

What Did Jesus Write On The Ground?

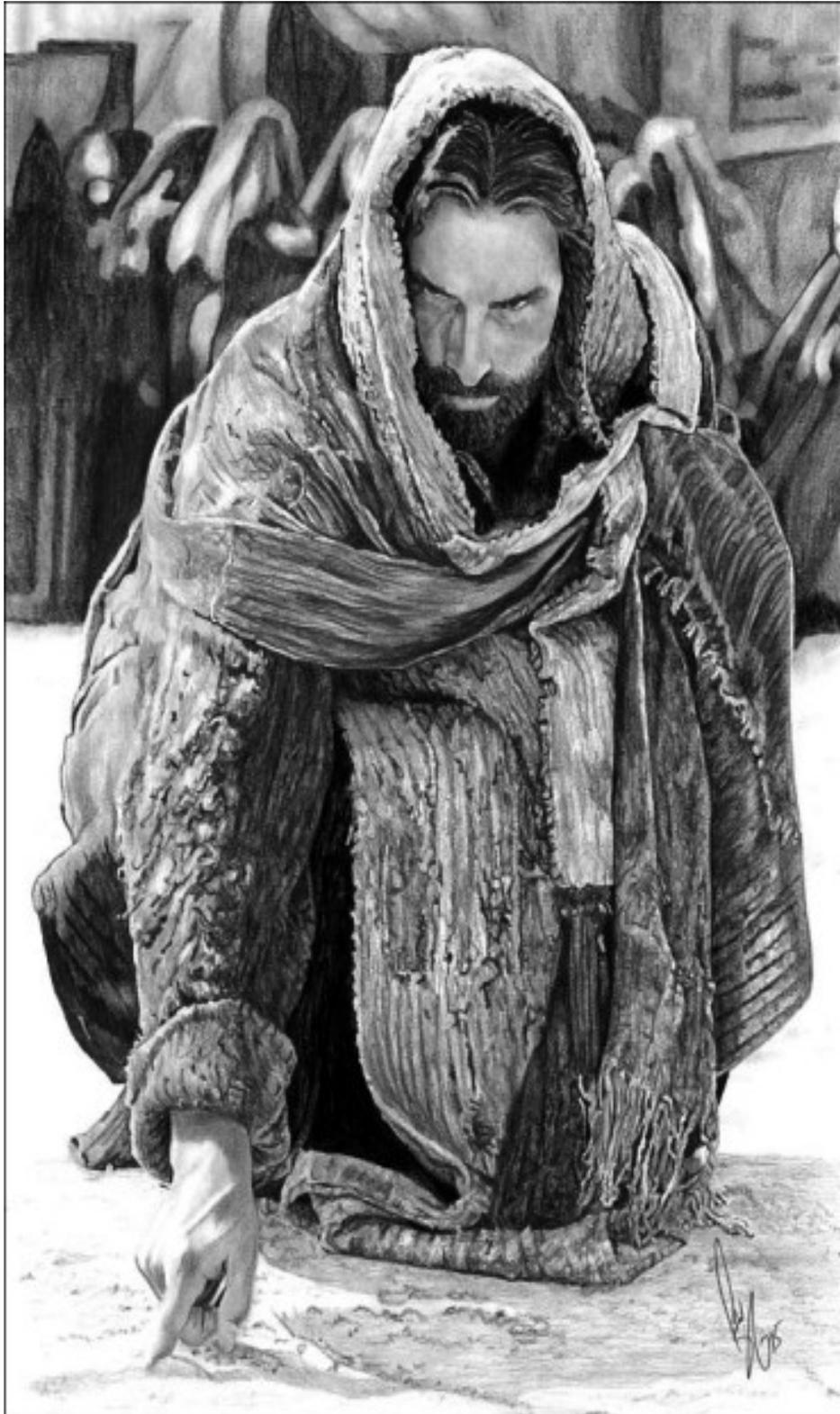


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Introduction

The first thing that I want to mention before attempting to tackle this subject is that the answer to the question "What did Jesus write on the ground?" is strictly the opinion of the writer. Nowhere in the Bible does it give us an exact answer to the question. The subject has been the topic of many conversations and debates. I cannot say with a 100% certainty that my explanation is the only correct explanation as I cannot prove with 100% certainty that my opinion is actually the absolute answer, as the absolute answer cannot be 100% proven. With saying that, I am confident enough that my explanation makes sense with, and is in compliance with sound Biblical doctrine, that I am willing to share it. I will approach this by first looking at the Biblical scenario, then I will break it down, and give what I believe is the answer to the question asked. It is my hope to shed light on this story as well as to help the reader gain another tool dealing with the self-application of Gods Word.

(John 8:2-11) Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The Scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground. But when they heard it, they went away one by one, beginning with the older ones, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

Here we have a wicked person who comes up with a malicious plan to destroy Jesus and get some of his peers to go along with him. We see in John 7:32, 45-48, that the Pharisees wanted Jesus arrested and were disappointed when he was not.

(John 7:32) The Pharisees heard the crowd muttering these things about him, and the chief priests and Pharisees sent officers to arrest him.

(John 7:45-51) The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Have you also been deceived?"

Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nicodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?"

The Breakdown

Pharisees & Scribes

Pharisees were a sect of pious Jewish men who were well educated in the Laws of Moses & the traditions of the Jewish people. Their main focus was to interpret the traditions of the previous generations. They were the minority in the Sanhedrin and had no political influence.

The title of Pharisee is not that of an occupation but rather that of a membership, most were middle class business men which kept them in personal contact with the common people.

The Jewish historian Josephus estimated that there were approximately 6,000 Pharisees.

Scribes were a group of Jewish men who were teachers of The Law. Throughout the Roman empire they were executors of "The Law", some were considered experts in the legal issues contained in The law. Many of the scribes were also Pharisees, as well as lawyers.

Testing Jesus

The Pharisees & Scribes did not test Jesus to see if he knew The Law, he had been teaching in the Synagogues so they were well aware that He was very knowledgeable in The Law. A common belief is that they were seeing if He knew Leviticus 20:10, but that's not the case, during the time of Jesus Rome had removed capital jurisdiction from the Jewish courts, except for temple violations. The Pharisees & Scribes were trying to use the Leviticus 20:10 point of Law to get Jesus convicted of Murder in the eyes of the Roman courts which would in turn have Jesus killed. The life of the woman meant nothing to these men, it was Jesus' life that they were really after.

(Leviticus 20:10) "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Jesus writes the 1st time

The key to figuring out what Jesus writes here is the statement he makes afterwards "let him who is without sin" the accusers could have easily said "I had just made a sacrifice so I am clean of sin" so I believe a better translation is "let him who is not sinning" (both translations fit the Greek "anamartetos" meaning "sinless").

If this is the case then there would have to be one single point of the Law that all of the accusers are violating at that moment and if this is true then these Pharisees and Scribes would be caught in the act of their sin just as the woman was caught in the act of her sin.

(Exodus 23:1) ".....You shall not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.

If Jesus did write this point of The Law on the ground then he would have caught the Scribes and Pharisees red handed in breaking The Law in the midst of many witnesses, just as they had caught the adulteress.

Jesus writes the 2nd time

If the Pharisees and Scribes were caught in the act of sin then they would have to accept their punishment just as they were willing to approve the punishment of the adulteress. It's important to remember that Jesus was teaching at this time so there were plenty of witnesses.

(Deuteronomy 19:15-21) 15"A single witness shall not suffice against a person for any crime or for any wrong in connection with any offense that he has committed. Only on the evidence of two witnesses or of three witnesses shall a charge be established. If a malicious witness arises to accuse a person of wrong doing, then both parties to the dispute shall appear before the LORD, before the priests and the judges who are in office in those days. The judges shall inquire diligently, and if the witness is a false witness and has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him as he had meant to do to his brother. So you shall purge the evil from your midst. And the rest shall hear and fear, and shall never again commit any such evil

among you. Your eye shall not pity. It shall be life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

If Jesus did write Exodus 23:1 and the Pharisees did indeed get caught in the act breaking of the Law then they would have to accept their punishment just as they would have expected the adulteress to accept her. I believe that when Jesus wrote the second time He wrote the point of the Law that describes the punishment for their sin which was death. The Jews of Jesus' time still believed that the breaking of the Law is punishable by death.

(Hebrews 10:28) Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

Eldest leaving first

The Greek word for elder or eldest is "presbyteron". In the church it is used for a church officer, but in the Jewish sects of the New Testament it is used in terms of rank. The lower rank had to wait to support higher ranked. As the higher ranked left so did the next in rank and so on. If a lower ranked Pharisee left before those ranked higher than him then the lower ranked Pharisee would have been considered a traitor.

The story above is often a separation from the Scriptures above and below. We see above it that the Pharisees wanted to arrest Jesus for anything, and below verse 15 tells us that Jesus was there to save not there to judge, convict, and condemn anyone.

(John 8:12-20) Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." So the Pharisees said to him, "You are bearing witness about yourself; your testimony is not true." Jesus answered, "Even if I do bear witness about myself, my testimony is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going, but you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one. Yet even if I do judge, my judgment is true, for it is not I alone who judge, but I and the Father who sent me. In your Law it is written that the testimony of two people is true. I am the one who bears witness about myself, and the Father who sent me bears witness about me." They said to him therefore, "Where is your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither me nor my Father. If you knew me, you would know my Father also." These words he spoke in the

treasury, as he taught in the temple; but no one arrested him, because his hour had not yet come.

Jesus states “I judge no one”. The Greek word for judge used here is “krino” and it means “to try, to condemn, or to punish”. What did Jesus say to the woman? “Neither do I condemn you”.

In Conclusion

I believe that the adulterous woman scenario is a lesson to everyone on the topic of judgment. Look at the following three Scriptures

(Matthew 7:1-2) "Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you.

(Luke 6:37) "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;

(Romans 2:1-2) Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things. We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.

The Bible teaches that we will be judged by the same judgment we use on others so we should not judge at all. Now with saying that we are always supposed to notice what is good or bad, right or wrong, good or evil, but that’s not judging according to the Bible that is discerning. Remember the Greek definition for judging is “krinos” it declares guilt (with conviction) and a sentence which only God has right to give. I believe that this story is an example Christ used to teach us why we should never judge others.

I hope that this writing has helped you in the doctrine of judgment. May the blessing of our Lord shine on you.

