

Biblical Ladders

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Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, aka Lewis Carroll, invented a popular pastime now called *word ladders*, in which one word metamorphoses into another by changing a letter at a time. We can go from THIS to THAT in three such steps: THIS, THIN, THAN, THAT.

As an ordained deacon of the Church of England, Dodgson also was quite familiar with the Bible. So let's play a game that combines both activities: Let's construct word ladders in which all words are Biblical. More precisely, the words should all be present in the Bible that was used in Dodgson's day, the King James translation.

Here, for example, is a six-step sequence that we might call Jacob's Ladder, because 'James' is a form of 'Jacob':

... seen of	JAMES;	then of all ...	(1 Corinthians 15:7)
... because your	NAMES	are written ...	(Luke 10:20)
... and their	NAVES,	and their ...	(1 Kings 7:33)
... When the	WAVES	of death ...	(2 Samuel 22:5)
... had many	WIVES.	And his ...	(Judges 8:30)
... made their	LIVES	bitter with ...	(Exodus 1:14)
... And Jacob	LIVED	in the land ...	(Genesis 47:28)

Puzzle #1. Many people consider the Bible to be a story of transition from WRATH to FAITH. The following tableau shows, in fact, that there's a Biblical word ladder corresponding to such a transition. But the tableau lists only the verse numbers, not the words; what are the missing words?

(Remember to use a King James Bible for reference, not a newfangled translation! Incidentally, the sequence of verses in this ladder is strictly increasing through the Old Testament, never backtracking in Biblical order; Jacob's Ladder, on the other hand, was strictly decreasing.)

... that his WRATH was kindled. ... (Genesis 39:19)
 ... ----- ... (Genesis 40:2)
 ... ----- ... (Exodus 24:4)
 ... ----- ... (Exodus 34:1)
 ... ----- ... (Leviticus 13:3)
 ... ----- ... (Leviticus 14:46)
 ... ----- ... (Leviticus 25:29)
 ... ----- ... (Deuteronomy 22:21)
 ... ----- ... (Joshua 11:4)
 ... ----- ... (1 Samuel 13:20)
 ... ----- ... (1 Samuel 15:3)
 ... ----- ... (1 Samuel 26:13)
 ... ----- ... (1 Kings 10:15)
 ... ----- ... (Psalm 10:14)
 ... ----- ... (Isaiah 3:17)
 ... ----- ... (Isaiah 54:16)
 ... ----- ... (Isaiah 54:17)
 ... by his FAITH. Yea also, ... (Habakkuk 2:4)

Puzzle #2. Of course #1 was too easy. So neither words nor verse numbers will be given this time. Go from SWORD to (plow) SHARE in four steps:

... not lift up a SWORD against ... (Micah 4:3)
 ... ----- ... ()
 ... ----- ... ()
 ... ----- ... ()
 ... every man his SHARE, and his ... (1 Samuel 13:20)

(Hint: In the time of King James, people never swore; they sware.)

Puzzle #3. Of course #2 was also pretty easy, if you have a good concordance or a King James computer file. How about going from NAKED to COVER, in eight steps? A suitable middle verse is provided as a clue.

... they were NAKED; and they ... (Genesis 3:7)
 ... ----- ... ()
 ... ----- ... ()
 ... ----- ... ()
 ... ----- ... (Luke 17:27)
 ... ----- ... ()
 ... ----- ... ()
 ... ----- ... ()
 ... charity shall COVER the multitude ... (1 Peter 4:8)

Puzzle #4. Find a Biblical word ladder from HOLY to WRIT.

Puzzle #5. (For worshippers of automobiles.) Construct a 12-step Biblical ladder from FORDS (Judges 3:28) to ROLLS (Ezra 6:1).

Puzzle #6. Of course #5 was too hard, unless you have special resources. Here's one that *anybody* can do, with only a Bible in hand. Complete the following Biblical ladder, which "comes back on itself" in an unexpected way.

... seventy times	SEVEN.	Therefore ...	(Matthew 18:22)
...	-----	...	(Matthew 13:)
...	-----	...	(John 4:)
...	-----	...	(Numbers 33:)
...	-----	...	(Deuteronomy 29:)
...	-----	...	(1 Samuel 15:)
...	-----	...	(Job 16:)
...	-----	...	(1 Kings 7:)
...	-----	...	(Romans 9:)
...	-----	...	(Leviticus 9:)
...	-----	...	(Acts 27:)
...	-----	...	(Jeremiah 10:)
...	-----	...	(Matthew 13:)
...	-----	...	(Ezekiel 24:)
...	-----	...	(Matthew 18:)

Puzzle #7. Finally, a change of pace: Construct 5 × 5 word squares, using only words from the King James Bible verses shown. (The words will read the same down as they do across.)

-----	Matthew 11:11	-----	Exodus 28:33
-----	Judges 9:9	-----	Lamentations 2:13
-----	Mark 12:42	-----	1 Peter 5:2
-----	Ecclesiastes 9:3	-----	Genesis 34:21
-----	Luke 9:58	-----	Acts 20:9

Answers

Puzzle #1.

...	WRATH	was kindled. ...	(Genesis 39:19)
... Pharaoh was	WROTH	against two ...	(Genesis 40:2)
... And Moses	WROTE	all the ...	(Exodus 24:4)
... and I will	WRITE	upon <i>these</i> ...	(Exodus 34:1)
... is turned	WHITE,	and the ...	(Leviticus 13:3)
... all the	WHILE	that it is ...	(Leviticus 14:46)
... within a	WHOLE	year after ...	(Leviticus 25:29)
... play the	WHORE	in her ...	(Deuteronomy 22:21)
... the sea	SHORE	in multitude, ...	(Joshua 11:4)
... man his	SHARE,	and his ...	(1 Samuel 13:20)
... have, and	SPARE	them not; ...	(1 Samuel 15:3)
... a great	SPACE	<i>being</i> between ...	(1 Samuel 26:13)
... of the	SPICE	merchants, and ...	(1 Kings 10:15)
... mischief and	SPITE,	to requite ...	(Psalm 10:14)
... Lord will	SMITE	with a scab ...	(Isaiah 3:17)
... created the	SMITH	that bloweth ...	(Isaiah 54:16)
... is of me,	SAITH	the LORD. ...	(Isaiah 54:17)
... by his	FAITH.	Yea also, ...	(Habakkuk 2:4)

Puzzle #2. Here's a strictly decreasing solution:

...	not lift up a	SWORD	against ...	(Micah 4:3)
... The Lord	GOD hath	SWORN	by himself, ...	(Amos 6:8)
... <i>sheep that are even</i>	SHORN,	which came ...	(Song of Solomon 4:2)	
... beside Eloth, on the	SHORE	of the Red ...	(1 Kings 9:26)	
... every man his	SHARE,	and his ...	(1 Samuel 13:20)	

There are 13 other possible citations for SWORN, and 1 Kings 4:29 could also be used for SHORE, still avoiding forward steps.

Puzzle #3. First observe that the word in Luke 17:27 must have at least one letter in common with both NAKED and COVER. So it must be WIVES or GIVEN; and GIVEN doesn't work, since neither GAKED nor NIKED nor NAVED nor NAVEN is a word. Thus the middle word must be WIVES, and the step after NAKED must be WAKED. Other words can now be filled in.

... they were	NAKED;	and they ...	(Genesis 3:7)
... again, and	WAKED	me, as a ...	(Zechariah 4:1)
... which is	WAVED,	and which ...	(Exodus 29:27)
... the mighty	WAVES	of the sea. ...	(Psalm 93:4)
... they married	WIVES,	they were ...	(Luke 17:27)
... hazarded their	LIVES	for the name ...	(Acts 15:26)
... looked in the	LIVER.	At his ...	(Ezekiel 21:21)
... hospitality, a	LOVER	of good men, ...	(Titus 1:8)
... charity shall	COVER	the multitude ...	(1 Peter 4:8)

(Many other solutions are possible, but none are strictly increasing or decreasing.)

Puzzle #4. Suitable intermediate words can be found, for example, in Revelation 3:11; Ruth 3:16; Ezra 7:24; Matthew 6:28; Job 40:17; Micah 1:8; Psalm 145:15. (But 'writ' is not a Biblical word.)

Puzzle #5. For example, use intermediate words found in Matthew 24:35; Ezra 34:25; Acts 2:45; Ecclesiastes 12:11; Matthew 25:33; Daniel 3:21; John 18:18; Genesis 32:15; 2 Corinthians 11:19; Psalm 84:6; Numbers 1:2. (See also Genesis 27:44.)

Puzzle #6.

... times	SEVEN.	Therefore ...	(Matthew 18:22)
... forth, and	SEVER	the wicked ...	(Matthew 13:49)
... seventh hour the	FEVER	left him. ...	(John 4:52)
... and to the	FEWER	ye shall give ...	(Numbers 33:54)
... from the	HEWER	of thy wood ...	(Deuteronomy 29:11)
... And Samuel	HEWED	Agag in pieces ...	(1 Samuel 15:33)
... I have	SEWED	sackcloth ...	(Job 16:15)
... hewed stones,	SAWED	with saws, ...	(1 Kings 7:9)
... remnant shall be	SAVED:	For he will ...	(Romans 9:27)
... shoulder Aaron	WAVED	for a wave ...	(Leviticus 9:21)
... violence of the	WAVES.	And the soldiers' ...	(Acts 27:41)
... Gather up thy	WARES	out of ...	(Jeremiah 10:17)
... and sowed	TARES	among the ...	(Matthew 13:25)
... And your	TIRES	shall be ...	(Ezekiel 24:23)
... till seven	TIMES?	Jesus saith ...	(Matthew 18:21)

Puzzle #7.

WOMEN	BELLS
OLIVE	EQUAL
MITES	LUCRE
EVENT	LARGE
NESTS	SLEEP

References

Martin Gardner, *The Universe in a Handkerchief: Lewis Carroll's Mathematical Recreations, Games, Puzzles, and Word Plays* (New York: Copernicus, 1996), Chapter 6.

<http://etext.virginia.edu/kjv.browse.html> [online text of the King James Bible provided in searchable form by the Electronic Text Center of the University of Virginia].