TO CAST A STONE

"If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her. Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground." — JOHN 8:7-8

Most of us are familiar with the story of the woman caught in the act of adultery. The Pharisees, great adversaries of Jesus, brought her before Him in order to set a trap so they could find a claim to arrest Him.

The Law of Moses stated a woman caught in adultery should be stoned along with the man. Would Jesus side with the Law and have this woman stoned, giving some credence to the fact He might actually be the Messiah, or would He err on the side of compassion and let her go, proving He was not the Messiah? They said to Him, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" (John 8:4-5). At this, Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with His finger. They kept questioning Him and He straightened and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." Again, he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

The intriguing question is what did Jesus write on the ground? This took place immediately after the 'Feast of Tabernacles', and on the last day of the festival, Jesus reached out to the people and talked about living water. "In a loud voice he said, 'If anyone is thirsty, let

him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him'" (John 7:37-38).

All of Scripture is one continuous story about Christ. If we link a prophetic statement Jeremiah made in the Old Testament about living water, we might have an idea as to what Jesus wrote on the ground. Jeremiah said, "Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust because they have forsaken the LORD, the spring of living water" (Jeremiah 17:13). Is this perhaps a fulfillment of that statement? Had Jesus written names of this woman's accusers in the dust? Had He then straightened, directed His attention to them and said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her?" When He began to write in the dust a second time, they started to leave, older ones first, until only Jesus was left with the woman.

However feasible this observation may or may not be, the point is nothing is hidden from God. Before we feel inclined to cast a stone, let us look into our own hearts, and be forgiving of one another just as God is forgiving of us.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, thank You for the grace You show in forgiving me. Help me to do the same for others, regardless of how severe my grievance. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Am I looking into my own heart before accusing others and casting blame?