

What Did Jesus Write in the Dirt?

Question: What did Jesus write in the dirt when the Pharisees brought to Him the woman caught in adultery?

Answer:

Some Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus and asked if she should be stoned to death (John 8:3-11). Instead of answering, He stooped down and wrote on the ground with His finger. He told them, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” He stooped down again and wrote on the ground. Beginning with the oldest man, they all left one by one. So what did He write?



Since the Bible doesn't record what He wrote we can only speculate. Scripture tells us they left “one by one” starting with the older men. Whatever He wrote convicted them. He probably wrote individual messages to each, from oldest to youngest. Since He addressed “the one without sin” He probably wrote their specific sins, including adultery.

Some scholars speculate He wrote the names of women with whom they had committed that sin. Could it be that the Pharisees didn't accuse the man caught in the act because he was in their group? It's possible they were all guilty of adultery, which meant **they would have to stone each other!**

After her accusers left, she called Him “Lord” (v.11). Jesus replied, “Neither do I condemn you.” Many people quote this verse saying “don't cast stones” and “I don't condemn you,” but they omit the rest of the verse, “Go and sin no more” (8:11). Jesus didn't want her to keep committing adultery but told her to live a godly life. He says the same to us when we come to Him—He cleanses us from sin and calls us to live a life that's pleasing to Him.

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