev. ed, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology and Exegesis* (NIDNTE), vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 749.

¹⁴⁴*BibleWorks* 8 [CD-ROM] (Norfolk, VA: Bibleworks, 2009).

¹⁴⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 449, 517.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*

seems fair to point out that Jesus himself (active voice) was announcing or rather presenting (declarative indicative mood) to the woman that at that very moment of his speaking, (Instantaneous present tense), he was not meting any punishment on her.

It can be assumed that had Jesus ended with the above phrase, “neither do I condemn you,” many questions could have been left unanswered. Was he refraining from condemning her simply because the accusers had gone? Was he declaring that she had not broken the law and hence not guilty? Arguably, Christ’s phrase that followed μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε (*meÒketi hamartane*) aids in responding to such questions. This phrase *meÒketi hamartane* is only found twice in the NT, in John and once in the LXX as simply (*meÒ hamartane*).¹⁴⁸

MeÒketi here is an adjective adverb which is modifying a verb with a present imperative (*hamartane*), meaning Jesus is commanding her as follows “not ever again, no more after this.”¹⁴⁹ Friberg seems to imply that *meÒ* and *meÒketi* can be used interchangeably and goes on to denote that *meÒ* is a “negative particle” for not, “used for assumed, hesitant, or indefinite denial, with the present imperative it signals to bring to an end an already existing condition; stop doing something, don't do it any longer.”¹⁵⁰

On the contrary Moulton and Milligan see a difference between the two. They posit (*meÒ* with a present imperative), can refer to an act that has not yet happened.¹⁵¹ But on the other hand, *meÒketi* with a present imperative, adds emphasis in that it is a restriction of something has already begun.¹⁵² If one buys in to Moulton and

¹⁴⁸*BibleWorks 8* [CD-ROM] (Norfolk, VA: Bibleworks, 2009).

¹⁴⁹Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, “Μηκέτι.”

¹⁵⁰ Friberg, *Analytical Lexicon*, s.v. “Μη,” and “Μηκέτι.”

¹⁵¹J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), s.v. “Μηκέτι.”

Milligan's argument, then the use of *meōketi* instead of *meō* in John 8:11, implies the emphasis in Jesus' words in forbidding the woman to continue in licentiousness from that moment onwards.

As specified, *hamartane* is in the imperative mood, which in general is the realm of volition (involving the imposition of one's will upon another) and possibility.¹⁵³ Its specific use here is in the prohibition imperative mood and is easily noticeable by a *meō* or *meōketi* before the imperative.¹⁵⁴

The term *hamartane* comes from ἀμάρτανω (*hamartano*)ō, meaning to miss the mark, be in error; or offending against God, man, religious or Moral Law, to sin, do wrong, or transgress.¹⁵⁵ It has also been defined as acting contrary to the will of God.¹⁵⁶ Moises Silva concurs that *hamartano*ō means to commit sin and he goes on to say, "Sin is both a falling away from the relationship of faithfulness toward God and disobedience to the commandments. . . . In both cases sinners shut themselves off from fellowship with God and become God-less (cf. Jer 2:29)."¹⁵⁷ Therefore Jesus was prohibiting the woman to repeat disregarding the Moral Law after having been set free to go unpunished or without being condemned.

From this analysis it can be suggested that Jesus' injunction to the woman to sin no more seems to bring a balance to his former statement "neither do I condemn you." It can be argued further that by this imperative "sin no more," Jesus

¹⁵² J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), s.v. "Μηκέτι."

¹⁵³ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 485.

¹⁵⁴ N. Clayton Croy, *A Primer of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 159.

¹⁵⁵ J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan, *Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1930), s.v. "Μηκέτι."

¹⁵⁶ Johannes E. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (New York: United Bible Society, 1988), s.v. "ἀμάρτανε."

¹⁵⁷ Moises Silva, rev. ed, *NIDNTTE*, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014), 257.

acknowledged that she had broken the Moral Law (the seventh one concerning adultery). The flight of the accusers alone could not automatically warrant the woman's innocence. Hence it seems noble to conclude that it was not because the woman was guiltless or deserving that made Jesus refrain from pronouncing judgement on her.

It sounds as if the Savior was saying "I am not punishing you, you are free, but do not repeat it again." So a better explanation seems to be pointing to the Savior as granting her a second chance. It does not seem an overstatement to suggest that here grace is alluded to in John 8:11. If this suggestion is acceptable, therefore it can be remarked that Jesus both graciously pardoned and cautioned the adulteress. Implying that his undeserved favour did not license the woman to continue breaking God's Moral Law.

It can be summed up that the study of words has shown that the terms used for woman (*gunaika*) and adultery (*moicheia*) together with the punishment of stoning as stated by the accusers, may suggest that the adulteress was a betrothed lady. Also, Jesus requested one who was not a malicious witness to begin the stoning process of the woman, not that he was asking someone who had never sinned. Lastly, John 8:11, gives Jesus' unmerited pardon "neither do I condemn you," to the woman. Also there is the Savior's imperative, "go and sin no more" which shows the importance of upholding the Moral Law after being graciously and undeservingly forgiven and having been mercifully left uncondemned.

Historical-Cultural Background

A reading of the Fourth Gospel would reveal that the story of the adulteress occurred at Jerusalem at the time of the Feast of Tabernacles. Jesus had secretly arrived there when the meeting was half way through in a bid to avoid his accusers

(John 7:10, 11, 14). It is to be highlighted that on the last day of the festival, the Jewish leaders sent the temple guards to arrest Jesus but failed due to his convincing discourses (John 7:37, 45, 46). Implying that the bringing of the woman caught in adultery took place a day after the end of the feast (John 8:2), that is the eighth day of the festival which was a holy day of rest (Lev 23:39).¹⁵⁸ After the event described in the PA, Jesus continued teaching but the critics' verbal exchange with him climaxed with them picking stones to kill him for claiming to be God, and he escaped (John 8:58, 59).

Despite the self-sufficiency of the Jews who claimed to be Abraham's descendants and hence free (John 8:33), Jesus remarks that sin laden people are under bondage (John 8:34). Christ declares that he quenches those who are spiritually thirsty (John 7:37), he dispels darkness (John 8:12) in any who believes in him and that he gives eternal life (John 8:51) to those who come to him. In the same thought therefore, it can be summarized that all these claims by Jesus surrounding the PA seem to find a practical expression in the incident of the woman dragged to Jesus for adultery.

Thus it can be concluded how the immediate context of the PA builds up to show the heightening of the arguments and hatred of the Jesus' opponents. It seems to explain how the Jewish leaders could go to any extent only to trap and implicate him. The PA acts as if it is the acted explanation of Jesus' claims as the light, water and life to all the souls troubled with sin.

¹⁵⁸“Early in the Morning,” [John 8:2], *SDABC*, 5:986.

Woman Caught in Adultery in Light of the Old Testament

In the Old Testament, adultery was dealt with seriously, death was the penalty (Lev 20:10). The sentence pronounced on the offenders depended on whether the female involved was a virgin, betrothed or married. Sexual relations with a virgin who is not betrothed warranted a payment of dowry to the father of the defiled lady. Also the adulterer was supposed to take that lady and make her his wife forever (Exod 22:16; Deut 22:28–29). However, if the woman was betrothed or married, both the adulterer and the adulteress were supposed to die (Deut 22:23–24). So, “the child of incest or adultery is called *mamzer*, and cannot be a member of the community (Deut 23:3) or marry an Israelite.”¹⁵⁹ It is reasoned out that the prevalence of warnings forbidding fornication and adultery in the Wisdom literature suggests there was rampant marital infidelity.¹⁶⁰

The adulteress was deemed as committing a threefold sin of disobeying the command of God, sinning against her husband and bearing to another the children of adultery.” She was supposed to be removed from among the congregation and her children to redress her sin.¹⁶¹

A contrary view is given that in the OT only adultery (a violation of someone’s marriage) was wrong, hence a man was “not under obligation to avoid all non-marital intercourse (*porneia*).”¹⁶² So only a woman was to be bound by the rule

¹⁵⁹*Qidduschin* 3, 12 Mishnah (Strack, *Einl.*, ed.), 49.

¹⁶⁰*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, vol. 10, Gerhard Friedrich, ed. Compiled by Ronald Pitkin., ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 4:731-732.

¹⁶¹*Jesus Sirach* 25:2, quoted in *TDNT*, 4:731.

¹⁶²*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, vol. 10, Gerhard Friedrich, ed. Compiled by Ronald Pitkin., ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 4:730.

of unconditional fidelity.¹⁶³ Also, it is added that only adultery with an Israelitess not with the wife of a non-Israelite was to be punished.¹⁶⁴ Adultery could be considered done only when adults were involved and without prior warning or witnesses, no punishment was to be carried. Lastly, only the woman was exposed to the full threat of punishments, unlike the man who could engage in polygamy.¹⁶⁵

It can be argued that such conclusions could have been out of the Israelites' own making. It could have been a result of their bid to beat the system or creating standpoints from the silence of God's Word or arm-twisting it.¹⁶⁶ On the contrary, it seems to be missing the point to suggest that God through Moses meant that during the OT times, infidelity would only occur with a married Israelite man and woman and not with unmarried ladies or non-Israelite women. Sexual immorality encompassed both the married and the single offenders (Gen 34). God's original intent seems deeper as explained later by Jesus in the NT when he showed that adultery would commence by entertaining lust in one's heart, (Matt 5:28).

The newly married wife could also be stoned if her husband complained that he found her not a virgin and it was proven as true (Deut 22:20, 21). An adulteress who was a daughter of a priest was to be burnt by fire (Lev 21:9). However, the method of the death penalty for married sexual offenders was not clearly stipulated in the OT. Tamar's meted punishment though was burning as a married wife who had

¹⁶³*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (TDNT)*, vol. 10, Gerhard Friedrich, ed. Compiled by Ronald Pitkin., ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), 4:730.

¹⁶⁴H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum NT aus Talmud und Midrasch* (1922), 295, quoted in *TDNT*, 4:731-732.

¹⁶⁵Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar*, 4:731-732.

¹⁶⁶Siegfried H. Horn, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, revised edition (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1979), s.v. "Adultery."

committed adultery and had not waited for her *levir* Shelah (Gen 38).¹⁶⁷ Interestingly, “a bondwoman so offending was to be scourged, and the man was to make a trespass offering (Lev 19:20-22).”¹⁶⁸

Complete public stripping of the adulteress (Ezek 16:37, 39), and mutilation (Ezek 23:25) are viewed as other methods that could have been used. On the contrary, the two quoted passages were imagery references to Israel’s spiritual adultery and her judgements. Hence, this seems to make a poor conclusive stance of viewing these methods as representative of Israelite practices.¹⁶⁹

The gravity of the sinfulness of sexual sin can be perceived from the Decalogue. Out of the Ten Commandments written by God, two of them refer to the vileness of adultery. God forbids both adultery (Exod 20:14) and coveting a neighbor’s wife (Exod 20:17). Though one may argue that the law of adultery here only referred to the married, it seems to be encompassing sexual impurity of any kind, whether in act or thought.¹⁷⁰

A test for adultery would be carried out by a priest if a man suspected his wife of infidelity (Num 5:11-31). It also prevented the man from victimizing an innocent wife on baseless grounds of jealous or mere cruelty.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, when caught in adultery, two or three eye witnesses were required to testify for execution

¹⁶⁷David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), s.v. “Adultery.”

¹⁶⁸William Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997), s.v. “Adultery.”

¹⁶⁹Smith, *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, s.v. “Adultery.”

¹⁷⁰Siegfried H. Horn, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary*, revised edition. (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1979), s.v. “Adultery.”

¹⁷¹Carl Friedrich Keil, and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), s.v. “Adultery.”

(Deut 19:15-21). This precaution was intended to create fairness and diminish chances of false victimization.¹⁷²

A malicious witness (a witness of violence) was to be punished.¹⁷³ This term is used to denote those who would pervert justice (Exod 23:1-2) and the misuse of the law by priests for their own selfish purposes.” (Ezek 22:6 and Zeph 3:4)¹⁷⁴ The witnesses were given first precedence to start the process of killing the adulterers followed by the people around in executing judgement (Deut 17:7). Thereby, these false witnesses would be guilty for shedding innocent blood.¹⁷⁵

In conclusion, the OT as has been revealed is filled with many references that deal with adultery and how to deal with the erring. It has been noted how God had put measures in a bid to minimize infidelity among His people. The judging process was also to be fair and thorough, lest some would be victimized by false witnesses.

Adultery in the Greco-Roman World

In the Greco-Roman world, extramarital affairs, prostitution and adultery were common.¹⁷⁶ Unconditional fidelity seemed to have been expected from the wife alone, and it was not forbidden for a man to have illicit relations with an unmarried

¹⁷²S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, 3rd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1902), s.v. “μοιχεΐα.”

¹⁷³Ibid.

¹⁷⁴Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (1980), quoted in Charles P. Baylis, “The Woman Caught in Adultery: A Test of Jesus as the Greater Prophet,” 181.

¹⁷⁵“The Hands,” [Deut 17:7], *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary (SDABC)*, rev. ed., ed. Francis D. Nichol (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1976-1980), 1013.

¹⁷⁶Everett Ferguson, *Backgrounds of Early Christianity*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 75.

woman.¹⁷⁷ Thus in Greek law, adultery was perceived as “secret sexual intercourse with a free woman without the consent of her lord.”¹⁷⁸

To offenders, private revenge was a preserve of the husband, father, son or brother through killing, maltreating or fine.¹⁷⁹ The cheated husband was mandated to divorce the wife or else he would be punished as well. A public temple was out of bounds for a woman caught in adultery.¹⁸⁰ Harlots on the other hand, were not protected by the law of private revenge.¹⁸¹ The father of the adulteress could exercise private revenge of killing the adulterer only if he would kill his daughter too.¹⁸² Augustus instituted the *Lex Julia de Adulteriis* which declared adultery as a penal offense in which offenders could be banished and prohibited the husband to forgive his cheating spouse.¹⁸³ Nevertheless, the wife was supposed to forgive her husband’s adultery.¹⁸⁴

In Hellenistic and Roman temples, there were various restrictions on worshippers. The temple of Athena at Pergamum instructed anyone wishing to visit it to have refrained from adultery for the preceding two days.¹⁸⁵ In a household cult in

¹⁷⁷Pseudo Demosthenes *Orationes* 59, 122 (ed. F. Blass, 1903), and (Johannes Stobaeus *Eclogae* IV, 497, 15), quoted in *TDNT*, 4:732-733.

¹⁷⁸Latte, 2446, quoted in *TDNT*, 4:732-733.

¹⁷⁹Aeschines *Orationes* 1, 91; Demosthenes *Orationes* 23, 53, Aristophanes *Nubes* 1083, and Homer *Odyssey* 8, 332: μοιχάγρια. Pseudo Demosthenes *Orationes* 59, 65. City law of Gortyna, Gt. Inscr., II, 20 ff. (J. Kohler-E. Ziebarth, *Das Stadtrecht von Gortyn* [1912], 5), quoted in *TDNT*, 4:732-733.

¹⁸⁰Pseudo Demosthenes *Orationes* 59, 87; Aeschines *Orationes* 1, 183, quoted in *TDNT*, 4:732-733.

¹⁸¹Pseudo Demosthenes *Orationes* 59, 67, quoted in *TDNT*, 4:732-733.

¹⁸²C.G. Bruns, *Fontes Juris Romani Antiqui* (1909), 112, quoted in *TDNT*, 4:732-733.

¹⁸³Girard, 175, 185; Bruns, 112; Suetonius Tranquillus *De Vita Caesarum* 34; Dio Cassius Cocceianus 54, 30, 4, quoted in *TDNT*, 4:732-733.

¹⁸⁴Cato in Gellius Noct. Att., 10, 23, 5, quoted in *TDNT*, 4:732-733.

¹⁸⁵W. Dittenberger, *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, 3rd ed., vol. 3, no. 982 (Leipzig, 1920), trans. F. C. Grant, *Hellenistic Religions* (New York, 1953), 6.

Philadelphia since the first century B.C. adulterers were forbidden to enter there. These were stipulations presented as directives from god (Zeus).¹⁸⁶

So it can be ascertained in summary that in the Greco-Roman era, laws pertaining to adultery were also stiff though loose in comparison to the Jews'. The pendulum swung and tilted in favor of men in cases of infidelity. It seems that infidelity was rife and rampant during these civilizations.

Woman Caught in Adultery in Light of Judaism around the New Testament Times

Adultery in Judaism was held in great disdain during the NT times. The specific penalties for this sin were tabulated in the Jewish writings. Philo shows that though child bearing was sacred to a Jew, adultery would result in a blameworthy seed.¹⁸⁷

According to the rabbis, the Jewish method of stoning was done with the condemned half naked and hands tied behind the back, as suggested by Clarke. The culprit would be thrown off the cliff by witnesses. In case the individual did not die, then one witness would crush the breast with a huge stone called the "coup de grace or finishing stroke."¹⁸⁸

The Jews being under Roman dominion were to seek permission first before executing any death sentences. A death penalty was a preserve of the Roman prefect.¹⁸⁹ Roy A. Stewart informs us that the restriction is generally believed to have been placed on the Jews in A.D. 6 when Palestine became a colony of Rome,

¹⁸⁶Ferguson, *Backgrounds*, 187.

¹⁸⁷*Philo Decalogo* 124, quoted in *TDNT*, 4:731.

¹⁸⁸Adam Clarke, *Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible*, vol. 5 (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, n.d.), 576.

¹⁸⁹D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 335.

though he mentions that another argument supports a later date of A.D. 70 when the Jewish revolt was thwarted.¹⁹⁰

Anna Galeniece meaningfully contributes that in the OT, adulterous offenders received instant justice. She notes that in the NT however, such people suffer from the baleful fruits of their misdoings in this life. So the death sentence is simply postponed till some further time.¹⁹¹ Thus “death is a natural result of sin and, at the same time, it is also the final punishment that comes to all impenitent sinners in the form of ‘the second death’ or final eradication (Rev 20:10, 14, 15).”¹⁹²

So in brief, the historical-cultural context has shown that adultery warranted punishment on the part of offenders. Different measures were meted whether in the Jewish culture or the Greco-Roman world depending on the status of the offenders that is whether they were betrothed, married or unmarried. The measures ranged from a death penalty, divorce to fines and floggings, showing that immorality was lowly esteemed.

Biblical and Theological Analysis

Jesus’ Perspective on the Law

The PA is one of the critical examples of how Jesus upheld both the Law of Moses and the Decalogue. The prohibition of adultery was enshrined in the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:14) while the penalty of transgressing this command was

¹⁹⁰Roy A. Stewart, “Judicial Procedure in New Testament Times,” *The Evangelical Quarterly* (Lebanon Bible College, Berwick-on-Tweed, 1975), accessed 12 February 2015, [Judicial Procedure1975-2_094.pdf](#).

¹⁹¹Anna Galeniece, “A Concept of Sexual Immorality and its Consequences in the Bible,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 15/2 (Autumn 2004): 141, accessed 20 February 2006, http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file. Sexual Immorality-Its consequences in the Bible_ Galeniece .pdf.

¹⁹²John M. Fowler, *Sin*, in *Handbook of Seventh-day Adventist Theology*, 252, 253, quoted in Galeniece, “Concept,” 141.

tabulated in the Mosaic Law (Deut 22:22). Jesus' critics recited Moses' instruction of stoning adulterers and they requested for his comment (John 8:5). Hendriksen conveys to us that the accusers mostly could have wanted to make Jesus violate the Law of Moses by refusing that the woman be stoned.¹⁹³

It is evident how the accusers were steeped into making Jesus violate the Mosaic Law so as to condemn him. Instead, the PA shows the irony of how the critics themselves were being oblivious of grossly gloating over the same. The trappers only brought the woman to Jesus for execution (John 8:3-5) instead of both the offenders (Deut 22:24). This is an example of how the critics arm-twisted the law's demands.

The need of two or three eye witnesses was a requirement for evidence (Deut 19:15-21). Serious scrutiny of the evidence and the witnesses themselves was mandatory before a sentence would be passed. Hence the witnesses should have seen the act together and at the same time as well. Walter A. Elwell adds that the Sanhedrin judges could even ask for the color of the sheets that were being used¹⁹⁴ or even the kind of motion that was being made.¹⁹⁵ A compromising position of preliminary sexual contact or even post sexual one as evidence was not taken into account. One had to be caught in the very act.¹⁹⁶ Hence as far as the presence of sufficient witnesses was concerned, the accusers passed the test. They exceeded the necessary number needed.

¹⁹³William Hendricksen, *John*, New Testament Commentary (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1954), 37.

¹⁹⁴Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker reference library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), John 8:11.

¹⁹⁵J. D. M. Derret, *NTS*, X (1963-64), 1-26, quoted in Morris, *John*, 781.

¹⁹⁶*Ibid.*

It however gives an impression that the Scribes and the Pharisees had set up this woman as a bait for Jesus.¹⁹⁷ E. G. White likewise supports this and adds that the accusers had set a trap for their victim.¹⁹⁸ Hence the accusers were guilty and faulty witnesses. A witness leading or letting one proceed into sin without warning was perceived as wrong.¹⁹⁹ Therefore, the accusers were wanting as far as the Mosaic Law was concerned that they were pretending to uphold. The teachers of the law became themselves breakers of the law,²⁰⁰ thereby becoming indifferent to their own heinous sin.²⁰¹

The very fact of Jesus' critics coming to request for his judgement while holding stones seems faulty. It seems they approached Jesus as "judge" for a verdict they had already decided upon. Such skipping of trial procedures contravened the Mosaic Law. Jesus on the other extent, who was meant to antagonize the Mosaic Law never stooped so low. His reply to them in requesting the worthy witness to initiate the stoning showed that Jesus acknowledged that law. He knew adulterers were fit for death in as much as every sinner is thus doomed. The Savior did not breach the very law he commissioned Moses to write. Instead Christ fulfilled it on the cross. The Law of Moses which pointed to him came to an end by his death (Matt 27:51). Hence the death that was meant for the sinner was meted upon him by his sacrificial and substitutionary death.

¹⁹⁷Gary M. Burge, "John," *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 242.

¹⁹⁸Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 461.

¹⁹⁹Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*, vol. 3, Baker reference library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), John 8:11.

²⁰⁰Bp. Wordsworth, quoted in Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator* (Ages Software, Inc., and BibleSoft, Inc., 2002), John 8:11.

²⁰¹J. N. Darby (John 8:5), quoted in William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995), John 8:5.

The woman was guilty of sin, and rightly deserving death. McGee unpacks how in the PA Jesus did not antagonize the Mosaic system but placed “his cross between that woman and her sin.” Thus, Christ would die for her sins.²⁰² He continues to share that Jesus had not come to judge but to be a Savior during his first Advent. Also that he would go to the cross to pay the penalty of sin for all sinners including that woman.²⁰³ Wiersbe concurs and further elaborates that Jesus was neither easy on sin nor contradicting the Decalogue. Instead, his forgiveness showed that one day he would die for her sins. Thus forgiveness is shown to be free but not cheap.²⁰⁴ This then strikes at the core of the relationship between law and grace. It suggests that Jesus was taking upon himself the sins of this woman so as to offer her forgiveness and later to be her sin sacrifice. This proves the high regard for the law that Jesus had and still has. Meaning his grace does not excuse sin and sinners but supplies his blood won pardon to the unworthy to enable them to keep God’s holy law.

In the PA, not only did Jesus uphold the Mosaic Law but the Decalogue too. To claim that this passage advocates for Jesus’ low esteem of the Ten Commandments seems to be an overstatement. Indulgence in sin is the very opposite of what this pericope is all about. L. O. Richards says the law is presented as the “good and holy expression of righteousness.”²⁰⁵ Hence Jesus did not water down the importance of the Decalogue. The accusers were not concerned with the woman’s

²⁰²J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, based on the Thru the Bible Radio Program, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1981), 4:416.

²⁰³*Ibid.*

²⁰⁴Warren W. Wiersbe, “John,” *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Chariot Victor, 1989), John 8:11.

²⁰⁵Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, “John,” *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), John 8:7.

righteousness and reform but vengeance in bringing the woman.²⁰⁶ This seems to be what Jesus was correcting, a wrong approach to the law. Jesus' concluding statement to the woman "go and sin no more," speaks highly of his sense of how the holy precepts were to be upheld.

The Messiah condemned the sin and forgave the sinner, hence he pardoned sin but did not palliate with it.²⁰⁷ Christ perfectly kept the law so that no one could accuse him of denigrating its teachings and power.²⁰⁸ No one could convict him of sin (John 8:46). In his whole life, Jesus did not break the Moral Law thereby being our example of a high ideal lifestyle for believers. Even Jesus' upholding of the Mosaic Law shines through in his life: for instance, his circumcision on the eighth day (Luke 2:21; compare with Lev 12:3), and his instruction to the leper he had healed to go to the Priest and offer a sacrifice was stipulated in the Torah Luke 17:12-14; compare with Lev 14:2, 3, 10-12).

For comparison's sake, it seems in order to note a similar instance in which Jesus was similarly set to be trapped by his accusers over the issue of the law. In Matthew 22:34-40, the Scribes and Pharisees came to test Jesus to tell them what the greatest commandment was. He cited to them complete love to God and to humanity as the two equal great ones on which all law and prophets hanged. E. White succinctly comments on this passage. She elucidates how loving God with one's all will enable humanity to keep the first four commandments since they deal with people's

²⁰⁶Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, "John," *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1987), John 8:7.

²⁰⁷Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator* (Ages Software, Inc., and BibleSoft, Inc., 2002), John 8:11.

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*

relationship with God. Secondly, loving one's neighbor as oneself will reflect in keeping the last six commandments since they focus on human relations.²⁰⁹

Here again, just as in the PA, Jesus did not antagonize the law. Meaning the law of love or mercy to fellow humanity is not a replacement of the already given Ten Principles in Exodus 20 as stated earlier. On the contrary, the Decalogue is to be kept stemming from a loving heart and not from a legalistic standpoint.

In addition, one cannot be justified in using the PA to support situational ethics or to refuse correction and discipline for wrong doing. D. Miller shows how the passage is thus abused to propagate situational ethics, libertinism and liberalism. He shows that such like views derive from an assumption that God is not "technical" neither is He concerned with minute details of "close adherence to his laws."²¹⁰ A bid to challenge such notions lands one in being branded as a traditionalist, legalist and one devoid of compassion.

This point will not be complete without citing how Jason Hines in the Spectrum magazine comments on the PA and concludes that the Law of God is pinned on freedom. So he believes "Those who would restrict civil marriage from homosexuals in the name of a Christian definition of marriage are making the same mistakes these Pharisees made. In their zeal to see their beliefs lived out in the lives of others, they violate the foundation of the very principles they seek to uphold."²¹¹ It can be pointed that Jason misses the point altogether by trying to force this passage to promote lawlessness under the guise of the cloak of freedom. Be that as it may, Miller

²⁰⁹White, *The Desire of Ages*, 606, 607.

²¹⁰Dave Miller, *The Adulterous Woman* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 2003), accessed 7 February 2016, <http://www.truthaccordingtoscripture.com/documents/apologetics/adulterous.php#.VrbUd63AqDA>.

²¹¹Jason Hines, "Criminally Law Abiding," *Spectrum*, January 2016, accessed 13 March 2017, <http://conversation.spectrummagazine.org/t/criminally-law-abiding/10333>.

rightly insists that in the PA, even Jesus himself did not breach either the Mosaic or the Moral Law in order to show mercy.²¹²

So, it can be asserted briefly that Jesus upheld both the Mosaic and the Moral Law in the story of the adulteress. This highlights Christ's elevated regard for the law. However, it can be pointed out that the Mosaic Law met its fulfilment at the cross while the Decalogue is still functional even after the cross.

The Relationship of Law and grace

John 8:11 serves as the pivot of this study as has been earlier remarked. Jesus announced to the woman that he did “not condemn her” and she was to “go and sin no more.” In this statement, one finds the solution to the jig saw puzzle of law and grace which was brought by Jesus' enemies. “The story has all the features of a set-up where only the poor woman is presented (not her partner) and the parameters are defined in such a way that mercy and justice are made to be opposing principles.”²¹³

In a bid to refute Jesus' grace in the PA, his uncondemning message to the woman has been interpreted as his aloofness in being a judge. So Jesus is seen as not having offered pardon to the woman but simply released her.²¹⁴ Barnes and Pearce agree as well that Jesus did put a disclaimer on having civil authority.²¹⁵ This is seemingly further bolstered by Jesus' immediate claim that he judges no one (John 8:15). Luder Whitlock though, neutralizes this and explains that “condemn” is a “legal

²¹²Jason Hines, “Criminally Law Abiding,” *Spectrum*, January 2016, accessed 13 March 2017, <http://conversation.spectrummagazine.org/t/criminally-law-abiding/10333>.

²¹³Gerald L. Borchert, *John 1-11*, vol. 25A, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 373.

²¹⁴Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset et al., *A Commentary*, John 8:11.

²¹⁵Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes* (Electronic Database: Biblesoft/PC Bible Study V5, Inc., 1997), John 8:11, and Pearce, quoted in Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke Commentary* (Electronic Database: Biblesoft/PC Study V5, Inc., 1996), John 8:11.

term referring to the sentence of a court.” Consequently due to lack of proper procedures on the part of the witnesses, the woman is thus seen as one not liable for prosecution.²¹⁶

Notwithstanding the above suggestions, to simply limit the scope of Christ’s response to this judicial sphere and no further does no justice to the full extent of his words. If Jesus had wanted, even after the departure of the accusers, he could have still rightly condemned her.²¹⁷ It can be posited that Jesus was not refuting his role, but that during his first advent, he came not to judge but to save.²¹⁸

The once evil woman went away free from neither earthly condemnation (her accusers had fled, 8:10) nor heavenly one (Jesus forgave her, 8:11).²¹⁹ So Jesus did not only free her from the Scribes and Pharisees, but from sin too.²²⁰ She was “placed under the constraint of his love,”²²¹ hence went away freed and under the Savior’s grace. So “there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ.” (Rom 8:1).

The pardon accorded the woman was not due to her meritorious deeds or an act of skewed justice. This stands in marked contrast with Appian’s account of Scipio and Epaminondas (369 B.C.) who after being convicted offered remarkable oratories of their past military conquests and good deeds. Thereafter, the judges dared not pass

²¹⁶Luder G. Whitlock, R. C. Sproul, Bruce K. Waltke and Moisš Silva, *Reformation Study Bible, Bringing the Light of the Reformation to Scripture: New King James Version* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1995), John 8:11.

²¹⁷*KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1994), 2096.

²¹⁸“Sin No More,” [John 8:11], *SDABC*, 5:986.

²¹⁹H. L. Willmington, *The Outline Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1999), John 8:11.

²²⁰Bruce B. Barton, *John, Life Application Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1993), 170.

²²¹Arthur Walkington Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Swengel, PA: Bible truth depot, 1923-45), 426.

out their due sentences of capital punishment and the two were released without being condemned.²²² In the matters of salvation however, only unmerited pardon from the Savior seems to be the solution, and this is what the adulteress received.

To reject Jesus' acquittal of the adulteress as inferring too much seems to be missing the point. Or else, it would imply a kind of "salvation by works" gospel where she had to go and correct her mess first before she could be forgiven. Therefore it seems plausible to believe that Jesus granted her his grace. After which he instructed her to continue in it by not sinning since grace does not nullify the law (Rom 6:15). The need for divine grace and not merit upon humanity has found some parallels in some Qumran community hymns. They emphasize that righteousness and perfection are found only in God and not in any man.²²³ Bruce affirms and shows how rabbinic understanding of law and grace was faulty in that they saw a dichotomy between the two. These leaders wrongly used the law to try and save themselves as well.²²⁴

In verse 11 of this passage, it is profound how grace and the immutable Law of God are presented by Jesus in real light of what they actually are, not competitive and conflicting but rather compatible and complementary.²²⁵ The woman had broken the holy Law of God and heretofore stood condemned (Rom 6:23). The same law she had broken could not save her, for it is not its role thus to do. It functions only to

²²²*Appian's Roman History II, Books VIII, Part II-XII*, Horace White, trans. (Great Britain: Loeb Classical Library, 1912), accessed 18 May 2016, <http://www.archive.org/details/appiansromanhist02appi>.

²²³1QHa 12.30; 1QS 10.11 and 1QS 11.2.

²²⁴F. F. Bruce, *Commentary on Galatians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (NIGTC) (Exeter: The Paternoster Press, 1982), 140.

²²⁵Bishop Wordsworth, quoted in Joseph S. Exell, *The Biblical Illustrator* (Ages Software, Inc., and Biblesoft, Inc., 2002), John 8:11.

reveal sin (Rom 3:20), holding one guilty before being cleansed by God's grace.²²⁶

“Nobody was ever saved by keeping the law, but nobody was ever saved by grace who was not first indicted by the law. There must be conviction before there can be conversion.”²²⁷

The woman was bidden to sin no more, just as the impotent man had been instructed (John 5:14). Showing that from thence on she had to stop her sinful practices.²²⁸ Such upholding of the law as well as extending of unmerited favor by Jesus is likewise emphasized by D. H. Stern.²²⁹ Likewise, C. F. Pfeiffer and E. F. Harrison agreed that this caution was needful since they believe she was penitent.²³⁰ Wesley concurs and proposes that it could be that Jesus' verbal and nonverbal actions had led the woman to have godly sorrow first.²³¹

One could inquire whether Jesus was commanding the woman not to continue in that specific and particular sin of adultery. If this was the case, it would appear as licensing the woman to continue in any other sin except that of adultery, which proves incongruent with the whole turner of the salvation process. Beasley-Murray

²²⁶Wiersbe, “John,” John 8:11.

²²⁷Ibid.

²²⁸Robertson, *Word Pictures*, John 8:11.

²²⁹David H. Stern, *Jewish New Testament Commentary* (Jewish New Testament Publications, Inc., 1992), John 8:11, accessed 12 February 2016, www.messianicjewish.net/jntp.

²³⁰Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett Falconer Harrison, *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1962), John 8:11.

²³¹John Fletcher, *A Vindication of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's Last Minutes*, vol. 7 (Wine Street: W. Pine, 1771), 81, accessed 18 May 2016, https://books.google.co.ke/books?id=si5cAAAAQAAJ&pg=PA81&lpg=PA81&dq=wesley-woman+caught+in+adultery&source=bl&ots=ESIZ3o33tD&sig=4i-g4EcdZB3-_CoivjcHuh9vSeI&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=wesley-woman%20caught%20in%20adultery&f=false.

convincingly answers that the redeemer offered pardon to the sinner and adding to her not to continue in this sin or any other sin which is defiance to God.²³²

The command here is for her not to return to breaking of the law (which is sinning 1 John 3:4). This verse becomes more interesting if one looks at it from the view point that this same author who is defining what sin is in his first epistle, is the same one who wrote the PA, stating how the woman was instructed to “go and sin no more.” That is while under grace, she was not to take occasion of her new found freedom and salvation as a passport to transgress God’s holy precepts. Here is where the whole argument becomes sharp. One can concur that many Pentecostal preachers today have been seen founding churches by preaching the abrogation of the law to those living after the cross and in the era of grace.²³³

One who is saved lives by the law when saved (Rom 6:1, 2, 12-14). Is “Christ’s gracious forgiveness an excuse to sin? ‘Go, and sin no more!’ was our Lord’s counsel.”²³⁴ The Psalmist sings thus, “But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared” (Ps 130:4). This connotes that unmerited favor constrains the penitent forgiven sinner to lead an obedient life in thanksgiving to God.²³⁵ It proves an insult to feel no obligation to obey God after being saved. Obedience is part of the honor we render for being undeservingly snatched from the bondage of sin. God inquires how his Fatherhood is being recognized if disobedience characterizes those

²³²Beasley-Murray, *John*, 147.

²³³Steve Hill, “The Great Lies in the Church Today,” *Charisma Magazine*, accessed 27 February 2017, <http://www.charismamag.com/spirit/spiritual-growth/17093-the-7-great-lies-in-the-church-today>, and “The ‘Pentecostal’ and ‘Charismatic’ Movement” *Present Truth Magazine*, vol. 1, Art. 4, accessed 27 February 2017, <http://www.presenttruthmag.com/archive/I/1-3.htm>.

²³⁴Wiersbe, “John,” John 8:11.

²³⁵*Ibid.*

who claim to be His children (Mal 1:6). To those already under grace, “obedience carries in it the life blood of religion.”²³⁶

Thomas Watson further lashes at some groups of people who denigrate the law’s importance in the life of an already saved Christian: the Marcionites and Manichees for perceiving it as carnal, when in essence it is us who are carnal (Rom 7:14); the Antinomians for rejecting the Moral Law as a rule to a believer, and lastly the Papacy for suggesting that God’s Law is imperfect by their actions of adding to His words their canon and their tradition. Watson then warns that setting aside God’s Law leads Him to also cast aside one’s prayers and more so, those who repudiate the law from ruling them, will have it judge them.²³⁷

It is noteworthy therefore how Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. ably squares up to the arguments posed against putting the OT Law into categories by critics like Corey, Meyer and Peake.²³⁸ Such arguments assert that after the cross, one has either to keep the whole law (inclusive of the Ceremonial) or leave all of it as nailed to the cross. Westerholm supports the latter view.²³⁹ These ideas are mentioned as stemming from Reconstructionism which Kaiser terms “dominion theology” as propounded by Greg L. Bahnsen.²⁴⁰

²³⁶Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments* (PC Study Bible electronic database, Biblesoft, Inc., 2004), s.v. “Obedience.”

²³⁷*Ibid.*

²³⁸Compare Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “God’s Promise,” in VanGemenen, *Five Views on Law and Gospel*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999. 289, with Benjamin L. Corey, *For the People who say. ‘But Jesus didn’t Abolish the Law*, (Progressive Christian Channel, 2015), accessed 13 March 2017, <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/formerlyfundie/for-the-people-who-say-but-jesus-didnt-abolish-the-law/>; H. A. W. Meyer, “Matthew,” *Commentary on the New Testament* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), 1: 120, and A. S. Peake, “Colossians,” *The Expositor’s Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), 3:527.

²³⁹S. Westerholm, *Israel Law and the Church Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 107-9, 218.

²⁴⁰Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Craig, 1977), quoted in Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “God’s Promise,” 289.

In a further response, as much as the Bible did not categorize the law explicitly, Kaiser insists that doing so is not contrary to its writings. He remarks how the Bible did not mention such concepts as Trinity, though they can be deduced from it. Kaiser supports the idea that the Moral Law is still binding while the Ceremonial Law was fulfilled at the cross, thereby type meeting antitype. He ends by rightly contending that the “Biblical Law and the gospel of God’s grace are not archivals but twin mercies given by the same gracious Lord.”²⁴¹

Another view by Samuele Bacchiocchi states that neither the Moral nor Ceremonial law was abolished (Col 2:13-17). He believed that it was the record of our sins that got nailed on the cross.²⁴² However, such an assertion leaves room for one to feel at liberty to continue the sacrificial system and its festivals. So it seems a better hermeneutic to view the Ceremonial Law to have been nailed at the cross.

One of the texts used to support the idea of the abolition of the whole Law states that Jesus is the *τέλος* (*telos*) of the law (Rom 10:4). The term is defined to mean termination, end, goal, fulfillment²⁴³ or culmination.²⁴⁴ Taken at face value, it appears to be in support of Dispensationalists who categorize two distinct and separate epochs (one of law versus the other of grace).²⁴⁵ A kind of discontinuity between Christ and the law, or precisely, a salvation-historical disjunction between

²⁴¹Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., “God’s Promise,” 289-302.

²⁴²Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Sabbath in the New Testament* (Michigan: Biblical Perspectives, 2000), 77, 78.

²⁴³Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889), s.v. “τέλος.”

²⁴⁴Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (*TNICNT*) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 641.

²⁴⁵Thomas R. Schreiner, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (*ECNT*) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 546.

the two is envisioned.²⁴⁶ It suggests that the OT people were saved by keeping the law while in the NT, Christ ushered in a substitute in form of faith.²⁴⁷ Longenecker, concurs and suggests that Christians who are already saved need no commandments but only the Spirit, love and service for others. He believes the Spirit will help one to avoid libertinism.²⁴⁸

The abolishment of the Ten Commandments and their “replacement” with a new law of love is similarly advocated by Corey. However, on the contrary, it can be responded that the law of love is fulfilled in keeping the commandments (John 14:15; 15:10), since love leads to practical action. True love operates within the confines of well-defined parameters.

R. Ouro adds by stating that Jesus’ death did away with the Mosaic (sacrificial) laws and not the Moral laws.²⁴⁹ Similarly, Murray cautions that we guard against the distortions of the law. A false view of the law (rejecting the Moral Law as being abrogated at the cross) leads to antinomianism.²⁵⁰ God’s heart (love and mercy) is not antagonistic to His will (the Holy Law).²⁵¹ Hence in humanity’s salvation, law and grace are not opposites; instead both play different but complementary roles.²⁵² N.

²⁴⁶Moo, *Romans*, 640.

²⁴⁷“Christ is the End of the Law,” [Rom 10:4], *SDABC*, 6:596.

²⁴⁸Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 241-48.

²⁴⁹Robert Ouro, “Daniel 9:27a: A Key for Understanding the Law’s End in the New Testament,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 12/2 (Autumn 2001): 194-95, accessed 24 February 2006, http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file. Dan 9_27_Laws end in the NT_Ouro.pdf.

²⁵⁰John Murray, *Principles*, 202-28, quoted in VanGemeren, *Five Views on Law and Gospel* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999), 43.

²⁵¹Taylor G. Bunch, *Love* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1952), 29-34.

²⁵²Carl P. Cosaert, *Galatians: A Fiery Response to a Struggling Church* (Hagerstown: Review and Herald, 2011), 68.

Gulley broadens this view by pointing how salvation has always been by grace even in the OT times and not by merit of law keeping.²⁵³

In the same vein, combining Romans 10:3 and verse 4 in context, the Jews concocted their own righteousness based on keeping the law as a way of redemption. Salvation has ever been by faith even in the OT times,²⁵⁴ but the Jews began abusing the law (both Ceremonial and Moral) and tried to use it to acquire righteousness.²⁵⁵

As a result, Jesus became the end or termination of the use of the law as a way of salvation.²⁵⁶ This text cannot therefore be used to disparage the perpetuity of the Moral Law in a Christian's life. It goes without saying though that the PA does not address the aspect of faith mentioned here, but the point still remains that grace as is manifested in our salvation, does not negate the law. The idea here being that the adulteress could not have pleaded innocent before Christ by keeping the law (it was the one condemning her). She needed mercy first before she could be enabled to go and start keeping the very law she had broken before.

The holy Law of God is to be kept by the repentant believer.²⁵⁷ On the other hand, sin has been described as the nature that gives one a propensity to do evil acts (breaking the law). These sinful acts are seen as the manifestation of that negative power within.²⁵⁸ Schreiner comments that by repenting and "dying" to sin (baptism) one symbolizes the death burial and resurrection of Christ. In so doing, Jesus' grace

²⁵³Norman R. Gulley, *God as Trinity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2011), 376.

²⁵⁴Thomas R. Schreiner, *John*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (*ECNT*) (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1998), 546.

²⁵⁵"Christ is the End of the Law," [Rom 10:4], *SDABC*, 6:596.

²⁵⁶*Ibid.*

²⁵⁷Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*, vol. 6, *Acts to Revelation* (USA: Hendrickson, 1991), 325.

²⁵⁸*Ibid.*

breaks the power of sin and empowers the repentant not to continue in it.²⁵⁹ Knight further agrees that although salvation is by grace, judgement will be by works (since judgement requires tangible evidence). And that good works were not the reason for our salvation but the “fruit of a saving relationship with Jesus.”²⁶⁰ Similarly, Moo maintains that a believer’s acquittal (by grace) is the cause of those good works to be accounted for in judgement.²⁶¹

The perpetuity of the Ten Commandments is supported by Burton. He tells us that although the Decalogue was part of the Torah, it was common for even the Jewish authors to refer to it (the Decalogue) as law (*nomos*).²⁶² He appeals to Philo who argues that the Ten Commandments are the springboard from which the Torah is derived.²⁶³ Correspondingly, Pseudo Philo shares that the giving of the Decalogue was the establishment of an eternal covenant with Israel and that God will judge the whole world with this “eternal law.”²⁶⁴ Lastly, two prayers in the second century Apostolic Constitutions highlight how the Decalogue was esteemed as binding upon humanity in the emerging Christian church.²⁶⁵

Thomas Davis contends that the “wonders of grace” through Christ’s death are God’s bid to extricate us from the consequences of law breaking. He focuses on the

²⁵⁹Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry’s Commentary*, vol. 6, *Acts to Revelation* (USA: Hendrickson, 1991), 310, 312.

²⁶⁰George R. Knight, *Walking with Paul through the Book of Romans* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 49.

²⁶¹Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT)* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 141-143.

²⁶²Keith A. Burton, “The Decalogue as Essential Torah in Second Temple Judaism,” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 9/1-2 (2000): 312, accessed 3 March 2006, [http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file.Decalogue as Essential Torah in Second Temple Judaism_Burton.pdf](http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file.Decalogue%20as%20Essential%20Torah%20in%20Second%20Temple%20Judaism_Burton.pdf).

²⁶³Philo, *Decalogue* 154, quoted in Burton, “Decalogue,” 314.

²⁶⁴Pseudo Philo 11:5, quoted in Burton, “Decalogue,” 314.

²⁶⁵Apostolic Constitutions 7.6.36 and 8.2.9 (ANF 07.474, 485, ed. Funk).

role of God's Ten Commandments in the good news of salvation.²⁶⁶ G. Klingbeil sees biblically unintended and unwarranted dichotomy between OT law and NT grace/freedom being fostered in modern scholarship and is supported by Badenas and Schreiner.²⁶⁷ He equally believes in the compatibility of law and grace. This goes well with Mulzac who sees in the Good Samaritan the blending of "the ethical demands of the law" and his grace (unmerited favor) towards his enemy the wounded Jew.²⁶⁸

Christ did not come to destroy the Moral Law (Matt 5:17-19) but to fulfill it, in the sense of showing its real, deep and spiritual intent. However, the Ceremonial Law which was a shadow of good things to come (Heb 10:1) found fulfilment in Christ's sacrifice in the sense of being terminated. Thus, there is no need for it to be continued now. The Decalogue though, is now written in the heart (Heb 10:16, 17) to be kept by those who are saved.

The story of the adulteress shows how Jesus dealt a deadly blow to the two extremes of the law. Pink addresses these extremes and he declares any untransformed individual as having a Pharisee's heart just as it is true to an Antinomian. So Phariseeism and Antinomianism are said to be uniting as did Herod and Pilate, against the Truth.²⁶⁹ In the PA Jesus showed that God's holy Law could be

²⁶⁶Thomas A. Davis, "The Sanctuary, the Gospel and the Law," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 10/1-2 (2000): 99, accessed 1 March 2006, http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file.Sanctuary-Gospel-Law_Chart_Davis.pdf.

²⁶⁷Gerald A. Klingbeil, "Between Law and Grace: Ritual and Ritual Studies in Recent Evangelical Thought," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, 13/2 (Autumn 2002): .60, 61, accessed 23 February 2006, http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file.Law_and_Grace_G-Klingbeil.pdf, R. Badenas, "Christ the End of the Law: Romans 10:4 in Pauline Perspective," *JSNTSS* 10 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1985), 7-36, and T. R. Schreiner, *Romans*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 6 (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998).

²⁶⁸Ken Mulzac, "Grace in the Synoptic Teachings of Jesus," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14/2 (Fall 2003): 72, accessed 20 February 2006, http://www.atsjats.org/publication_file.Grace_in_the_Synoptic_Mulzac.pdf.

²⁶⁹Arthur W. Pink, *The Law and the Saint* (USA: The Ages Digital Library, Ages Software, 1997), 3.

upheld while at the same time grace being availed to sinners. This set at naught both the accusers' legalism and the accused's previous act of lawlessness (adultery).

It can be suggested that the PA shows Jesus' longsuffering heart to his critics too. Matt Slick believes that it might have been the leaders' sins that Jesus was jotting on the ground.²⁷⁰ This seems to go well with Nikolai Velimirovich and E. G. White.²⁷¹ If one takes this into account, then He who had written the law on stone (Exod 31:18) and sealed Belshazzar's fate on the walls (Dan 5:5, 6) could have as well written the accusers' sins on the inerasable pavement. In his mercy he wrote on erasable sand.

Summary

It can be summed up thus; the PA is inspired, canonical, authentic, as well as fitting well in its traditional location and arguably Johannine, hence to be treated as any other Biblical text. This though does not suggest that one is to be oblivious to the challenges of its absence from some of the early manuscripts and the silence of some of the early Church Fathers over it. However, there are evidences in support of it like some references of the same from early people like Papias and Eusebius and documents like the Apostolic Constitutions.²⁷²

In the PA, Jesus is seen upholding both the Law of Moses and the Decalogue, while at the same time extending mercy to the adulteress brought to her. In so doing, Christ set at naught his critics' trap. It can be argued that they wanted Jesus to either prohibit the woman's death penalty hence antagonizing Moses and risking stoning

²⁷⁰Matt Slick, *Why did Jesus Write in the Dirt/Ground When the Woman was Caught in Adultery?* Accessed 7 January 2016, <https://carm.org/jesus-wrote-ground-woman-adultery>.

²⁷¹St. Nikolai Velimirovich, *What Was Christ Writing on the Ground?* Accessed 7 January 2016, <http://members.cox.n...itage/index.htm> and White, *The Desire of Ages*, 461.

²⁷²Papias *The Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord: Fragments of Papias* 6.1 (ANF 1.153, 155, trans. Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson), Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16 (NPNF 2.1.173, trans. Cruse), and *Apostolic Teaching and Constitutions* 2.3.24 (ANF 7.408, ed. James Donaldson).

himself or pass a death sentence and face the Romans' wrath for assuming their responsibility of passing such punishments.

The woman brought seemed to have been betrothed because the suggested punishment of stoning was meted for such.²⁷³ Also the terms used (γυνοῖκα and μοιχεία) mostly referred to the married and betrothed.²⁷⁴ Similarly, Jesus, in requesting a non-malicious witness thus dispersing the accusers and freeing the adulteress but bidding her to stop her sinning, showed the relationship between law and grace. One who is saved and is under grace keeps the law.

Conclusion

The PA's combination of law and grace can be wrapped up by the Psalmist's words, "Grace and truth have met together; justice and peace have kissed each other."²⁷⁵ This text is a striking reference of synonymous parallelism in which two of God's prime attributes are joined in each clause.²⁷⁶ Therefore, "justice and pardon, seemingly alienated from each other, embrace as loving friends."²⁷⁷ Thus in the story of the adulteress, Christ shows that in him the whole seemingly impasse between the law and mercy is perfectly met. This is the epitome of the grand plan of salvation.

²⁷³Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 7.4, 9.

²⁷⁴Check words occurrences, *BibleWorks* 8 [CD-ROM] (Norfolk, VA: Bibleworks, 2009), and Elaine Adler Goodfriend, *Adultery*, Anchor Bible (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1992), s.v "Adultery."

²⁷⁵David H. Stern, trans., *Complete Jewish Bible (CJB)* (Biblesoft/PC Study Bible/Refworks/cjewish.JSR. Psalm 85:10.

²⁷⁶"Mercy and Truth," [Psalm 85:10], *SDABC* (Libronix Digital Library System), Ps 85:10.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 4

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Law and grace are concepts that have sparked a lot of debates since time immemorial.¹ Questions of whether these two aspects are compatible with each other or not arise. Some believe that Law and grace are antagonistic and incongruent terms which are ever parallel to each other.² Hence to such, one is freed from keeping the law when they get saved and are under grace. Others suggest the opposite and view the two as mutually inclusive and intertwined ideas that are interdependent.³

The PA was studied in a bid to discuss such questions. The way Jesus handled the adulteress' case was studied to find out how the issue of law and grace could be addressed. Interestingly, this passage too has over the years been the ground of ceaseless criticism.⁴ Ranging from being branded as uninspired, uncanonical, a hoax,

¹Compare C. L. Blomberg, "Critical Issues in New Testament Studies for Evangelicals Today," *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture* (ed. P. E. Satterthwaite and D. F. Wright; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 57, and Mark W. Karlberg, "The Search for an Evangelical consensus on Paul and the Law," *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Society* 40/4 (December 1997): 566, accessed 16 April 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs40-4-pp563-579_JETS.pdf.

²S. Westerholm, *Israel Law and the Church Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988)107-9, 218, Greg L. Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Craig, 1977), quoted in Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "God's Promise," 289, and Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 241-48.

³George R. Knight, *Walking with Paul through the Book of Romans* (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald, 2002), 49, and Thomas A. Davis, "The Sanctuary, the Gospel and the Law," *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 10/1-2 (2000): 99, accessed 1 March 2006, http://www.atsjets.org/publication_file.Sanctuary-Gospel-Law_Chart_Davis.pdf.

⁴Compare Gary M. Burge, "A Specific Problem in the New Testament Text and Canon: The Woman Caught in Adultery," *Journal of the Evangelical and Theological Studies* 27/2 (June 1984) 142-3, accessed 12 February 2015, http://www.etsjets.org/files/JETS-PDFs/27-2-pp141-148_JETS with Johnson, *A Stylistic Trait*, 96; Kostenberger, *John*, 246, Heil, "The Story of Jesus," 184, quoted in

to being termed a misplaced story (interpolation) in the Bible.⁵ The PA is perceived as disrupting the smooth flow of its immediate context and thought as unJohannine.⁶

This stems from the sole reason that the PA is absent in many of the earliest manuscripts and that some Church Fathers are silent over it.⁷

As if that was not enough, it has been remarked that the PA seems to be palliating with evil and Jesus seemingly being too soft on sin.⁸ Similarly, it has been critiqued that there is no grace shown in the pericope and no evidence of forgiveness on the part of Jesus.⁹ Jesus is seen as simply refusing to be a judge hence releasing the woman for lack of witnesses after their shameful flight.¹⁰

However, there is evidence of an early awareness of the PA and that some Church Fathers like Papias and Eusebius commented in its favor.¹¹ Hence this study concluded that PA is inspired, canonical and authentic, hence to be freely used as any

Whiteford, "Anti-Judaic Glosses, 29, and Dave Miller, *The Adulteress Woman* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, 2003), accessed 7 February 2016, <http://www.truthaccordingtoscripture.com/documents/apologetics/adulterous.php#.VrbUd63AqDA>.

⁵A. T. Robertson, *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (New York, 1925), 154, E. J. Goodspeed, *Problems of New Testament Translation* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1945), 105-109, and F. H. A. Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 3rd ed. (London, 1883), 610, accessed 16 May 2016, <https://archive.org/stream/aplainintroduc01scrigoog#page/n682/mode/2up>.

⁶Jo-Ann A. Brant, *John*, Paideia Commentaries on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 141, and Leander E. Keck, Gen. ed. *The New Interpreter's Bible*, vol. IX (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 628.

⁷Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd. ed., 4th. rev. (Stuttgart: United Bible Societies, 1994), 187-88.

⁸Joseph S. Excell, *John 8-21*, *The Biblical Illustrator*, vol. 14 (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, n.d.), 1.

⁹J. H. Bernard, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. John*, ed. Alan Hugh McNeile (New York: C. Scribner' Sons, 1929), 2:721.

¹⁰Adam Clarke, *Adam Clarke Commentary* (Electronic Database: Biblesoft, Inc., 1996), John 8:11, and Jon Courson, *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 507.

¹¹Papias *The Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord: Fragments of Papias* 6.1 (ANF 1.153, 155, trans. Alexander Roberts, and James Donaldson), and Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16 (NPNF 2.1.173, trans. Cruse).

other scriptural text without any reservations.¹² Also that it is Johannine and belongs to its current location without any disruptions, but on the contrary smoothly connecting with its immediate verses. It has been remarked that the removing of this story from the present location is actually what will cause a rough and meaningless connection to the surrounding texts.¹³

Having summed up the arguments on the PA, it is befitting to mention that this research found out that law and grace are two sides of the same coin as shown in this story. The two issue from the same God and thus cannot be antagonistic. Each has its different role but both are complementary.

Conclusion

The way Jesus tackled the issue of the adulteress showed that he did not contradict either the Mosaic or the Moral Law. His request for one without sin to be the first to administer punishment to the woman (John 8:7), showed that he upheld the Law of Moses. This law required innocent witnesses (Deut 19:16-19, 21) to be the first to cast a stone, and Jesus extended that requirement to the witnesses before him. Had he contradicted either Moses' Law or the Decalogue, his critics would not have failed to highlight it. Likewise, the Savior esteemed the Moral Law as well. This is shown in that the woman had broken the seventh commandment which forbids adultery and it seems Jesus in telling her to sin no more, he was acknowledging that she had sinned.

¹²J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, based on the Thru the Bible Radio Program, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1981), 4:414, and Lagrange, 221-226, quoted in Bruner, *John*, 508.

¹³John William Burgon, *The Causes of the Corruption of the Tradition Text of the Holy Gospels*, 181, 182.

To think that the pardoning of the woman meant being easy on sin seems to be missing the point. It can be argued that Christ simply offered grace which is a preserve of the undeserving sinners condemned by the law. Forgiveness of past misdoings cannot be taken as a license to continue in a sinful lifestyle. This Jesus demonstrated by admonishing the adulteress to go and sin no more. Hence she was not supposed to continue breaking the law after being forgiven.

Thus it can be argued that the law's role is to point out one's standing, if found wanting, one needs grace to be cleansed. After being pardoned, one's gratitude for such unmerited favor should compel him/her to keep God's commandments. Hence obedience to the law is a result not the cause of one's salvation.¹⁴ It will prove ironical for one to claim to have been saved and continue to live in the same sins he/she was saved from. Being under grace (Rom 6:1-3), cannot be used as a scapegoat of remaining in sin, which is the transgression of God's Law (1 John 3:4).

It is to be noted though that later the Mosaic Law would be fulfilled at the cross and discontinued thereafter (Col 2:14-17). On the other hand, the Decalogue would continue as a perpetual and holy institution (Matt 5:17-19). It remains as God's standard for all humanity to live by and to be engraved in all the hearts of the saved (Heb 10:16).

The PA seems to be a good example of how Jesus showed that justice and mercy meet in him. The Savior upheld the law while offering grace to the erring. Therefore a proper balance of the two was strikingly kept by him, thus putting at naught the accusers' legalism while at the same time correcting the woman's lawlessness. It seems the paradox of all ages of how God could be just while being the justifier of sinners got answered in this story (Rom 3:26).

¹⁴Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (NICNT) (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 141-143.

Thus it can be remarked that both the law and grace have their specific and proper roles which cannot be exchanged without great damage. When the adulteress came to Jesus she was under the condemnation of the law. She could not use the same law to get saved. She needed mercy, since what the law fails to do (that is justifying the sinner), grace is able to accomplish (Rom 8:3). Similarly, when the woman had been forgiven, she needed the standard or guideline on how to live from then on. This, grace could not do, but it was the function of the law thus to do, because without the law, she could not know what sin was (Rom 7:7). Hence Jesus instructed the woman to go and break the commandments no more.

Therefore, it appears appropriate to underscore that the lesson taught by the PA of law and grace is to echo throughout generations. Instead of us dying in our sins, Jesus was sacrificed in our stead so that he could deliver us from the law's condemnation. So after receiving Christ's free and undeserved acquittal, we are still constrained to abide in God's holy Law. Being freed from sin does not permit us to continue as law breakers. On the contrary, it enables us to live new lives, free from sin. Hence, the PA shows that the Savior loved the sinner while hating the sin, yet his critics and humanity in general hate the sinner but loving the sin.¹⁵ So Jesus elucidated the relationship between the law and grace as twin mercies given us to live by.¹⁶

Recommendations

More research on the PA's manuscripts needs to be done. Possibly it could harmonize the evidences against and those in favor of this pericope. Further

¹⁵Ellen, G. White, *The Desire of Ages* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1898), 462, 463.

¹⁶Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., "God's Promise," 289-302.

archeological discoveries of manuscripts and studies could reveal to us what seems hard to fathom over the inclusion of this story in the canon.

A study could be done on the topic of justification basing on the PA. Jesus' non-condemnatory address to the woman could be further looked into so as to note this other aspect of our salvation.

One could also attempt the uphill task of looking into the identity of the woman. Whether there were any connections with her and the other once immoral women in the Gospels like Mary Magdalene.

Lastly the PA could be studied to aid in the issues of discipline in churches and how they could be handled. The process of discipline and the motives for it could also be gleaned from the same passage.

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