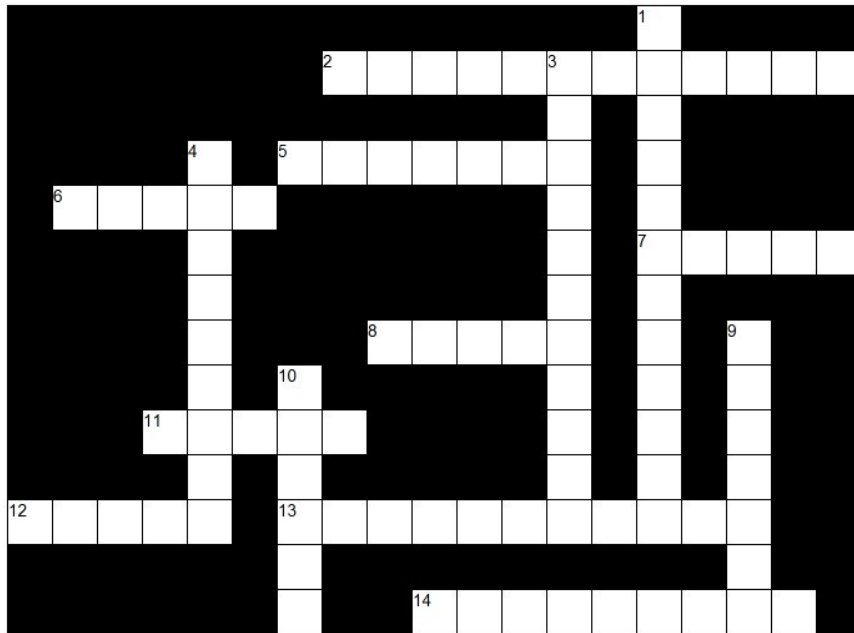


A Bible Crossword: Matthew, Part 9

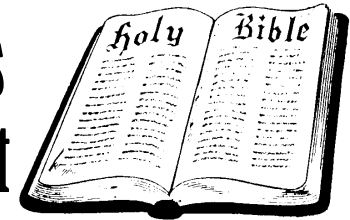


Across: 2. The Pharisees liked to make theirs broad. 5. Jesus asked if John's was from heaven or men. 6. The Pharisees strained out a gnat but swallowed on of these. 7. Jesus said not to be called this by men, for One is your Teacher, the Christ. 8. Jesus called the Pharisees this kind of guide. 11. Jesus asked how this man could call the Christ "Lord" when the Christ would be his son. 12. The Pharisees were whitewashed ones. 13. The wicked vinedressers killed the son to steal this from him. 14. The chief priests asked Jesus who gave Him this.

Down: 1. The Sadducees didn't believe in one. 3. A lawyer asked Jesus which one of these was the greatest. 4. Members of this sect joined the Pharisees to ask Jesus about paying taxes to Caesar. 9. In the parable of the wedding feast, a guest was thrown into outer darkness for not wearing an appropriate one. 10. Jesus told the Sadducees that God is not the God of the dead of these.

-All answers can be found in Matthew 21-23, NKJV.

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I Can't Want It!

Three-year olds develop some curious expressions. They are rapidly learning new words and vocabulary, but the results of how they put phrases together can be quite amusing. Our three-year old's favorite expression right now is "I can't want it!" She uses this phrase whenever she's asked to do something she doesn't want to do. When she gets a little older, I'm sure she'll adopt the standard expression, "I don't want to," but for now, her reply when she feels put upon is "I can't want it."

What do you say when you feel put upon? To what phrase do you turn, when you are told to do something that you don't want to do? The Bible examples are plenty.

Who Is The Lord?

Pharaoh was commanded by God to let the children of Israel leave Egypt to offer a sacrifice to Him in the wilderness. Pharaoh replied, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the LORD, nor will I let Israel go" (Exodus 5:2). After a series of devastating plagues and the destruction of his army in the Red Sea, Pharaoh found out who the Lord is. The Lord is the Creator and Ruler of the universe.

Some deny the Lord's authority to command them. The folly of such is illustrated in Isaiah 29:16, "Surely you have things turned around! Shall the potter be esteemed as the clay; For shall the thing made say of him who made it, 'He did not make me'? Or shall the thing formed say of him who formed it, 'He has no understanding'?" God is the Potter; man is the clay. From time to time our three-year old also replies with the inevitable "Why?" when told to do something. "Because I said so" is a perfectly valid reply to give to a child. It is also a perfectly valid reply for God to give His creation. We obey God because He is God, and fearing Him and keeping His commandments is our whole duty (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

I Go, Sir!

In Matthew 21:28-31, Jesus told the following parable: "But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?"

Neither son behaved in the manner a parent might praise, but the second son truly disappointed. He said, "I go, sir," but he didn't go to the vineyard and work as his father instructed.

Three-year olds do that too. You tell them to go upstairs and get in their beds for naptime only to find them somewhere else entirely when you go to check on them. They might say, "Yes, sir," but it doesn't mean they are actually going to do as they were told.

Are you the same way? Do you make claims of obedience only to follow your own path? King Saul was told to go up against the Amalekites and utterly destroy them. He did go up against them, but his claims of obedience were met with rebuke by Samuel. "Then Samuel went to Saul, and Saul said to him, 'Blessed are you of the LORD! I have performed the commandment of the LORD.' But Samuel said, 'What then is this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?'" (1 Samuel 15:13-14). Faithfulness in word is nothing but hypocrisy if it isn't supported by faithfulness in conduct.

Nothing

One of the saddest stories in the New Testament is the story of the Rich Young Ruler. He came to Jesus and asked what he needed to do to have eternal life. Jesus told him that he lacked one thing: "Jesus said to him, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions" (Matthew 19:21-22). The Rich Young Ruler didn't say anything. He just went away sorrowful.

Some choose this sorrowful road. They recognize their lost condition. They understand the Gospel plan of redemption, but they do nothing.

All of these responses lead to the same consequence. If I say "Who is the Lord?" or "I go, sir" (but I don't go) or if I say nothing and walk away, I walk away from my reward. Don't say, "I can't want it." Say "Here am I! Send me" (Isaiah 6:8) and go.