



A. **True Freedom - Progression**

Thirst → Drink → Life (John 7)

Darkness → Light → Direction (John 8)

Bondage → Truth → Freedom (John 8:31–36)

- Freedom runs deeper than a change in circumstances or location.
- Freedom begins with a relationship with God through Jesus.

B. **Be a good Judge - An Early-Morning Class**

- Pharisees set a trap for Jesus. They bring a woman ‘caught in adultery’ to trap him in his judgment. What is the trap?

- Option A - Stoning: _____

- Option B - Let her go: ‘he’d be disobeying the Torah

- Do you believe in God who gives a second chance?

C. **Shine, Jesus, shine**

- Jesus claimed: ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in the darkness, but have the light of life’ (8:12)

- What does it mean to walk in the darkness?

D. The great unknown

- Jesus not only claims God as his Father and second witness but also claimed to be from above – He came from God.
- In what way does this claim heighten the tension between Jesus and his opponents (vv.19-30)?

E. The Revelation

- Jesus said, ‘If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins’ (v. 24). What is the response of our contemporary culture to this claim?
- Jesus said: ‘If you hold to my teaching ... then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.’ (VV.31-32)
- Like the Jews, today some say, ‘we are already free’. Are they really free?
- Hearing Jesus claiming divinity, they wanted to stone him – Why?

Bread • Water • Light
One Gospel — Three Invitations (John 6–8)

John 6 — Bread	John 7 — Water	John 8 — Light
“I am the Bread of Life”	“If anyone thirsts...”	“I am the Light of the world.”
Hunger satisfied	Thirst quenched	Darkness removed
Come and eat	Come and drink	Come and follow
Life received	Life flows within	Life is guided
Many walk away	Many debate	Many divide

Questions

- How did Jesus’ attitude towards the adulterous woman differ from that of the religious leaders?
- Why does it matter that Jesus claimed to be God?
- Why did the claims of Jesus upset the leaders so much that they wanted to stone him?
- How do you think God wants you to interact with people who reject what Jesus said about himself and them?

John 7:53-8:11

Why is this passage absent in the earliest manuscripts, and does it affect authenticity?

What manuscript evidence do we have?

Earliest Manuscript Witnesses and Omissions

Over the centuries, many manuscripts of the Greek New Testament have been discovered, providing strong evidence for its text. Notably, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (both from the 4th century), as well as Papyrus 66 (mid-2nd century) and Papyrus 75 (late 2nd to early 3rd century), omit John 7:53-8:11. In these manuscripts, the text flows directly from John 7:52 to John 8:12, without mentioning the woman caught in adultery.

Evidence from later manuscripts such as Codex Bezae (c. 400) and Codex Basilensis (c. 700) includes this passage, but its presence varies across different manuscripts. Some scribes relocated this passage to other sections, such as after Luke 21:38 or later in John 7. Its varying placements and absence in earlier manuscripts suggest it was a floating text for some time.

Patristic and Early Church Considerations

Some early Greek manuscripts omit this story, but later Church Fathers and early Christian writers were aware of it. Jerome included it in the 4th-century Latin Vulgate, and Augustine suggested it may have been omitted by scribes who feared it could be seen as endorsing adultery. In contrast, earlier Greek Fathers, such as Chrysostom, did not mention it, likely because it was absent from their manuscripts.

Possible Reasons for Omission

- 1. Manuscript Variation:** Some scribes transmitting the Gospel of John may not have had access to the tradition containing this passage. This would naturally lead to differences in later copies.
- 2. Concern About Misinterpretation:** Augustine noted that Jesus' response might encourage adultery, prompting some scribes in certain regions to omit or relocate the passage to avoid misunderstandings.
- 3. Later Insertion:** Some textual critics believe that the passage, though historically authentic, was not part of the original Gospel of John. Instead, it likely originated in a separate tradition and was inserted by scribes who considered it valuable to preserve.

Authenticity and Historical Credibility

- 1. Consistency with Jesus' Character:** The teaching in this passage closely aligns with Jesus' known approach to sin and holiness. Jesus shows compassion for repentant sinners and calls them to leave their sin behind (John 8:10-11: "Neither do I condemn

you. Go now and sin no more.”). This theme resonates throughout the rest of the Gospels.

2. Widespread Acceptance: Initially absent from early manuscripts, this account later gained acceptance and was included in major printed Scriptures. The early church’s support, as reflected in Latin manuscripts, aligns with John’s core message.

3. Doctrinal Implications: Even if some readers believe this narrative wasn’t part of the original text of John’s Gospel, it aligns with Scripture’s teachings. Its principles—compassion, warnings against hypocrisy, and the call to righteous living—are consistent with Jesus’ message.

Impact on the Reliability of Scripture

The presence or absence of this passage does not affect the New Testament’s doctrinal soundness or historical reliability, as it is attested by numerous Greek manuscripts, early translations, and quotations from the church fathers.

When passages such as John 7:53-8:11 vary among manuscripts, textual critics analyze both the external evidence and internal features. This thorough approach helps identify questionable origins while recognizing the overall faithful transmission of Scripture.

Exegetical and Pastoral Considerations

- 1. Moral and Spiritual Instruction:** This passage emphasizes repentance, humility, and divine mercy, urging believers and non-believers alike to reflect on justice and mercy.
- 2. Caution in Application:** Preachers and teachers of John 7:53-8:11 often acknowledge the textual questions yet affirm that the passage conveys important truths, including divine grace for sinners and the call to live righteously.
- 3. Scripture’s Unity:** In the Gospels, Jesus demonstrates His authority and compassion by forgiving repentant sinners, rebuking hypocrisy (as in Luke 7:36-50), and fulfilling God’s law (Matthew 5:17).

Conclusion

John 7:53-8:11 is absent from some early Greek manuscripts, raising questions about its original placement. However, it was recognized in various early church traditions, and many later manuscripts include it, with prominent theologians referencing it. The passage aligns with Scripture, highlighting Jesus’ mercy toward sinners and his firm stance against sin.

This passage may prompt questions about its textual history, but it does not undermine the reliability of the New Testament. Careful examination of manuscripts and early citations shows that Scripture has been preserved with great care. The message of divine mercy and human accountability remains clear, reflecting the transforming grace and truth found in Jesus Christ.