

BSP #4, December 19th, 2003  
Group Time Sharing Questions

1. What occasion does the Jewish Feast of the Tabernacles celebrate? (Read Ex. 40:1-15; Deut. 16:13-17; and Lev. 23:41-44.)
2. Read Philippians 3:4-7 and John 9:40-41. What do these verses teach us the Pharisees thought of themselves? What insight does this give us to Jesus' statement to them in John 8:7: "let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her"?
3. In John 8:31-59, Jesus and the Jews engage in a heated argument about Abraham and his descendants. The Jews are clearly upset by the things that Jesus says, but the real clincher is verse 58, which really puts the Jews over the edge. What does Jesus say that makes them take up stones to kill him? What two words are key in His statement and what would it mean to the Jews? Read John 8:24, 28; Ex. 3:14.
4. The Jews claimed to be righteous because they were descendants of Abraham. Do you think being Catholic or attending Mass, being active in your parish or doing good deeds makes you righteous? 1 John 2:4 states: "Whoever says, 'I have come to know him,' but does not obey his commandments, is a liar, and in such a person the truth does not exist." Are you keeping his commandments?

ANSWERS:

1. To commemorate the erection of the Tabernacle and Israel's living in tents in the wilderness. Every morning of the celebration a priest went down to the Pool of Siloam, and brought back a golden pitcher of water to the Temple (the successor of the Tabernacle). This water was poured on the altar of holocausts amidst the singing of the Hallel (Ps, 112-117) and the joyful sound of musical instruments.
2. The Pharisees believed they were completely holy and sinless. The statement suggested that the Pharisees should be the first to throw stones since they believed that they were without sin. Their leaving the scene (they went away one by one according to John 8:9) was an action that admitted sins, which means they contradicted themselves. Why did they contradict themselves? Stay tuned for the Navigator's Time.
3. In verse 58, Jesus says, "I solemnly declare it: before Abraham came to be, I AM." The two words that upset the Jews the most are: "I AM". "I AM" in Greek = EGO EIMI = the Holy name of God. For the Jews, it's a blasphemy for a man to claim to be God and call himself using God's Holy name.