

– Continued from page 1 –

built specifically for the Pony Express. Sand Springs Station and Cold Springs Station are both stacked rock structures without roofs. Since we visited them more than 150 years after they were vacated, one might suspect the materials they were constructed from simply decayed over time. However, Englishman Sir Richard Burton visited these sites while they were in operation and reported they were roofless then. The Pony Express functioned for such a short duration that many stations were never finished being built!

Notwithstanding its brevity, memory persists. The National Pony Express Association has been conducting an annual re-ride every June since 1980. The Pony Express has figured into the plots of countless movies and TV shows, including one I watched regularly as a child, *The Young Riders*. Starring Stephen Baldwin and Josh Brolin, *The Young Riders* first aired September 20, 1989 and continued for 3 seasons, broadcasting its 68<sup>th</sup> and final episode July 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1992. From its first show until its last, this fictional series about the Pony Express endured 1,037 days, almost twice as long as the real Pony Express existed, and more than 3 times as long as the Express ran its full route.

It is fascinating to observe how a brief occurrence in the past can be enduringly remembered for decades and even centuries. Consider how quickly Jesus of Nazareth accomplished His work. Scholars suggest He preached for about 3½ years.

The apostle John chronicled 3 Passover feasts observed by the Lord during His ministry (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55). The first occurred after He had been baptized (1:29-34), selected His apostles (1:35-42), and performed His first miracle (2:1-12). Keep in mind that His baptism was followed immediately by His 40-day temptations in the wilderness (Mark 1:9-13), so several major events transpired in His ministry prior to the first Passover mentioned by John. It was during the third Passover that He was crucified (John 19:14). Well over two years of Christ's work in the gospel is written down, but He did far more than pen or ink could ever capture (John 21:25).

It may not be possible at present to know precisely how long Christ's earthly ministry lasted, but an estimate of 2½ to 3½ years does seem very reasonable. That is less than a Presidential term in the United States. It is a shorter span than the time between two Olympic Games. Students spend more time in high school than Jesus did preaching. A loan on a new car takes twice as long to pay off. It is such a short period of time. Yet, what He accomplished in those few years is

– Continued on page 3 –

## PRIOR TO CONCEPTION, ALCOHOL USE BY FATHERS CONTRIBUTES TO BIRTH DEFECTS

Author Unknown

Research has shown that alcohol consumption by men before conception can significantly impact the health of future children. Studies indicate that men who drink alcohol prior to conception may increase their baby's risk of birth defects by up to 35 percent. Alcohol can damage sperm DNA, alter hormone balance, and interfere with the normal development process long before pregnancy begins. Because sperm carry genetic material that shapes early development, their quality plays a critical role in fetal health.

Scientists explain that sperm take approximately 3 months to fully mature. During this window, lifestyle choices such as alcohol intake, poor diet, and chronic stress can affect sperm structure and function. Alcohol exposure during this period has been linked to oxidative stress and DNA fragmentation, which may increase the likelihood of developmental abnormalities. By abstaining from alcohol for at least three months before conception, men give their bodies time to produce healthier sperm with improved genetic stability.

– Continued on page 4 –

– Continued from page 2 –

still shaping the world. Time itself continues to be counted based on when He was born. Call it "Common Era" (C.E.) if you like, but the numbers are the same as the year of our Lord, "Anno Domini" (A.D.). Whether He worked for 3 or so years or even twice that, it is still affecting billions of people almost 2000 years after He died.

While He was still working, Jesus summarized His ministry, saying, *"the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them"* (Luke 7:22). Within a generation, Paul said that *"the word of the truth of the gospel"* had been brought to *"all the world"* (Colossians 1:6-7). Even His enemies said that those who preach Jesus as King *"have turned the world upside down"* (Acts 17:6-7). The accusation was more accurate than even those making it understood. What He accomplished shook earth and heaven (Hebrews 12:26-27)! When God began speaking to mankind through His Son, *"the last days"* were underway (Hebrews 1:1-2).

Jesus Christ did not need much time to reshape the world because He is divine, the omnipotent and timeless God.

## **"WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?"**

**ACTS 16:30**

### **LEARN THE GOSPEL**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

### **BELIEVE IN CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

### **CONFESS CHRIST**

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

### **REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 3:19; 17:30

### **BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

### **REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

## **"THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

**HEBREWS 10:24-25**

### **SUNDAY**

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

### **WEDNESDAY**

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

### **THURSDAY**

Men's & Ladies' Studies @ 6:20 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard  
Belén, New Mexico

**Seekers Welcome.  
Members Expected.**

## **"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN ANY TRESPASS... RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

**GALATIANS 6:1**

### **CONFESS TRESPASSES**

James 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9

### **REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 8:22

### **PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS**

Acts 8:22

### **REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

– Continued from page 3 –

This research highlights that reproductive health is not solely a maternal responsibility. Paternal habits before conception matter and can influence outcomes long after birth. Abstaining from alcohol is a simple, preventive step that supports sperm integrity and reduces avoidable risk. While genetics and environment both play roles, protecting sperm health through informed lifestyle choices can meaningfully support healthier pregnancies and stronger developmental foundations for future children.

# **"WHOLE COUNSEL"**

**ACTS 20:27**

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## **571 DAYS OF THE PONY EXPRESS**

**Bryan Matthew Dockens**

Despite its lasting memory in the lore of America's Old West, the Pony Express operated very briefly. Delivering the mail from St. Joseph, Missouri, across Kansas, Nebraska, a corner of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and Nevada to Sacramento, California, the Central Overland California and Pikes Peak Express Company began delivery April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1860 and ceased operations October 26<sup>th</sup>, 1861, two days after the transcontinental telegraph reached Salt Lake City. The Pony Express functioned for 571 days in total: 1 year, 6 months, and 23 days.

With the outbreak of the War between the States, the route was curtailed, operating only between Salt Lake City and Sacramento from March 1861. What had been a full operating distance of 1,966 miles was reduced to 776 miles for the final 9 months the Pony Express existed. That means the complete route operated for fewer than 10 months, or about 331 days.

Of the 8 States through which the Pony Express ran its route, in only one, Nevada, did the route span the full distance from its eastern border to its western border. More than any other State, Nevada contained 47 Pony Express stations scattered along over 400 miles. Having lived 18 years in the Silver State, our explorations included 4 of these stations. Two were within the walls of other facilities, namely Fort Churchill and Buckland's Station, but two others were

– Continued on page 2 –

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