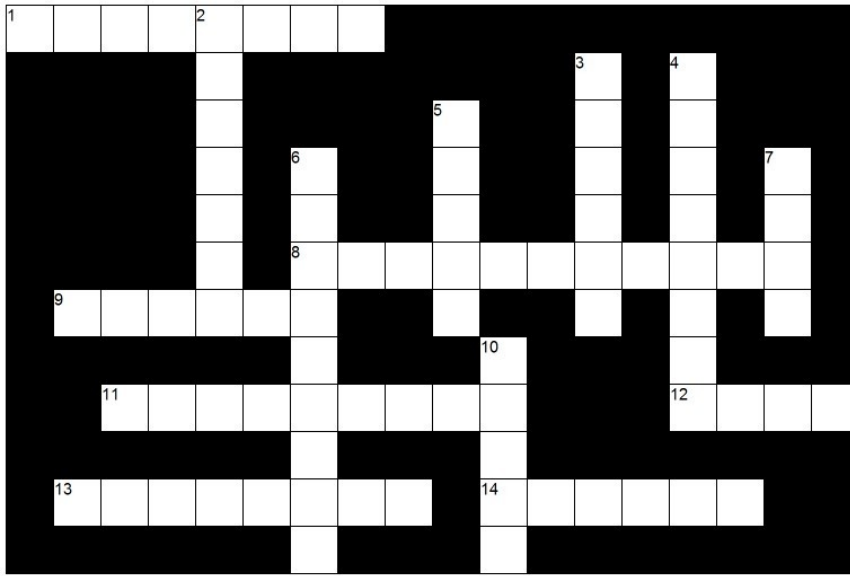


## A Bible Crossword: Matthew, Part 7



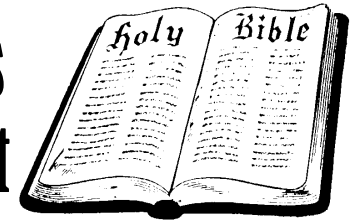
www.CrosswordWeaver.com

**Across:** 1. Jesus was transfigured on one. 8. Peter suggested building three of these for Jesus & His company at the transfiguration. 9. The unforgiving servant consigned a fellow servant who couldn't pay a small debt to one. 11. It's better to have one hung on your neck and be cast into the sea than to cause a little one to stumble. 12. Peter found tax money for himself and Jesus in one. 13. The disciples asked Jesus who was this in the kingdom of heaven. 14. The disciples realized that John the Baptist filled the role of this forerunner prophet.

**Down:** 2. The unforgiving servant owed his master ten thousand of these. 3. Prophet who appeared when Jesus was transfigured. 4. Because of this, the disciples failed to cast out a demon. 5. Law-giver who appeared when Jesus was transfigured. 6. By the mouth of two or three of these, every word may be established. 7. What the Son of Man came to seek and save. 10. Peter asked if he should forgive his brother this many times.

-All answers can be found in Matthew, Chapters 17-18, NKJV.

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### Did Alexander Campbell Establish The Church of Christ?

A poster to an online, Bible Questions and Answers message board asked "Did Alexander Campbell establish the church of Christ?" The question is an old one, asked many times. Some have asked the question sincerely. Some have argued combatively that this was the case. They argue that the church of Christ, as it exists today, is simply another denomination of human origin.

Alexander Campbell was one of the pillars of the Second Great Awakening that occurred between 1790 and 1840, but crediting him with the establishment of the church of Christ overstates his role considerably.

Consider the following Bible parallel as evidence: Did Josiah establish Judaism?

When King Josiah some to the throne of Judah, the true worship of God, authorized in the Law of Moses, had virtually ceased. The temple of God itself had fallen into such disrepair that Josiah gave orders to repair and restore it (2 Chronicles 34:10). While the work was being done, Hilkiah the priest made a discovery—he found the Book of the Law of the Lord (2 Chronicles 34:14). When the Book was read in his hearing, Josiah tore his clothes in mourning (2 Chronicles 34:19) and made a covenant to keep all the testimonies and statutes of the law (2 Chronicles 34:31).

When Josiah came along, the true worship of God had ceased. He learned the truth and committed himself and Israel to following it. Did he establish Judaism? The answer, of course, is "No." He didn't establish a religion. He did his best to restore a religion that had become corrupted and lost.

The same is true of Alexander Campbell. He didn't establish the church of Christ. He did his best to restore a religion that had become corrupted and lost. Like Josiah, he was not an establisher; he was a restorer.

Restorers do not look upon men as the standard of authority, no matter how respected those men may be. The power of God unto salvation is found in the gospel, in God's word (Romans 1:16). Continuing in the word makes us wise for salvation (2 Timothy 3:14-17). We may acknowledge and respect reformers of the past, but to be complete in Christ, we must be reformers ourselves conforming our lives to the word which abides forever (1 Peter 1:25).

—RAB

## CAN WE UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE ALIKE?

The Bible itself answers our question: "when you read, you can understand" (Eph. 3:4). And, "Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things" (2 Tim. 2:7).

Our problem in understanding the Bible is illustrated by the story of a man who decided that he was going to "figure out the Bible." So, as he placed his Bible on his lap it fell open to Matthew 27:5. He read the phrase about Judas that says he "went and hanged himself." Well, that didn't help him much, but he decided he would try it again. This time the Bible fell open to Luke 10:37 and he read, "Go and do likewise." With that he slammed it shut and was now thoroughly convinced

no one could make any sense out of the Bible.

Obviously, just letting the Bible fall open, or any other hit-and-miss approach, will always leave us with the idea the Bible is not understandable. Such would be true for any book. To understand the Bible there must be some organization to our study, and we must give ourselves time to absorb the ideas taught.

Also, we must reject the idea that "common people" are not supposed to understand it; that the job of understanding belongs to professional teachers. They are to explain it to us. That is simply not so!! The Bible's message is about Jesus and our salvation; that message is intended to be understood by common people. Such is the declaration of Mark 12:37 (KJV, NKJV): "And the common people heard Him gladly." As it was with Jesus' words, so it is with Scripture's words.

Another problem to overcome is the conflicting interpretations that supposedly knowledgeable people give to Bible texts. Many are led to think, "If Bible educated people understand it in contradictory ways, then how can I figure it out?" I sympathize with their confusion. But the fault lies, not with the Bible, but with those who misuse it with contradictory interpretation. Jesus did not pray for such divisiveness (John 17).

I have a suggestion. Forget other people's theories; yes, even your theories, and just read the Bible as you would read a friend's letter. Let God's message come through to you. Keep asking yourself as you examine "the Scripture" (Acts 17:11), "What does the Scripture say?" (Rom. 4:3). Start reading Luke, then Acts; when finished, read John. Don't read into it your ideas, but let God's words be the sole source of the ideas you form. Remember, "You can understand."

—Ronny E. Hinds, Reflector Oct 8, 2000