

The woman caught in adultery story is well known today among Christians, and even in popular Western culture, but there are questions about its authenticity.

“Yahweh’s promises are promises unalloyed; natural silver which comes from the earth seven times refined”—Psalm 12:6 NJB

“Every word of God is flawless . . . Do not add to his words or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar”—Proverbs 30:5,6 NIV

“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the plagues described in this scroll. And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any share in the tree of life and in the Holy City”—Revelation 22:18,19 NIV

The phrase “Let him who has no sin cast the first stone” (paraphrased from [John 8:7 KJV](#)), has become entrenched everyday speech and in popular culture—for one thing due to the immense popularity of The King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. **“The Catholic Church accepts this passage as canonical scripture” (NAB note on [John 7:53-8:11](#))**. Both Protestants and Catholics often preach and teach from the woman caught in adultery story as though it were canonical scripture.

The vast majority of Christians, including Pastors, do not know, and are totally unaware, in fact, that the account of the woman caught in adultery in [John 7:53-8:11](#) was not part of the original Bible! Many people just “know”, in their “hearts”, they think, that Jesus really said these words, since they’ve heard this story all of their lives, and sermonized in churches. The phrase at [John 8:7](#) is often used to let others know not to take sin too seriously, and not to “judge” others. It is often quoted by those who want to excuse their own deliberate sin, which they know the Bible condemns. This account violates the principles at **Proverbs 30:5,6** and **Revelation 22:18** (quoted above). Why?

“The story of the woman caught in adultery is a later insertion here, missing from all early Greek manuscripts . . . There are many non-Johannine features in the language, and there are also many doubtful readings within the passage”—New American Bible (NAB) note on John 7:53-8:11



The evidence against this account is extensive and wide-ranging. It is omitted by a truly diverse group of ancient Greek manuscripts, and is missing from all the early Greek manuscripts, such as Codex Sinaiticus (4th century), Codex Vaticanus (4th century), Codex Alexandrinus (5th century), Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus (5th century), Codex Washingtonius (5th century), Codex Borgianus, including the very important P66, P75, plus L, N, T, 0141, 33, 157, 565, 1241, 1333, 1424, and many, many others. Some other manuscripts that do contain it mark it off with asterisks or obeli. In manuscript 225 it's after [John 7:36](#), but in others it's after 7:44. In f13 it's after [Luke 21:38](#). The missing manuscript evidence alone is more than enough proof that the passage is a fake! But there is even more, much more. When a text “moves around” in manuscripts, like this account does, it is strong evidence of its later origin, and efforts by scribes to put it where it seems to “fit”. The manuscript evidence alone is 100% against this text being original.

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The syntax, vocabulary and style of writing in these 12 verses is very different from the rest of John's writings, which is another clue as to the suspicious nature of the passage. Then there is the fact that, when these 12 verses are removed from the text, as modern translations are increasingly doing, the flow of the text from [John 7:52](#) to 8:12 fits perfectly. The story is completely foreign to John's account of the events regarding Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem ([John 7:45-8:20](#)) by interrupting the flow of the text.

Then, there is the problem with the story itself. Since adultery cannot be committed alone, the question arises, "Where was the man, her partner, in the act?" Jesus, being no dummy, would likely have called attention to this fact, if this account was genuine. There is no indication of any repentance on the part of this woman, or any hint of her attitude, in this account. Contrast this with the repentant attitude of the sinful woman at [Luke 7:36-50](#), that Jesus encountered.

The account of the woman caught in adultery in the pericope of [John 7:53-8:11](#) is justified by many, even in the scholarly community, as being the recording of an actual historical event in the life of Jesus, even though it has no genuine Biblical support. The adulterous woman story is used as much as any of the legitimate Biblical accounts, often with sincere ignorance, to support the Biblical teaching of being merciful. However, the Bible has more than enough true, genuine scriptures about mercy without these 12 spurious verses (**[Exodus 34:6,7](#); [Matthew 5:7](#); [18:21-35](#); [Luke 10:25-37](#); [James 3:13](#)**). Despite the claims of many "scholars," this story has all the earmarks of fiction. It is not a historical account

Aside from the account's Biblical illegitimacy, a much worse, and even more serious problem is that the adulterous woman account is often used to excuse sinful actions. One justification for using this story is that Jesus is supposedly more merciful than Yahweh of the Old Testament. While Jesus definitely highlighted God's mercy, he did not soft-pedal sin. For example, Jesus said, **"Whoever blasphemes against the holy Spirit will never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an everlasting sin"** (**[Mark 3:29 NAB](#)**). He also foretold, **"The Spirit will come and show the people of this world the truth about**

sin” (John 16:8 CEV). However, the woman caught in adultery story *does not*, **“show people of this world the truth about sin.”**

Christians under the New Covenant are no more excused from sin than they were under the Old Law Covenant. “Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?” (Hebrews 12:28,29 NIV). The punishment for serious sins, such as adultery, may have seemed to be more immediate under the Old Covenant, but make no mistake, it was no less serious than it is under the New Covenant. So the claim that God in the Old Testament was stricter, meaner, and more rigid, in dealing with our sins than the merciful, loving, forgiving Jesus in the New Testament is absolutely false. The story at John 7:53-8:11 has helped to fuel this myth. God does not change (Malachi 3:6). To use this account, even in a sincere way, is a mistaken misrepresentation of God, Jesus and the Bible itself. **“Anyone who rejects the law of Moses died without pity on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Do you not think that a much worse punishment is the one who who has contempt for the Son of God, considers unclean the covenant blood by which he was consecrated, and insults the spirit of grace” (Hebrews 10:28,29 NAB).**

The sin-excusing Jesus in the pericope of John 7:53-8:11 is, in fact, **“a different Jesus” (2 Corinthians 11:4 NLT)** who preaches **“a different gospel” (Galatians 1:6 NAB).** The Bible teaches us who the real Jesus is, **“the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. As his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him” (1 John 2:27 NIV).** By comparing the Biblical Jesus to the **“counterfeit”** Jesus portrayed in John 7:53-8:11, we can see the difference, and reject it.

The Bible, from beginning to the end, warns several times about ‘adding anything to the words of God’ (Deuteronomy 4:2; Proverbs 30:5,6; Revelation 22:18,19). Obviously, this

principle was flagrantly violated with the woman caught in adultery story, and this spurious addition was put into the popularly famous KJV at [John 7:53-8:11](#), and there were also additions to other places in the Bible. But such tamperings and additions have been uncovered by the discovery of numerous ancient, more accurate Biblical manuscripts, and also by modern Biblical textual scholarship methods to arrive at the original Biblical text. Spurious additions have now been eliminated from the text of the most current Greek Master Texts, and the modern translations that are based on them. God said He would preserve His word – and he has! “The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever” ([2 Peter 1:24,25](#) NIV). Satan tried to corrupt the Biblical text, but his corruptions have been not only been exposed, but also weeded out in the more accurate translations! We would do well not to bring them back in, for example, by using this spurious account of the woman caught in adultery in any kind of legitimate way, as though it was part of “All Scripture [that] is inspired by God” ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)).

Rejecting the “Woman Caught in Adultery” story is not a matter of ‘taking away from the Bible,’ as some claim. Rather, it’s a matter of rejecting something that was ‘added to the Bible,’ (**[Revelation 22:18,19](#)**). It was not in the Bible in the first place.