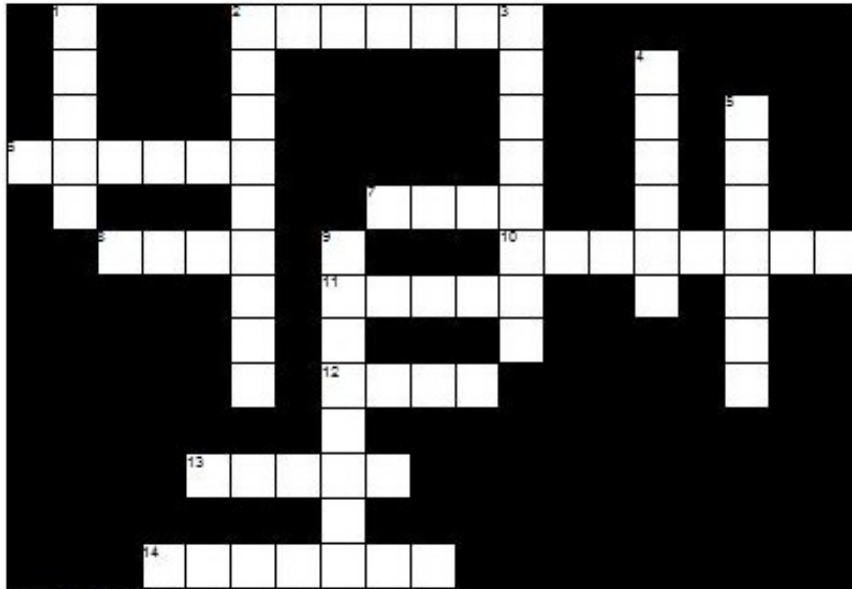


A Bible Crossword: Matthew, Part 1

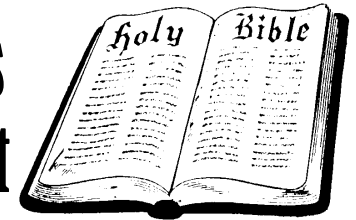


Across: 2. Place of Judah's captivity. 6. Mary's betrothed. 7. This led the wise men to Jesus. 8. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus LIKE one. 10. Name for Jesus meaning "God with us" (KJV spelling). 11. Where Jesus was taken for protection. 12. The wise men came from this direction to see Jesus. 13. Jesus is the son of this king, listed first in Matthew's genealogy. 14. What John the Baptists belt was made of.

Down: 1. The king who was troubled to hear of Jesus' birth. 2. The place of Jesus' birth. 3. The town where Jesus grew up. 4. River in which John the Baptist baptized Jesus. 5. What John ate with wild honey. 9. Weeping prophet who foretold the weeping in Ramah.

—All answers can be found in Matthew, Chapters 1-3

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I've Forgotten The Stuff My Kids Are Learning

While riding in the van, watching Larry Boy and the Bad Apple, Lindsay recognized one of her vocabulary words—Frail. Sensing a learning opportunity, Carina asked her if she knew how to spell the word. She did! Then, Carina asked her if she knew how to make a cursive "F." She knew that too.

I didn't. I tried to think of what a cursive "F" is supposed to look like, but I drew a total blank. I've totally forgotten how to write in cursive. In my childhood, I wrote my cursive so poorly that my junior high English teacher told me I should probably just print. I've been printing ever since. The only thing I can write in cursive today is my own signature.

It occurred to me as we were driving that my 10 year-old daughter is learning things in school (home school specifically) that I've forgotten. I don't even like to think about what my almost 13 year-old is studying. The moment that started putting letters in the math problems they totally lost me.

Many parents can probably sympathize with my situation. Our children are learning things that we used to know ourselves but have long forgotten. I know this is true in secular education. Is it true in Biblical education too? We send our children to Bible classes in which they learn all about Bible stories, events and people. In these Bible classes, are our children learning things we've already forgotten?

Here are a few questions to consider....

- How many books are in the Bible?
- Can you list them all? in order?
- Can you name the three sons of Noah?
- Can you list the Patriarchs?
- Can you list the sons of Jacob?
- Can you list the Judges?
- Can you list the Apostles?

Number six on the list is a real tough one, but my almost 13 year-old can do it without hesitation. I can't.

Do you find yourself in the same boat as me? Have you forgotten the things your children are learning? There is only one remedy for this problem: 2 Timothy 2:15. Don't know what that verse says? Look it up, or maybe ask one of your kids.

—RAB

Just Accept Errors As Variants

Do you have trouble with your spelling? Many of us do, so Ken Smith, a criminology professor at Bucks New University in Britain has proposed a compelling solution. He wrote in the Times Higher Education Supplement, "University teachers should simply accept as variant spelling those words our students most commonly misspell." Instead of viewing the errors as errors, we can simply declare them correct and make life easier for everyone.

Though academics responded to this spelling solution with initial skepticism, it isn't hard to imagine such a measure being adopted. This approach to error in general has become increasingly popular in our world.

Rather than treating errors like errors, we simply declare the

errors acceptable. For example, because so many people commit fornication, many in our society have endorsed the practice as acceptable. The same point applies to a host of things the Scriptures condemn as sins. The moral relativism of our society today is a reflection of the idea that we can simply accept an error based upon its popularity.

The children of Israel suffered from this relativism, and God had little patience for it. Isaiah wrote, "Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!" (Isaiah 5:20). The same woe applies today.

Many might justify making a single exception now and then, but the exception ball is difficult to stop once it has started rolling. To kickstart his proposal, Smith suggested 10 common misspellings that should immediately be accepted into the pantheon of variants, including "ignor," "occured," "thier," "truely," "speach" and "twelth" (no, "twelth" is not correct; it should be "twelfth"). In fairness to him, Smith did not endorse abandoning all rules of spelling. According to him, he only wants to add 20 or so commonly misspelled words to the list of words that already have accepted variants.

The troubling thing to me is the "or so" part. Once we've decided to start making exceptions for ourselves, we have a hard time stopping. Committing sin is like eating Pringles: you can't stop with just one.

Paul warned Timothy, "But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). The road to hell runs downhill. The farther we allow ourselves to go, the greater slope becomes, leading us faster and faster to destruction.

This is what comes, what we come to, when we call evil good.

—RAB