



Not Condemning nor Condoning John 8:1-11

Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou? This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not (John 8:5-6—KJV).

“Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?” They were saying this, testing Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground (John 8:5-6—NASB).

“In the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground (John 8:5-6—NRSV).

The scribes and Pharisees did not care about saving a woman from sin when they brought her before Jesus and a crowd and accused her of a sin that could lead to the death penalty. They only wanted to misuse her to entrap Jesus in a crime that could lead to His death. If Jesus upheld the Law of Moses and condemned her, they could accuse Him before Pilate of promoting rebellion, for the Romans forbid the Jews from stoning someone. If He upheld Roman Law and said she should not be stoned, they could bring charges against Him before the Sanhedrin for not upholding the Law of Moses. They were already condemning Him for breaking the Sabbath. To begin His answer, Jesus wrote in the ground. The Bible does not tell us what He wrote. But we can use our imaginations. I imagine He wrote a list of sins or commands from the Law of Moses. Then, Jesus said, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her,” and He began writing again (John 8:7-8). I imagine He began to write the names of her accusers by the list of sins or commands that they had broken, because all her accusers left without condemning her. Without condoning her sin, Jesus found a way to save her from being condemned and gave her the opportunity to repent of her sins and believe in Him as her Savior and Lord.

Thinking Further

1. Who brought the woman to Jesus and why did they?
2. What was the charge against the woman and what was the punishment if she was found guilty?
3. Why might they have not brought the man to Jesus too?
4. What might Jesus have written on the ground with His finger?
5. Who condemned the woman, and what did Jesus tell her?