BIBLE BRAINSTORMS

ROGER HOWERTON

Word Games & Puzzles from the Gospels

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THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
ST. MATTHEW

1 JESUS' GENEALOGY

See if you can name each of the 12 people described below. All of them are listed in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1.

1. She is the only woman in the list with a book of the Bible named for her. _____
2. His name was changed to Israel. _____
3. This king played the harp. _____
4. In faith, she hung a scarlet thread out of her window. _____
5. This king died of a disease in his feet. _____
6. God made him "father of many nations." _____
7. He is listed as "the husband of Mary." _____
8. When he was born, his father was 100 years old. _____
9. He sealed a deal with a shoe in order to marry Ruth. _____
10. He fathered eight sons; the youngest became a great king. _____
11. He had 700 wives. _____
12. He was governor in charge of rebuilding Solomon's temple. _____

2 ADD-A-LETTER 1

Begin with the letter shown, then add one letter at each step, rearranging the letters each time to fit the definition at the right. The last answer will be a key word from the book of Matthew.

	E						
Myself							
Encountered							
Abound							
Gauge							
Irritability							
Satan (in the wilderness)							

3 CAN YOU FOLLOW DIRECTIONS?

Start with the phrase "Joseph laid the body in his own tomb" at the top and follow the directions, step-by-step. Keep the letters in order at each step, making only the change requested. The final answer will be a phrase from the book of Matthew that is related to the beginning phrase.

1. Reverse the letters in the words "laid," "body," and "tomb."
2. Reverse the letters in "Joseph," and move the result to the end.
3. Remove the plural pronoun, the flying insect, and the foreign currency.
4. Change every D to an S.
5. After the third letter, add the word "sirs."
6. Replace every L and J with "ieh."
7. Replace the word that means "cry" with the word "of."
8. Replace the word that means "possess" with the word "ton."
9. Change every B to an S.
10. Remove the first three letters.
11. Replace "in his" with the three-letter poetic word for "before."
12. Place an R after the first H.
13. Place an H between the words "ere" and "ton."
14. Place the letters N and E at the beginning.
15. Reverse the string of letters.

JOSEPHLAIDTHEBODYINHISOWNTOMB

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

KNOCKOUTS

Below is a quotation of Jesus from the book of Matthew. All of the words are there, in the correct order, with the letters in correct order as well, but one letter has been added to each word. "Knock out" the unnecessary letter in each word to reveal the quotation.

FORM THEE SOON OFT MEAN HIS COMES
TWO SALVE THATS WHITCH WASH LOIST.

_____

_____

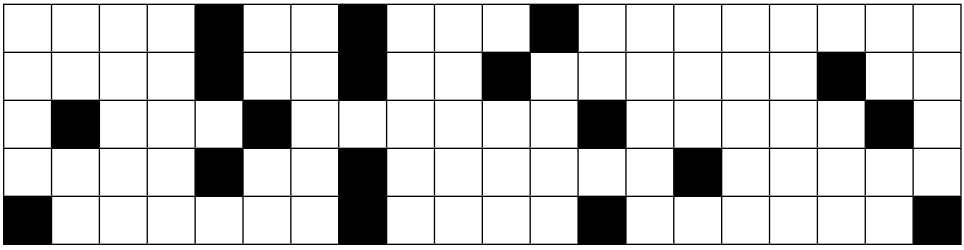
THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER (HOMONYMS, SYNONYMS, ANTONYMS)

Below is the parable of the sower from Matthew 13. Many blanks have been left in the story, with a word in parentheses before each blank. That word is a homonym (same sound, different spelling), a synonym (same meaning), or an antonym (opposite) of the correct answer for the blank. Figure out the correct answers to properly complete the story.

A (planter) _____ went (in) _____ to (sew) _____, and as he sowed, some seeds fell (buy) _____ the roadside, and the (fowls) _____ came and devoured them. Others fell (off) _____ (stony) _____ ground, where they didn't have much (dirt) _____, and immediately they sprang (down) _____, because they had (know) _____ depth of earth. When the (son) _____ had (sunk) _____, they were scorched. Because they had no (route) _____, they withered away. Others (dropped) _____ among thorns. The thorns (shrank) _____ up and choked them. Others fell on (bad) _____ soil, and yielded fruit: (sum) _____ one hundred (thymes) _____ as much, some sixty, and some thirty.

6 MOVIN' UP 1

Move the letters in each column up and into the boxes above (not necessarily in the order the letters are in now) to find a quote from Jesus in the book of Matthew. A block signifies the end of a word.



D	E	A	H	A	I	D	A	I	E	C	E	E	A	H	E	E	A	A	L
E	I	C	H	Y	I	F		S	H	E	R	E	C	P	E	C	H	L	N
H	R	E	H		T	N		T	H	E	R	F	O	R	H	H	L	Y	S
P	R	T	W		R	O		T	H	Y	S		T	T	I	N	R		W
		T	Y			S		T	N				W		S	T			

7 THE WORD WITHIN

Fill in the blanks with words that answer each clue. The words will be of varying lengths. When read top to bottom, the completed words will reveal a quotation from the book of Matthew.

1.	Not more	B _____ E D
2.	2nd tone of musical scale	A _____
3.	Not she	T _____
4.	Exclamation upon seeing a mouse	M _____
5.	Either	F _____
6.	Attention getter	T _____
7.	Corridor	S _____
8.	Feminine pronoun	I N _____ I T
9.	Ordinal follower of 4 or 7	_____ E
10.	Rembrandt's line of work	E _____ H

8 CHANGE-A-LETTER

Change one letter in every word below to make another word. When finished, a quotation of Jesus will be revealed.

LEAVEN AID GARTH SHELL PAST SWAY,
BAT BY WORKS STALL NOW PANS AWRY.

_____

_____

9 LEFTOVERS

Answer the quiz questions below. The answers may be found in the list of words, though not necessarily in order. Cross off each answer from the list. The remaining words, when read left to right, top to bottom, will reveal a quotation from the book of Matthew. Scripture references have been given at the end of each question.

No	Three	Servants	Hate
Money	Man	Yes	Woman
Can	Serve	Disciples	Two
Teach	Love	Masters	Wedding

1. What gender of person had the issue of blood? (9:20) _____
2. Jesus said, "Do good to them that _____ you." (5:44)
3. For what event were servants sent out to look for guests? (22:10) _____
4. How many measures of meal did the woman hide leaven in? (13:33) _____
5. What did Peter find in the mouth of a fish? (17:27) _____
6. Jesus said, "Thou shalt _____ thy neighbor…." (19:19)
7. Did Mary Magdalene visit the tomb of Jesus? (27:61) _____
8. To whom did Herod tell that John the Baptist had risen from the dead? (14:2) _____
9. Jesus said to go and _____ all nations. (28:19)
10. Whom did the soldiers say had stolen the body of Jesus? (28:13) _____

10 VANITY PLATES

Of course, there were no automobiles in Bible times, and certainly no license plates. But let's assume for a moment that the chariots had to have license plates. Can you match the personalized license plate to the person in the book of Matthew who would have displayed it?

1. WTRWLKR
2. CARPNTR
3. ROMNGOV
4. TAXMAN
5. BAPTIZR
6. LEAD100
7. 30SILVR
8. VRGNMOM
9. HI – PRST
10. BDAYBOY

A. Judas Iscariot
B. Caiaphas
C. John the Baptist
D. Joseph (Jesus' father)
E. Herod the tetrarch
F. Simon Peter
G. Matthew
H. Centurion
I. Mary (Jesus' mother)
J. Pontius Pilate

11 ONE OR THE OTHER

Cross out one letter in each box so that the remaining letters will spell out a quotation from the book of Matthew. A black box signifies the end of a word.

G L	O I	V F	T E		I U	S P	
T S	P H	A I	S N		D P	I A	Y N
	T O	U W	R O		S D	A H	I A
S L	T Y		T B	H R	E I	N A	D E

_____

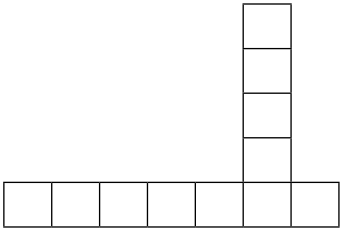
_____

CROSSROADS

Each crossroad below contains two words that make a phrase from the book of Matthew. Fill in the blanks from the word list below. The first word of each grid should be placed down, and the second word across.

Beloved	Daily	Loaves	Prophet
Blind	False	Man	Son
Bread	Five	Men	Wicked
Come	Kingdom	One	Wise

1



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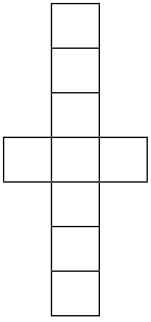

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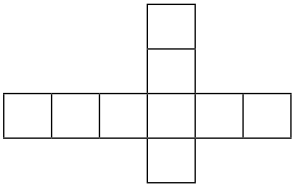

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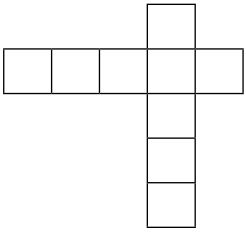

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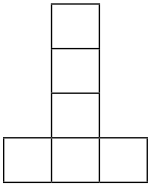

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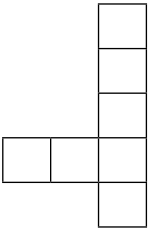

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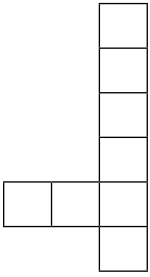

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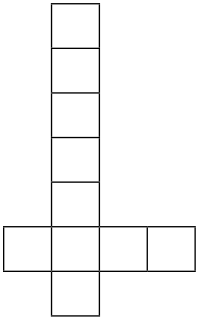


LOST SHEEP

In Matthew 18, Jesus spoke of a man who had a hundred sheep, but one had gone astray. Can you help find it? In the puzzle below, the word "sheep" appears only once. The word may be forward, backward, diagonal, vertical or horizontal. Find it.

S E P E E S H P S S E E H S P H S E E E
P H E E S H E E S P S E H E E S P H P E
E S P P H E E P H E E P E E S H E E E P
E E H S H P S S E E H P E P E E E H S E
P E S E E P H E S E E H P S P E H E E S
E P E P S E E E P H S E S E E S P H H P
S E P E E S H P S S E E H S P H S E E E
S S E H H E E P H E E P E E S H E E E P
H P S H E S E S H P P E E E E H E E P S
E E P S H E P H E E S H S H E P E S H E
P H E E S H E E S P E E H E E S P H P E
H S E E P E P H P E E S H S H E E H E P
E E S H S E H E E S S P E H E P E S S E
E S E P H E E P H E E P E E S H E E E P
P E H S E P S H E E E S H E P P H H E P
S H E P E S E E P H P E E S H E P E E S
S E P E S S E P H E E P H E E P E E S H
H E H P E H S E P S H E E E S H E P P H
E S H S H P S S E E H P E P E E E H S E
P E H S E S H P S S E E H S P H S E E E

IT'S A LIVING

The list below consists of occupations from the book of Matthew in code—one letter stands for another. Each code letter represents the same letter throughout the list. When you have identified a word in the list, use the solved letters to help decode the other words. For example, KDBBDF could be LETTER.

F Y G W L B T G W I O

_____ _____

B Y V T G I W W

_____

H W T F Y V Z O

_____

M G Z Q

_____

L G I Y W T H V Z

_____

I V A A J F W W

_____

I W T C V Z O

_____

B T S B Y W O

_____

B J K X G F V Z

_____

Y J I K V Z A H V Z

_____

MATTHEW'S CHRISTMAS QUIZ

Matthew tells much about the birth of Christ, and so does Luke. Putting these two accounts together gives us the bulk of what we know about the event. See if you can answer the questions below from the book of Matthew. Place the letter of each correct answer in order to reveal a related Christmas phrase.

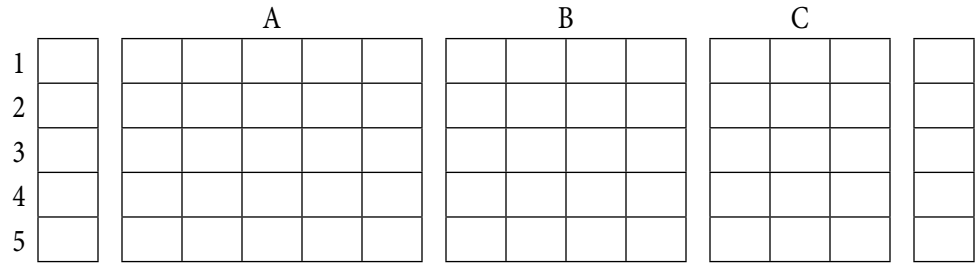
1. In what city was Jesus born?
   f. Jerusalem g. Bethlehem h. Nazareth
2. What was the name of the king of Judaea at the time?
   o. Herod p. Pontius Pilate q. Nero
3. From what direction did the wise men come?
   d. east e. west f. north
4. To what city did the wise men come?
   w. Jerusalem x. Bethlehem y. Nazareth
5. What did Herod ask the chief priests and scribes?
   h. what time the wise men arrived
   i. where Christ was to be born
   j. what time the star appeared
6. What did Herod ask the wise men?
   r. what time the wise men arrived
   s. where Christ was to be born
   t. what time the star appeared
7. What gifts did the wise men bring to Jesus?
   h. myrrh, frankincense, and gold
   i. gold, silver, and frankincense
   j. frankincense, gold, and figs
8. Why didn't the wise men return to Herod?
   s. Herod told them never to return
   t. they lost their way
   u. God warned them not to return
9. Who warned Joseph to flee with his family to Egypt?
   r. Herod s. angel of the Lord t. wise men

_____

_____

16 WORD LADDER 1

Each ladder has five columns. Every answer in column A will have five letters; every answer in column B will have four; answers in column C will have three. After answering the definition for A1, one letter can be dropped and the remaining four letters rearranged to make the answer for B1. Place the dropped letter into the box to the left of column A. Drop another letter from the B1 answer and rearrange the remaining three letters to form the answer for C1. Place the dropped letter into the box to the right of column C. Continue this pattern for the entire puzzle. When finished, the columns of dropped letters, reading down, will reveal a phrase from the book of Matthew.



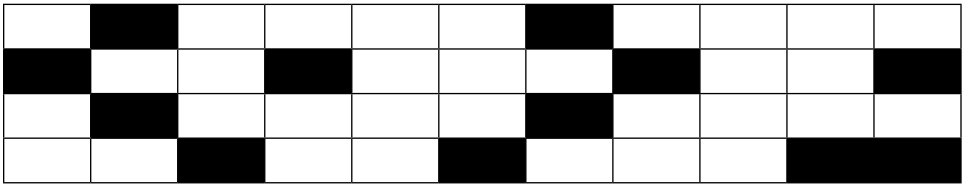
A1. Short trip
A2. Stock market unit
A3. One killed Goliath
A4. Reason
A5. Speed

B1. Fish for salad
B2. Skin irritation
B3. Notice
B4. Attorney's project
B5. Despise

C1. Acorn or pecan
C2. Possesses
C3. Number of lepers healed
C4. Top card
C5. Derby, for one

17 MOVIN' UP 2

Move the letters in each column up and into the boxes above (not necessarily in the order the letters are in now) to find a quote from Jesus in the book of Matthew. A block signifies the end of a word.



A	I	C	B	E	E	H	C	A	A	N
A	T	H	I	L	L	T	I	D	N	T
O		S	I	S	Y		T	H	N	
				T				O		

ANSWERS

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

JESUS' GENEALOGY

1. Ruth 2. Jacob (Gen. 35:10) 3. David (1 Sam. 16:23) 4. Rahab [Rachab] (Josh. 2:18) 5. Asa (2 Chron. 16:12–13) 6. Abraham (Gen. 17:4) 7. Joseph (Matt. 1:16) 8. Isaac (Gen. 21:5) 9. Boaz [Booz] (Ruth 4:8–10) 10. Jesse (1 Sam. 16:10–11) 11. Solomon (1 Kings 11:3) 12. Zerubbabel (Hag. 1:14)

ADD-A-LETTER 1

me, met, teem, meter, temper, tempter

CAN YOU FOLLOW DIRECTIONS?

J O S E P H L A I D T H E B O D Y I N H I S O W N T O M B
1. J O S E P H D I A L T H E Y D O B I N H I S O W N B M O T
2. D I A L T H E Y D O B I N H I S O W N B M O T H P E S O J
3. D I A L D O B I N H I S O W N B J
4. S I A L S O B I N H I S O W N B J
5. S I A S I R S L S O B I N H I S O W N B J
6. S I A S I R S I E H S O B I N H I S O W N B I E H
7. S I A S I R S I E H O F I N H I S O W N B I E H
8. S I A S I R S I E H O F I N H I S T O N B I E H
9. S I A S I R S I E H O F I N H I S T O N S I E H
10. S I R S I E H O F I N H I S T O N S I E H
11. S I R S I E H O F E R E T O N S I E H
12. S I R S I E H R O F E R E T O N S I E H
13. S I R S I E H R O F E R E H T O N S I E H
14. N E S I R S I E H R O F E R E H T O N S I E H
15. H E I S N O T H E R E F O R H E I S R I S E N (Matt. 28:6)

KNOCKOUTS

"For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matt. 18:11).

THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER

sower, out, sow, by, birds, on, rocky, soil, up, no, sun, risen, root, fell, grew, good, some, times

MOVIN' UP 1

"Pray to thy Father which is in secret and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matt. 6:6).

THE WORD WITHIN

1. less 2. re 3. he 4. eek 5. or 6. hey 7. hall 8. her 9. th 10. art
Promise: "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth." (Matt. 5:5)

CHANGE-A-LETTER

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

LEFTOVERS

1. woman 2. hate 3. wedding 4. three 5. money 6. love 7. yes 8. servants 9. teach 10. disciples.
Quotation: "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24).

VANITY PLATES

1. f 2. d 3. j 4. g 5. c 6. h 7. a 8. i 9. b 10. e

ONE OR THE OTHER

"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11).

CROSSROADS

1. false prophet 2. beloved son 3. five loaves 4. daily bread 5. wise men 6. blind man 7. wicked one 8. kingdom come

LOST SHEEP

S E P E E S H P S S E E H S P H S E E E
P H E E S H E E S P S E H E E S P H P E
E S P P H E E P H E E P E E S H E E E P
E E H S H P S S E E H P E P E E E H S E
P E S E E P H E S E E H P S P E H E E S
E P E P S E E E P H S E S E E S P H H P
S E P E E S H P S S E E H S P H S E E E
S S E H H E E P H E E P E E S H E E E P
H P S H E S E S H P P E E E E H E E P S
E E P S H E P H E E S H S H E P E S H E
P H E E S H E E S P E E H E E S P H P E
H S E E P E P H P E E S H S H E E H E P
E E S H S E H E E S S P E H E P E S S E
E S E P H E E P H E E P E E S H E E E P
P E H S E P S H E E E S H E P P H H E P
S H E P E S E E P H P E E S H E P E E S
S E P E S S E P H E E P H E E P E E S H
H E H P E H S E P S H E E E S H E P P H
E S H S H P S S E E H P E P E E E H S E
P E H S E S H P S S E E H S P H S E E E

IT'S A LIVING

chief priest, Pharisee, merchant, king, fisherman, Sadducee, servant, prophet, publican, husbandman

MATTHEW'S CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. g 2. o 3. d 4. w 5. i 6. t 7. h 8. u 9. s
Phrase: "God with us" (Matt. 1:23)

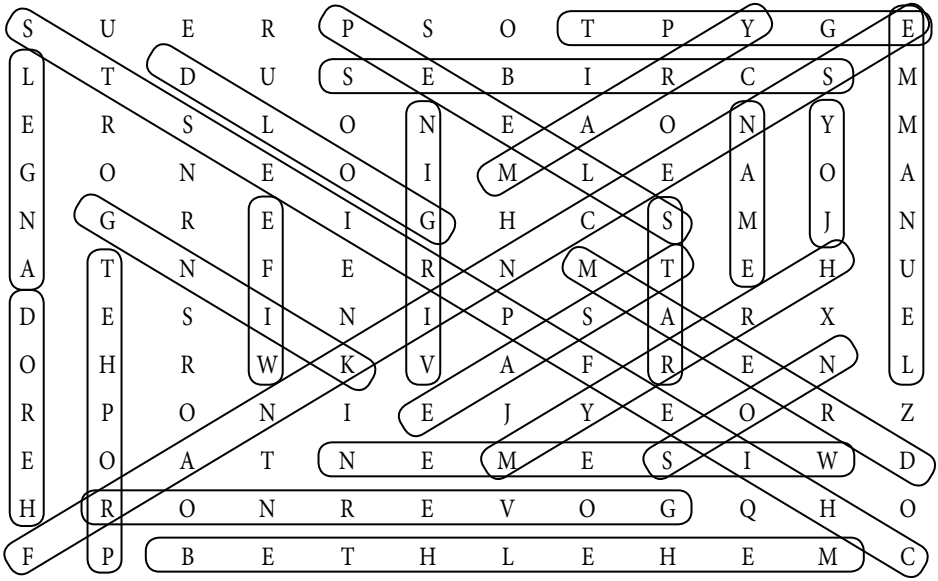
WORD LADDER 1

A: jaunt, share, stone, cause, haste; B: tuna, rash, note, case, hate; C: nut, has, ten, ace, hat. Phrase: Jesus arose

MOVIN' UP 2

"A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matt. 5:14).

EARLY LIFE OF CHRIST



WHERE AM I?

1. Bethany 2. Bethlehem 3. Bethsaida 4. Canaan 5. Capernaum 6. Egypt 7. Galilee 8. Gethsemane 9. Israel 10. Jericho 11. Jerusalem 12. Nazareth 13. Nineveh 14. Wilderness

WORD LADDER 2

A: laces, Aaron, demon, water, meant, least, known; B: aces, roan, done, wart, neat, tels, know; C: sea, nor, doe, art, net, set, won. Phrase: Lame man can walk

MATTHEW'S FAMILIAR PHRASES

five loaves and two fishes; the salt of the earth; many called but few chosen; an eye for an eye; blessed are the meek; the light of the world; rain on the just and the unjust; weeping and gnashing of teeth; a city set on a hill

FAMOUS PEOPLE WITH BIBLE NAMES

1. Mary 2. Peter 3. Jonas 4. John 5. Simon 6. Martha 7. Joseph 8. Thomas 9. Andrew 10. Caesar 11. David 12. Jesse James

MOVIN' UP 3

"Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain" (Matt. 5:41).