

A KANGAROO COURT

Request: “I have always been fascinated with the details of the story of the woman caught in adultery. Would you do a study on it?”

If you have a study bible, you will notice a footnote regarding the absence of this story in many of the ancient manuscripts. Professor Bruce Metzger of Princeton University, a renowned textual scholar, concedes that the account of this Johnine story has all the earmarks of historical veracity.

It is an intriguing story from a biblical Jewish legal point of view. It is also filled with the human drama so many people like. The Jewish religious politicians sent a kangaroo court of legal experts to trap Jesus either in a crime against Rome or Israel. They caught a woman “in the very act of adultery (Jn.8:4/ re-handed).”

Now they want to catch Jesus in the very act of violating either Roman law or Jewish law:

(Jn.8:5) “Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do you say?”

If Jesus says “**yes**,” they would accuse Him before Roman court of sedition.

(Jn.18:31b) “The Jews said to him (Pilate), ‘We are not permitted to put anyone to death.’”

If Jesus says “**no**,” they would accuse Him before Jewish court of blasphemy:

(Jn.5:18) “For this cause therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because he was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”

We will begin by examining our lesson text by the following five homiletical points.

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| • Temple | (Jn.8:1-2) | Dawn to teach |
| • Test case | (Jn.8:3-4) | Dawn with pawn |
| • Trap | (Jn.8:5-6a) | Dawn with Law |
| • Truth | (Jn.8:6b-9) | Dawn with judgments |
| • Tribunal | (Jn.8:10-11) | Dawn without condemnation |

This lesson will study five aspects of the Kangaroo Court sent to trap Jesus in a legal trap designed to destroy His ministry.

1. The kangaroo court made a very important legal opening statement that blew a big hole in their case.

(Jn.8:4) “They said to Him, ‘Teacher, this woman has been caught in adultery, IN THE VERY ACT.’”

The Greek word for caught is katalambano (perf.p.ind) [entrapment]. The kangaroo court was using criminal law to work against the law and against a law-abiding citizen like Jesus.

She was caught IN THE VERY ACT (epi+loc of time / autophoros) [red-handed] by this kangaroo court.

How is it possible for **all of them** to be present in the “very act of adultery?” Unless this was a conspiracy plot by the members of this kangaroo court (a set up).

2. **Since they were all present, they knew who the guilty man was as well as the woman. Jewish law required both parties of adultery to be charged.**

(Deut.22:22) “If a man is found lying with a married woman, then BOTH of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from among you.” (Lev.20:10, 14)

3. **Bearing false witness brought equal guilt upon all false witnesses:**

(Ex.23:1) “You shall not bear false report; do not join hands with a wicked man to be a malicious witness.”

(Deut.19:16-19) “If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him or wrong doing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and judges who will be in office in those days. And the judges shall investigate thoroughly; and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you.”

This means that the entire kangaroo court was guilty and could be charged with the crime worthy of stoning to death.

4. **After Jesus wrote (katagrapho / impf.a.ind) [legal term to write against] (Jn.8:6) twice upon the ground and spoke to the kangaroo court between these writings, the Bible says they left the temple court by rank and file (Jn.8:6b-9). [We are not told what he wrote].**

But He may have written Deut.19:16-19 on the ground the **first time** before speaking these words – “He, who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw the stone at her.” (Jn.8:7) **This is the sin of false witness.**

The **second time** He may have written the name of the man on the ground. In fact, the man may have been there and maybe even part of this kangaroo court – “And if a **false witness** and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother.” (Deut.19:19)

The Kangaroo court left without verdict - “**And when they heard it**, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she had been, in the midst.” (Jn.8:9)

“The hands of the witnesses shall be the first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.” (Deut.17:7)

5. **The authority and rank of the kangaroo court is seen in the order of their leaving this case without condemnation. They were more than willing to throw this case away.**

The **Grace Court** remained: (Jn.8:10) “And straightening up, Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?’”

(Jn.8:11) “And she said, ‘No one, Lord.’ And Jesus said, ‘Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more.’” **Note the order of His words.**

Religion says: “Change and I will forgive or else I will condemn”. Note that Jesus didn’t say, “Don’t sin and I will forgive you” nor did He say, “Don’t sin and I won’t condemn you.”

Grace says: “You don’t have to change to be accepted. You change because you have been accepted!”

You have to believe the Grace Gospel in order to find the reason to allow the Love of God to change you.

- As believers, we have been all caught and released from the slave market of sin (Rom.5:12-21).