

Love in the Old Testament

As does the word 'love' in English, the main Hebrew word 'ahab' has many uses.

By Gregory Dullum

"Love" is a word we use often in our conversations! We love pizza, or an outfit, or a style of car. We love our pets. We love our relatives, our school, our community, our state, our country, our church and our God.

We tell our dearest friends and relatives, "I love you." If spoken with all sincerity, there are NO other three words that sound as sweet. We all crave to be loved.

We use the word "love" in so many ways, let's define the word in English before we learn how it's used in the Old Testament.

Defining 'Love' in English

There are 22 definitions of "love" in the *Random House College Dictionary* (1973). Let's look at just six of them:

"1. [A] profoundly tender, passionate affection for a person of the opposite sex." Is this what comes to mind when we read the word "love" in the Bible? This definition is sometimes used in the Old Testament but NEVER in the New Testament! It is very limited in its scope. It excludes love for relatives of the same sex. It also excludes pizza and pets.

"2. [A] feeling of warm personal attachment or deep affection, as for a parent, child or friend." This definition is limited to "a feeling" but includes people of the same sex who have a close connection: a parent, child or friend. We have seen that this is the meaning of the Greek word *phileo* in the New Testament. It is also part of the Old Testament meaning of the word "love."

"3. [S]exual passion or desire, or its gratification." This, again, is very limited in its scope. This kind of love was intended by God to be experienced ONLY by a husband and wife *within a*



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In English, we use the word "love" many different ways. Some people love pizza, but that is different than the love for their spouse. A Hebrew word for love, *ahab*, is similar. The first time it's used in the Bible, it is the love between a man and his meal.

marriage. This definition is NOT used for "love" in the New Testament.

After four dictionary definitions which don't relate to this study, we come to number eight:

"8. [A]ffectionate concern for the well-being of others." This corresponds to the Greek word *agape* in the New Testament. It is part of the meaning in the Old Testament as well.

"9. [A] strong predilection or liking for anything: her love of books." This is the broadest definition. The objects of this love can be "anything," including pets and pizza. This definition is sometimes meant when we read the word "love" in the Old Testament.

"11. [T]he benevolent affection of God for His creatures, or the benevolent affection due from them to God." This curious definition says God has "benevolent affection" toward us (and all creatures) and we owe the same to Him. Certainly, the Bible speaks of this kind of love! There are some big words in this definition. Let's define them to know what this defi-

inition *really* means.

First is the word "benevolent." This means "desiring to do good to others." It is an outgoing ACTION that helps OTHERS. Benevolent also can mean "generous."

"Affection" is "a fondness or devotion to a person or thing." When we're fond of something, we like it, we love it, we are excessively tender toward it, we cherish it with a strong or unreasoning FEELING.

"Devotion" to God is interesting. While "fondness" is attached to our emotions and feelings, "devotion" is attached to our wills, our mind-set. Devotion means "profound dedication; consecration." It is "the ready will to serve God." This is NOT based upon emotion but it is a setting of the mind to follow a course of action, in this case, to serve God.

In other words, in definition No. 11, we are discussing a two-way relationship between God and humans that is generous, outgoing, benefiting each other, expressing feelings of liking, loving and cherishing the other with excessive tenderness, and setting our wills to serve each other.

All of these complex relationships, and more, can be meant when we use the English word, "love."

What is meant by "love" in the Old Testament?

First Mentions of 'Love'

When is the word "love" first used in the Bible? How is it used? Does it speak of God loving mankind? Is it a command for us to love God? Is it a romantic tale of love between a man and a woman? No!

The first use of the word "love" (in

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present-tense English) is between a man and his meal. When Isaac was old, he told his son, Esau, “make me savory food such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless you before I die” (Gen. 27:4).

The word appears twice before this verse, but is translated in past tense in English as “loved.” The first use describes the relationship between a man and his only son—Abraham loved Isaac (Gen. 22:2). The next time the word is used, it is between a man and his wife—Isaac loved Rebekah (Gen. 24:67).

The first three times the word “love” is used in the Bible, three different kinds of love are mentioned; three different definitions are required. And surprisingly, none of these deal with God loving humans, humans loving God, or humans loving ALL other humans *in general!*

If Abraham was born 2161 B.C., as we are told in *The New Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, and the Bible FIRST USES the word “love” when telling of Abraham’s love for Isaac, does that mean *no love was expressed* during the first 1,900 years of man’s existence?

Of course not! There are many EXAMPLES of love, even if the *word is not used*.

Example of Adam’s Love

Adam LOVED his wife. He loved her as defined in our first English definition, “a profoundly tender, passionate affection for a person of the opposite sex.”

As the animals were paraded before Adam, he very likely *appreciated their beauty*. He may have petted a dog, brushed a horse and stroked the soft fur of a cat. He may have felt *a certain fondness* for some of the animals. But something was missing. He felt an emptiness in his soul that the animals could not fill. He could NOT LOVE the animals with tender, passionate affection.

Things changed when Adam caught his first glimpse of a beautiful, naked woman! When Eve was brought before Adam, he said, “This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man” (Gen. 2:23). Adam found no soul mate among the animals (vv. 19-20). He found that soul mate in Eve (v. 18)! Their relationship was one of LOVE—of tender, passionate affection for a person of the opposite sex!

Adam also loved Eve as described in definition No. 3: “sexual passion or desire, or its gratification.” We are told in Gen. 4:1, “Adam had sexual relations

with his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain” (Gen. 4:1 *New Century Version*).

We see that, even though the word “love” does not appear prior to Genesis 22, mankind has experienced romantic and sexual love since God first created woman.

We can go back even further in time to find love in the Bible.

Examples of God’s Love

Is not the creation of man an act of love by God? When God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness,” and blessed them and gave them dominion over all of the rest of creation (Gen. 1:26-31), didn’t that spring from love as described in our English definitions No. 2 (“a feeling of warm personal attachment or deep affection, as for a parent, child or friend”), No. 8 (“affectionate concern for the well-being of others”) and No. 11: (“the benevolent affection of God for His creatures”)?

A case can be made that love can be found in *the first verse* of the Bible: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” WHY did God create a *physical* heavens and earth? It was for the BENEFIT of mankind! This was *an act of love*, as defined in the previous paragraph.

The Old Testament has many, many EXAMPLES of love. We will discuss more of them after we define the Hebrew WORDS.

Old Testament Words for Love

We are familiar with the New Testament Greek words of *phileo* and *agape*. But what Hebrew words are translated “love”?

There is one main word in Hebrew that is translated love—*aheb*. *Aheb* and its derivatives (*ahab*, *ahabah*) have many different uses as does the English word. Hebrew also uses a few other words as well. They are sprinkled sparsely throughout the Old Testament.

Before we look at *aheb*, let’s examine the other words. Some of these words are used only once.

- *Dowd* or *dod*—from a root word meaning to boil, this word is used figuratively to mean love, love-token, lover, friend (Prov. 7:18; Song 1:2, 4; 4:10, 7:12; Ezek. 16:8, 23:17).

- *Chaba*—to cherish with affection; to love (Deut. 33:3).

- *Chasheq*—to cling or to join, figuratively, it means to love or to delight in (Deut. 7:7, Ps. 91:14, Isa. 38:17).

- *Ageb*—Much love or very lovely (Ezek. 33:31).

- *Agabah*—inordinate love (Ezek.

23:11).

- *Racham*—to love, especially to compassionate: have compassion; love; find, have, obtain or shew mercy (Ps. 18:1).

- *Rayah*—a female associate (Song 1:9,15, 2:2, 10, 13, 4:1, 7; 5:2; 6:4).

- *Towb*—loving (Prov. 22:1).

By far and away, the most common word is *aheb*, so let’s focus now upon its meaning.

Defining *Aheb*

The Old Testament contains many examples of emotional, romantic love—Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Ruth and Boaz, Rahab and the spies, and the lovers in the Song of Solomon. Love between parent and child is evidenced by Abraham’s love for Isaac, Jacob’s deep love for Joseph and Benjamin, and David’s love for his dying son born of Bathsheba and for Absalom (who did not return his father’s love).

Is this emotional, tender affection the only meaning to the word *aheb*? Is this what is meant when the Old Testament speaks of love between God and man or between man and all his neighbors?

Was God’s love too AWESOME *to be understood*? Was it mystical and *incomprehensible*?

Were any ACTIONS required by Israelites in order to *show their love to God*? Or was it enough to have warm, affectionate feelings toward God?

“The Old Testament is a book totally lacking in abstractions, in speculation or philosophizing. It is concrete, particular, practical. ... The love of God, then, is not some vague, ghostly quality, totally removed from human experience, unlike the love of a man for a woman.

“The Hebrew was not afraid of talking about God in human terms. After all

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those are the only terms man really knows. ... [Today,] we are Greek rather than Hebrew in our orientation, and under the influence of romanticism we have cheapened and sentimentalized the term 'love' [so] that it is only by the exertion of considerable effort that we can understand the Old Testament world" (*Sex and Love in the Bible* by William Graham Cole, 1959, pp. 21-22, 56).

Love: Spontaneous, Faithful

Ancient Israelites first learned about the love of God when He rescued them from Egyptian slavery. They didn't deserve to be rescued; they didn't deserve his love.

"The divine love, to begin where Israel began, is spontaneous and free. Nothing in Israel could account for the fact that God set his heart upon her as a people, loving them and leading them in the paths of his covenant law. They were no more righteous or religious than any of their neighbors" (Cole, p. 23).

Israel was loved, NOT for anything she did or was. "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of peoples; but because the LORD loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers" (Deut. 7:7-8).

Israel was loved by God and rescued from Egyptian slavery because: 1) God Himself chose to love her in spite of herself; and 2) God's promise to Abraham. God's love was both FREE to Israel and FAITHFUL to Abraham.

God's love for Israel is described in very ROMANTIC, SENSUAL terms in Ezekiel 16. (We could use the Greek word *eros* to describe this love!) While no one else gave Israel a second glance as she lay struggling the blood of her birth, God decided to love her and encouraged her to live (v. 6). When she was old enough for love, God says, "I spread my wing over you and covered your nakedness" (v. 8).

He washed her, anointed her, clothed her in beautiful garments and jewelry (vv. 913). For the most part, it was a one-sided love affair. Israel did not return God's love. She played the harlot, going after other gods (vv. 15-34).

God loved Israel, not because Israel deserved his love, but because He was God and He chose to love her!

Love: Setting the Will to Serve

When we read the word "love" in English, our thoughts race to romance and affectionate feelings of the heart. But this is NOT the reaction Hebrews had to the word "love."

In Hebrew, the emphasis of love is placed upon the "will and its actions rather than on the heart and its feelings or on the mind and its thoughts" (Cole, p. 55).

To love something or someone means to spend time caring for it; to spend money on it; to center our lives around that object. We all spend our time and money and center our lives around something! If we examine ourselves to see where we spend most of our time, money and effort in our lives, we'll see what we love the most. As Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." This is a Hebrew concept of love.

In Hebrew life, everyone MUST love. "No man is free to choose whether or not to love; he is only free to choose what he shall love. And that choice is decisive in determining what he shall become. That is why the whole Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, was preoccupied with the problem of idolatry, which was not essentially bowing before images of wood or stone, but the investment of one's love in the wrong place. To love means to obey, to serve, to be grasped by concern for the welfare of another. It does not mean to feel giddy or ecstatic" (Cole, pp. 55-56).

Love Requires Action

God's love for Israel manifested itself in mighty acts from dropping deadly plagues on the Egyptians to dividing the deep Red Sea.

"The divine love was first of all spontaneous, and it was manifested in the mighty acts of God. It was neither a vague, spiritual force pervading the whole of the cosmos, as in Oriental religions, nor was it capricious emotion of the moment, as in much of Greek mythology. God revealed his love in his irruption into the historical process to bless or to curse, to build or to destroy, to plant or to root up" (Cole, p. 24).

How was Israel to respond to God's

love? "Israel was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, bringing all nations to share the covenant relationship with God. ... She was to share it with the whole community of mankind" (Cole, p. 25).

Moses told the Israelites, "Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land go to possess" (Deut. 4:5). Israel was to *love God* by OBEYING Him. Why?

Moses continued, "Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is near to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?" (vv. 6-7).

Israel was to set an example for the nations around her! God promised that through Abraham's descendants, all the nations of the earth would be blessed (Gen. 22:18). This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus Christ came and showed the way to salvation for ALL mankind. But is that the *only* meaning of this verse? Or can we also take from this verse that Israel was to obey God and be blessed by God in such a fantastic way that *she would become a guiding light* to the rest of the world? Was she not to *share her blessings* and *teach God's way of life to the Gentile nations* of this world?

"Israel was to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, bringing all nations to share the covenant relationship with God. ... She was to share it with the whole community of mankind" (Cole, p. 25).

Loving God Is Loving Neighbor

It is in the Old Testament that we first read the words that Jesus would later call the "first" or greatest commandment: "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5). The second greatest commandment also is found in the Old Testament: "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev. 19:18). These two great commandments were connected in Hebrew thought.

To love God meant loving humans: "it is simply not possible to discuss the Old Testament conception of man's love for God apart from man's love for man. ... The love of God meant obedience ... and obedience translated itself primarily into loving one's neighbor" (Cole, p. 57, 59).

If loving God with all your heart, soul,

LOVE

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Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. What is the No. 1 proof of the Bible?
2. Which archangel fought Satan at his rebellion?
3. In what river was Jesus baptized?
4. How many spies did Moses send into the land of Canaan?
5. When Elijah was taken away, what was Elisha's request?

(Answers on page 5)

DEACONS: HELPERS IN THE CHURCH

Nicolas and other deacons (and deaconesses) are mentioned in the New Testament.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 2

Two of the first seven deacons ordained in the Church of God (Stephen and Philip) set the bar very high for other deacons to follow. Both of these men were powerful preachers who performed miracles; one was martyred.

Four of the other deacons probably performed their duties well, although they served in obscurity; the Bible makes no mention of them after their ordinations.

Finally, we come to Nicolas. His story may serve as a warning to all who are ordained: do not think more highly of yourselves than you ought (Rom. 12:3).

Nicolas

Nicolas may have used his office to gather followers after himself, forming a heretical group called the Nicolaitans. (Some authors and Bible translations spell his name Nicolaus but we will use the *New King James* spelling of Nicolas except when quoting others.)

“Nicolaus, of Antiochene proselyte, figures in second-century Christian literature as the founder of the Nicolaitans, who (as we learn from the Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia in the Apocalypse) endeavoured to relax the requirements of the Council of Jerusalem” (*New Testament History* by F.F. Bruce, 1972, p. 219).

“About this time also, for a very short time, the heresy of those called the Nicolaites, of which also mention is made in the revelation of John. These boasted of Nicolaus as their founder, one of those deacons who with Stephen were appointed by the apostles to minister unto the poor.

“Clement of Alexandria, in the third book of his *Stromata*, relates the following respecting him, ‘Having a beautiful wife, and being reproached after the ascension of our Lord, with jealousy by the apostles, he conducted her into the midst of them, and permitted anyone that wished to marry her. This they say was perfectly consistent with that expression of his, “that everyone ought to abuse his own flesh.” And thus those that adopted his heresy, following both this example and expression literally, rush headlong into fornication without shame’ ” (*Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History* by Eusebius Pamphilus, 1969, pp. 114-115).

If Eusebius’ history is true, Nicolas may have used his office of deacon not to serve the church, but to serve himself, drawing away a following after himself.

However, *Smith’s Bible Dictionary* by

William Smith (1979), disputes this: “There is no reason except the similarity of name for identifying Nicolas with the Nicolaitans which our Lord denounces, for the traditions on the subject are of no value” (“Nicolas,” p. 448).

The *New Unger’s Bible Dictionary* by Merrill F. Unger (1988) agrees, saying, “By some it has been believed that the sect of the Nicolaitans was founded by this Nicolas, but of this there is no positive evidence” (“Nicolas,” p. 921).

The *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* says this about the Nicolaitans, “The church fathers considered them followers of Nicolaus of Antioch mentioned in Acts 6:5 and founders of libertine Gnosticism, which remained active beyond the second century. Though this suggestion is possible, not many scholars would regard it as historically reliable” (Paul A. Achtemeier, gen. ed., 1996, p. 757).

If Nicolas did not found the Nicolaitans as claimed by the early church fathers, it’s possible that this heretical group *took his name* and FALSELY claimed him as their founder, in much the same fashion that the Roman Catholic Church claims the apostle Peter was its first pope.

Phoebe

After the original seven deacons in Acts 6, the next possible mention of someone in the office of deacon is a woman who may have been a deaconess.

About A.D. 57, the Apostle Paul wrote his epistle to the church at Rome. As he neared the end of his letter, he wrote, “Now I introduce and commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchraea, that you may receive her in the Lord—with a Christian welcome—as saints (God’s people) ought to receive one another. And help her in whatever matter she may require assistance from you, for she has been a helper of many including myself—shielding us from suffering” (Rom. 16:1-2, *Amplified Bible*).

(The word “deaconess” is not in our King James or New King James translations; the Greek word *diakonos* is translated “servant” instead.)

“In Rom. 16:1 it is uncertain as to whether *diakonos* should be rendered ‘servant’ or the more official ‘deacon.’ Since *diakonos* most commonly is not used in its technical meaning of deacon, many conclude that Phoebe was not an officeholder in the church. Yet, there are several factors that might indicate otherwise. First, Paul

uses the masculine *diakonos* to refer to a woman instead of the feminine form. Second, Paul specifically states that Phoebe is a *diakonos* of the church at Cenchraea, which is the only place Paul speaks of someone being a *diakonos* of a local church (cp. Eph. 6:21; Col. 1:7; 1 Tim. 4:6 [the word *diakonos* is translated “minister” in these verses]). Third, Paul urges the Romans to aid Phoebe since she is sent to perform an official task on behalf of the Apostle Paul and her church. It is argued that such an official task requires an official office” (“Deacon,” *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 2003, p. 398).

‘Deacons’ First Mentioned

Late A.D. 61, near the end of Paul’s two-year house arrest in Rome, he wrote his epistle to the church at Philippi. As he began his letter, the word “deacons” is mentioned for the *first time* in the *New King James Bible*: “Paul and Timothy, servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons” (Philipp. 1:1).

Euodia and Syntyche

There were many women in the church at Philippi; the church began with the conversion of Lydia and her household during a Bible study on the river bank (Acts 16:13-15). Paul mentioned two women in Philippians 4: “Euodia and Syntyche, please, I beg you, try to agree as sisters in the Lord” (v. 2, *Good News Bible*).

These two women were eminent in the church at Philippi and probably were deaconesses. Paul said they “labored with me in the gospel” (v. 3), and in all his writings he said this of only one other person—Timothy. In the Macedonian country where they lived, women’s social position was higher than in most parts of the civilized world (*All of the Women of the Bible* by Edith Deen, 1955, pp. 262-263, 295-296).

“It appears that Euodias [some add an “s” to the end of her name] and Syntyche did not agree about a matter in the church and Paul entreated them to be of the ‘same mind in the Lord.’ ...

“We know that Euodias and Syntyche were worthy of help because Paul says of them that their names ‘are in the Book of Life,’ indicating that they were spiritual laborers” (Deen, p. 263).

Their example shows that just because two people are ordained does not mean they will always agree on everything.

Paul Lists Qualities of Deacons

Paul was released from Roman prison about A.D. 62. He made one final journey that is not mentioned in the Book of Acts but can be pieced together from extrabiblical sources and from comments in his epistles. He traveled from Rome to Spain, and preached in some Spanish coastal cities. Then he went to Britain and preached in cities on that island. Next he traveled south through Gaul (France), and down the eastern coast of the Adriatic Sea (Illyricum and Macedonia). Before he was arrested in Troas about A.D. 66, Paul visited Crete, Ephesus, Philippi, Nicopolis, Corinth and Miletus, and left behind an elder in each area.

The young minister Timothy had been left behind in Ephesus. About A.D. 65, Paul wrote a letter from Macedonia to Timothy, who was still in Ephesus. In this epistle, Paul gave instructions on what to look for in candidates for the offices of bishop (overseer) and deacon (helper). 1 Tim. 3:1-7 list the qualities to look for in a bishop. Paul continued in verse 8:

“Likewise, deacons must be reverent, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy for money, holding the mystery of the faith in pure conscience. But let these also first be proved; then let them serve as deacons, being found blameless. Likewise their wives must be reverent, not slanderers, temperate, faithful in all things. Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For those who have served well as deacons obtain for themselves a good standing and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus” (vv. 8-13).

“Although the qualifications for deacons are found in 1 Tim. 3:8-13, there is no explicit text that states their duties. Because deacons are mentioned after bishops in Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3, and because of the connotation of the term *diakonos*, most agree that they fulfilled a supporting role to the bishops. ... Some have suggested that the qualifications of not being double-tongued [hypocritical—HCSB] (1 Tim. 3:8) perhaps indicates close contact with church members in home visitations. Others maintain that the requirement of not being greedy (1 Tim. 3:8) indicates that deacons were responsible for collecting and distributing funds” (“Deacons,” *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 398).

Deacons’ Wives or Deaconesses

There is some dispute as to whether verse 11 refers to deacons’ wives or to the separate office of deaconess. Some Bibles translate the word as “wives” and some

translate the word as deaconesses.

“The problem is that the text is ambiguous since Paul uses the Greek term *gunaikes* (“women” or “wives”), which could refer to deaconesses or wives of deacons. The arguments for the [former] position [that Paul is writing about deaconesses] are the following:

“(1) First Timothy 3:11 begins with ‘Likewise’ as does verse 8 and therefore also introduces a new office.

“(2) Since there is no requirement for the bishops’ wives, why should there be one for deacons’ wives?

“(3) The word ‘their,’ although added in some translations, is not found in the Greek. The text simply reads, ‘wives’ or ‘women,’ not ‘their [i.e. deacons’] wives.’

“(4) A serving ministry would not require women to be in authority over men and thus not violate 1 Tim. 2:1. That is why deacons do not have to be ‘able to teach’ as do the overseers since that is an authoritative act.

“Yet, there are good arguments countering the four previously mentioned:

“(1) First Timothy 2:9 also begins with ‘likewise’ but is not a parallel idea (men are to pray ... likewise women are to dress appropriately). Also it would seem awkward for Paul to address deacons in vv. 8-10, interrupt himself to introduce the office of deaconess, and then go back to speaking about deacons in vv. 12-13.

“(2) It is possible that the wives of deacons are mentioned but not the wives of bishops if the former participated in their husband’ ministry (such as ministering to widows). Furthermore, there are other requirements of deacons that are not made of overseers.

“(3) The possessive pronoun ‘their’ is not required to make the passage refer to the wives of deacons in the present context. If Paul had meant to speak of the office of deaconess, he would have used the word ‘deaconess’ rather than using the word often translated as ‘wives.’

“(4) Even if deacons do not teach, they still exercise authority, which would be inappropriate for women” (*Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, p. 399).

The *Amplified Bible* mentions in its footnote to 1 Tim. 3:11 that the Greek word could refer to deacons’ wives, deaconesses OR BOTH. Rather than taking sides in the dispute, I like the idea that verse 11 could be describing BOTH wives of deacons and deaconesses.

(To be continued!)

Know Your Bible Answers

1) Fulfilled prophecy. 2) Michael. 3) Jordan. 4) Twelve. 5) A double portion of God’s spirit.

Fun Fact

of creation, history, holidays & the Bible



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS
Strawberries are the only fruit that have seeds on the outside.

Witerature

Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.

Being George Washington by Glenn Beck, Threshold Editions, 2011, p. 149.

Redeem the Time

“Pulitzer Prize-winning Washington biographer Ron Chernow relates that the young [George] Washington was obsessed with precision and time. ‘Washington,’ Chernow writes, ‘aspired to stand at the center of an orderly clockwork universe.’

“Washington had placed a sundial at a center spot on his estate lawn. A French businessman friend once said that ‘no one ever appreciated better than George Washington the value of time and the art of making use of it.’”

Eccles. 12:1, Eph. 5:15-16, Col. 4:5

Quotable Quotes

“People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don’t believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want and if they can’t find them, make them.”

—George Bernard Shaw

Memory Scripture

“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the difficult days come, and the years draw near when you say, ‘I have no pleasure in them.’” —Eccles. 12:1

Love

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and might were a tree, the FRUIT of that tree—the *outcome* of that way of life—is loving your neighbor as yourself (Old Testament Survey lecture by Dr. Charles Dorothy, Ambassador College, Pasadena, April 30, 1976).

Consider these examples of loving or serving one's neighbor by obeying God:

1. Justice is served. Some consider God's instruction in Deut. 19:21 to be barbaric: "Your eye shall not pity; but life shall be for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." In reality, this was *ethical* treatment. "What it was saying, in effect was, 'You shall take no more than an eye for an eye,' curtailing the practice of killing the offender who dared to gouge out an eye or knock out a tooth" (Cole, p. 70). Obeying God's instructions showed love to neighbor by treating him justly.

2. Sabbath rest for all. When Israel obeyed God's command to rest on the Sabbath, love was shown to neighbor as well. Servants, slaves and beasts of burden were all given rest on the seventh day.

3. Freedom on Year of Jubilee. When Israel obeyed God by keeping a "Year of Jubilee," slaves were freed and debts were forgiven. Love for God translated into loving actions toward fellow humans (Cole, p. 75).

Israel was one big family, descended from Abraham. They were to treat each other as blood brothers should. They didn't have to like each other; but they set their wills to treat each other properly.

"What we are forbidden to do is act as though our individual tastes were divine decrees, permitting us to mistreat or misuse those unfortunate enough to lie beyond the warming rays of our affection and approval. The Bible asks simply that all men be viewed as children of God and therefore worthy of respect and even reverence. This is the first and most important way in which to love God—to emulate him in loving his children, even as he loves them, by giving to them what belongs to them" (Cole, p. 69).

"We have seen, then, that the Old Testament knows all shades of human love. Man's love for God is not a mystic rapture ... but rather a reverent obedience which manifests itself in love for one's neighbor. And that love is a steady and sober concern for the welfare of another ... rather than a precarious and ephemeral sentiment. ... Yet, the tenderer feelings of the more intimate relationships of life are not lacking, either" (Cole, pp. 87-88).

(To be continued!)

END-TIME EVENTS

RECENT WORLD EVENTS & THEIR PROPHETIC SIGNIFICANCE

North Korea Fires Ballistic Missile

"North Korea fired a ballistic missile off its east coast on Wednesday [April 5] a day before President Trump was to host his Chinese counterpart, President Xi Jinping, at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida for their first summit meeting. ...

"But by launching a missile on Wednesday, North Korea apparently sought to pull attention to its growing missile and nuclear weapons threats a day before the United States-China summit meeting. To Mr. Trump, the test is a new reminder that North Korea's leader, Kim Jong-un, is determined to develop a long-range missile that can one day carry a nuclear warhead across the Pacific" ("North Korea Fires Ballistic Missile a Day Before U.S.-China Summit" by Choe Sang-Hun, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, April 4, 2017, pp. 1-2).

North Korea could be one of the "kings from the east" who attack the "king of the North" (A European union) as he occupies the Holy Land at the end time (Dan. 11:40-45, Rev. 16:12-16).

Before the month was out, "President Trump summoned all 100 members of the Senate for a briefing by his war cabinet on the mounting tensions with North Korea. An American submarine loaded with Tomahawk missiles surfaced in a port in South Korea. Gas stations in the North shut down amid rumors that the government was stockpiling fuel.

"Americans could be forgiven for thinking that war is about to break out. But it is not.

"The drumbeat of bellicose threats and military muscle-flexing on both sides overstates the danger of a clash between the United States and North Korea, senior Trump administration officials and experts who have followed the Korean crisis for decades said" ("The Drumbeats Don't Add Up to Imminent War With North Korea" by Mark Lander, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, April 26, 2017, p. 1).

When asked about the sign of his coming and the end of the age, Christ said, in part, "And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to

pass, but the end is not yet" (Ma0t. 24:3, 6). This could be some of the "rumors of war" of which Christ spoke.

China Launches Own Aircraft Carrier

"China's first domestically built aircraft carrier slipped into the sea for the first time on Wednesday [April 26] after days of publicity celebrating the impending launch as a milestone in President Xi Jinping's drive to extend China's military reach far beyond its shores. ...

"The Chinese Navy is at the heart of Mr. Xi's military plans. In addition to aircraft carriers, China has been building other vessels that could support and shield them on missions, said Andrew S. Erickson, a professor at the United States Naval War College and editor of a new book on Chinese naval shipbuilding" ("China, Sending a Signal, Launches a Home-Built Aircraft Carrier" by Chris Buckley, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, April 25, 2017, pp. 1, 3).

China could join North Korea to be two of the "kings from the east" who attack the "king of the North" as he occupies the Holy Land at the end time (Dan. 11:40-45, Rev. 16:12-16).

Yellow Fever in Brazil

"As fears spread in Brazil over the resurgence of yellow fever, health officials are issuing a warning: Stop killing the monkeys.

"Infectious disease specialists say people are taking aim at the wrong target. Mosquitoes, not monkeys, are actually the vector for the virus, and the monkeys are dying from yellow fever in much higher numbers than people in Brazil. Those who kill the monkeys are making matters worse by depleting primate populations that serve as beacons for where yellow fever is spreading, epidemiologists said" ("Brazil Yellow Fever Outbreak Spawns Alert: Stop Killing the Monkeys" by Simon Romero, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, May 2, 2017, p. 1).

Pestilences are a sign we in the "beginning of sorrows" leading up to the return of Christ (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).