

What Kind of Passengers Are We?

We are all passengers on Spaceship Earth. What are we doing with the time we have left?

By Gregory Dullum

Recently I watched the science fiction movie *Passengers* starring Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt, which is now available on DVD and blu-ray.

The film tells the story of the space ship *Avalon* which is transporting 5,000 settlers and a crew of 253 to a colony on the planet Homestead II. This planet is so far from earth that it takes 120 years to get there. Everyone is put into suspended animation in hibernation pods as the ship flies on autopilot. Four months before arrival, the ship is set to automatically wake up the crew and passengers so they can prepare for their lives in their new home. They have not aged during their cryogenic sleep, but once they wake up, they start aging again.

A meteor makes it through the ship's protective force field and damages the ship after only 30 years of space flight. As a result of the damage, one of the passengers, Jim Preston (Pratt) is awakened.

When he realizes he has 90 years to go before any other passengers will be awakened, he tries to make his lonely life bearable. His only companion is an android bartender named Arthur.

Jim nearly goes crazy living alone for a year, making the biblical point that it is not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18).

Like Solomon in the book of Ecclesiastes, he tries many different things to give his life meaning, but finds it all futile (Eccles. 1:2, 2:1, 10-11). His life seems so pointless that he considers sucking himself unprotected into space in a suicide (v. 17).

Among the pods of sleeping passengers, Jim discovers Aurora Lane and is attracted to her. He reads all he can about Aurora in the passenger manifest.

Jim wants to awaken Aurora so he can have a companion. He knows that if he does, he is condemning her to a lonely life with him on a spaceship.



NAPS photo

The recent video release *Passengers* offers food for thought to Christians who are in a similar situation.

They will not live long enough to see the others awaken and they will not make it alive to Homestead II. Her plans for her future will be crushed.

Jim eventually gives in to his desires and awakens Aurora. It takes some time for Aurora to return Jim's affection but as time passes, their relationship grows.

They discover that their problems are not over. The meteor damage that caused Jim to be awakened was only the start of mechanical problems; conditions on board the ship keep worsening. Eventually Jim and Aurora realize if they don't risk their lives to fix the damage, no one will survive. More than 5,000 lives will be lost.

While watching the movie, I was reminded of our situation as Christians. We, too, are passengers on a great spaceship (our spaceship is called planet Earth) and there is no way we will make it alive into God's kingdom. "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 15:50). We must die

and/or be changed to reach the kingdom—our Homestead II (vv. 51-53).

Jim and Aurora had only a limited number of years on board that space ship until they died without ever reaching Homestead II. We have only a limited number of years in this life until we die (or are changed at Christ's coming). Jim and Aurora struggled with *what to do with their lives* on that spaceship.

We, too, must ask ourselves, *what are we going to do with our lives?* We have only so many years left until we die or until the kingdom comes. What do we hope to accomplish with what's left of our lives? Will we use what's left of our lives to the best advantage?

We can waste our lives seeking after fame, fortune or earthly pleasures, as did Solomon, or we can put our time as passengers to good use. Moses wrote about how life is only 70-80 years long and added, "So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Ps. 90:10, 12). Wisdom begins with fearing (obeying) God (Ps. 111:10). The apostle Paul tells us, "See that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16). Let's put our remaining years to good use!

Jim and Aurora were willing to risk their lives to save their fellow passengers (and themselves). How much are we willing to risk of our time and money to save our fellow passengers on this earth (John 15:13, Rom. 12:1)?

Had they not been awakened before the other passengers and crew, the meteor damage would have killed everyone on board the *Avalon*. Had we (the elect) not been called by God prior to the rest of the world, everyone on spaceship Earth would die (Mat. 24:22).

Our Christians lives have some struggles similar to those of Jim and Aurora. Jim and Aurora set a good example as passengers. What kind of passengers are we?

Romantic Love Has Ups & Downs

There are many examples in the Old Testament that can teach us about romantic love.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 7

Last month we defined the Hebrew word for love, *aheb*, as best we could. That one word is used to describe many different kinds of love, just the English word, “love” has 22 dictionary definitions. The meaning of the word *aheb* must be gathered from its context.

We will now look at examples of the word *aheb* being used in the Old Testament to express a romantic, sexual love.

Romantic Love in Old Testament

There are many examples of romantic love in the Old Testament. We have already discussed the love between Adam and Eve, which can be inferred, even though the word *aheb* is not used.

Now, let’s look at 10 other examples of romantic love where *aheb* is the verb.

1. Isaac and Rebekah

Isaac, who was 37 years old, was devastated by his mother’s death. He really missed Sarah! She was the *only woman* in his life for 37 years and suddenly she was GONE!

Isaac got over his feeling of loss only after he married Rebekah! He was able to transfer his love for his mother to his new bride. His passionate affection and concern for Rebekah gave Isaac a new outlet for his love. When he got his mind off himself and focused on giving himself to Rebekah, he found comfort for the first time since his mother’s death.

“Then Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent; and he took Rebekah and she became his wife, and he loved her. So Isaac was comforted after his mother’s death” (Gen. 24:67).

2. Jacob and Rachel

Romantic love is a POWERFUL FORCE. It has driven men to do GREAT deeds. We have the example of Jacob’s love for Rachel. He loved her so much that he was willing to serve her father seven years in order to win her hand in marriage.

“Now Jacob loved Rachel; and he said, ‘I will serve you seven years for Rachel your younger daughter’ ” (Gen. 29:18).

Being with someone you DON’T LIKE or doing something you DON’T ENJOY makes time seem to *stand still*. On the other hand, when you are with the one you love

or are doing something you love, time flies. *Romantic love makes time fly.*

Jacob loved Rachel so much that those seven years flew by! “So Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and they seemed but a few days to him because of the love he had for her” (v. 20).

Rachel’s father, Laban, tricked Jacob and gave him Rachel’s older sister, Leah, as a wife instead of Rachel. Jacob did not discover the switch until the next morning.

Although married to Leah, Jacob still had a strong love for Rachel. Unwilling to give up his true love, he took Rachel as a second wife and agreed to work another seven years for Laban (vv. 21-28).

Romantic love can be parceled out in doses. Romantic feelings for another can come and go. Jacob did NOT love his two wives *equally*. “Then Jacob also went in to Rachel, and he also loved Rachel more than Leah. And he served with Laban still another seven years” (v. 30). The Bible doesn’t say Jacob *hated* Leah or *had no feelings* toward her; it infers that Jacob had *some* small amount of love for Leah when it says he loved Rachel “MORE.”

These first two examples teach us that romantic love is based partly upon appearance. There is something about the other person that appeals to us. We are attracted to him or her like a magnet. Rebekah was described as “a young woman” who “was very beautiful to behold, a virgin” (Gen. 24:16). Rachel “was beautiful of form and appearance” (Gen. 29:17).

3. Shechem and Dinah

Shechem was a Hivite who found Dinah, daughter of Jacob, very attractive. He did not control his romantic and sexual urges. He fornicated with her after seeing her: “And when Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the country, saw her, he took her and lay with her, and violated her. His soul was strongly attracted to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the young woman and spoke kindly to the young woman. So Shechem spoke to his father Hamor, saying, ‘Get me this young woman as a wife’ ” (Gen. 34:2-4).

Shechem’s fornication with Dinah was not rape. Rape is a violent crime against women which is committed, not as an act of LOVE but as an act of POWER. Rapists do NOT *love* their victims.

What Shechem did was wrong. The

Bible says, “It was wrong for him to have sexual relations with Jacob’s daughter; a thing like this should not be done” (Gen. 34:7 *New Century Version*). But Shechem did this wrong *because* he “fell in love” with Dinah (v. 3, *NCV*).

Overpowered by his romantic feelings, Shechem stole Dinah’s virginity. He allowed his feeling of romantic, sexual love to drive him to do something he should not have done. He “took her and forced her to have sexual relations with him” (v. 2, *NCV*).

Again, this was NOT rape. It was NOT an act of violence against a woman, but an act of uncontrolled romantic, sexual feelings. Shechem “spoke kindly to her” (v. 3, *NCV*). Later, he was willing to suffer the pain of circumcision, and ordered it done to all his men so he might acquire Dinah as his wife (vv. 22, 24). Shechem’s romantic feelings for Dinah resulted in the death of himself and his male companions (v. 25).

Romantic, sexual love can get one in trouble if these feelings are NOT CONTROLLED and are not used properly *within a marriage relationship*, as intended.

4. Samson and His Wives

Samson found his first wife among the Philistines. He didn’t care about her character, her religion or her upbringing. His sole concern was that he found her appearance pleasing: “And Samson said to his father, ‘Get her for me, for she pleases me well’ ” (Judges 14:3). This de-

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Editor

Gregory Dullum

Circulation Managers:

Craig Evans • Raleigh Collins

Gregory Dullum

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NAPS photo

Romantic love is fickle and doesn't always last. It is based upon feelings of attraction instead of upon a committed mind-set that looks out for the welfare of each other.

scribes a romantic, sexual love.

Samson's Philistine wife did not love him with a *committed love* that put him FIRST in her life. Her loyalty lay with her people, NOT with her new husband. She was enticed by other Philistines to plot against Samson (vv. 15-17).

When his wife gave away his secret, Samson *didn't blame her*. He said to those men who enticed her to divulge the answer to his riddle, "If you had not plowed with my heifer, you would not have solved my riddle" (v. 18). It was WRONG for them to invade the relationship between Samson and his wife.

Samson left in anger and he did not take his wife with him, so she was given to his best man. The feeling Samson had, that "she pleases me well," seems to have cooled off or Samson would NOT have left his wife behind. We are reminded that romantic, sexual love *may not last forever*.

Samson's feelings for his wife were not *totally* quenched. He returned "after a while" to be with her again. Her father did not allow him to see her, because she was now the wife of another man (Judges

15: 1).

Samson later "loved" Delilah (Judges 16:4). He married this woman but she, like his first wife, had a stronger loyalty to the Philistines than to her husband. She accused Samson of not loving her when he did not tell her the source of his great strength (v. 15). When Samson finally gave in to her daily pestering, she betrayed him, and it cost him his life (vv. 16-30).

Samson had romantic attractions to women he found *appealing*. It was based upon *feelings of the heart*. It was NOT a *committed* love of total

outgoing concern; and it was NOT a love based upon an examination of character.

5. Michal and David

There was a time when King Saul wanted to eliminate the young David as a threat to his throne. He thought by giving David one of his daughters in marriage, David would valiantly fight the Philistines and would eventually be killed by them (1 Sam. 18: 17-21).

The Bible tells us, "Now Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David" (v. 20). This was a *romantic*, passionate love based upon *feelings*. And it may have been more—she was willing to risk her life for David. The Bible indicates that *David did not love her with the same amount of passion*. David was willing to kill 100 Philistines to win Michal's hand in marriage but once they were husband and wife, we don't read that "David loved Michal" or "they loved each other." Instead, we see repeated the statement, "Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him [David]" (v. 28).

Michal warned David of her father's plot to kill him and she let David down through a window so he could escape. She took a household idol and laid it in a bed, covering it with a goat-hair blanket and clothes. To fool David's pursuers, Michal lied, saying David was sick in bed. When her plot was discovered, she lied again, saying David made her do this on threat of death (vv. 11-17).

David fled without Michal and later married three other women. Saul then took Michal and gave her to another man as wife (1 Sam. 25:42-44). At this point we may wonder, did David *EVER love*

Michal or did he consider this just a *political marriage* of convenience? And did Michal *ever stop loving David*?

After Saul's death, David wanted Michal back! He sent a message to Saul's son, Ishbosheth, saying, "Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred foreskins of the Philistines." Ishbosheth sent and took Michal from her current husband, who did not want to give her up! The husband "went along with her to Bahurim, weeping behind her." When General Abner said to him, "Go, return!" the husband gave up and went home. The husband felt a romantic attraction for his wife but was *unwilling* to give *his life* for her.

What became of the love Michal had for David? Had it waned? Had the fires of romance burned out?

Some time later, David was made king over all Israel, the Philistines were defeated, and the ark of the LORD was returned to Jerusalem. "And as the ark of the LORD came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the LORD; and she despised him in her heart" (2 Sam. 6:16).

Michal's romantic love had indeed diminished. Her whole attitude had changed. Her love was not a *committed* love for David "no matter what." It was *conditional*. When the conditions changed—when David acted in a way she thought was inappropriate—her LOVE CEASED.

Michal accused David of showing off before other maidens. David rebutted her, saying he was celebrating before the LORD and that the maidens held him in higher honor than she. This marital discord led to Michal having no children by David (vv. 20-23).

We see that romantic, sexual love is a *powerful force*. It can lead one to do extraordinary feats—killing 100 Philistines for their foreskins or deceiving King Saul and helping David escape. But romantic love *may not last forever*! If the fires of romance are not kept stoked, the flames will die! This kind of love *does not always* last FOREVER.

6. Amnon and Tamar

We see another example of romantic love in the story of Amnon and Tamar, two of King David's children. This example of romantic love is *SOLELY* based upon *sexual attraction* and *physical appeal*. There is no consideration for what is right or wrong. This type of love can have such a strong effect over a person's emotions that it can literally make one *SICK*! In

LOVE

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Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenninger

1. What is the definition of sin?
2. Who was Abraham's father?
3. What did David do that caused God to give him three choices of punishment?
4. Who was Joseph's firstborn?

(Answers on page 5)

DEACONS: HELPERS IN THE CHURCH

Ignatius is helped by deacons and commands that they be respected in the churches.

By Gregory Dullum
Part 3

Ignatius was one of three pupils of the Apostle John (the others were Papias and Polycarp). Following John's release from Patmos A.D. 95, Ignatius probably received final training before being appointed bishop of Syrian Antioch ("Ignatius, Saint, *World Book Encyclopedia*, 1956, vol. 9, p. 3642).

Ignatius Arrested

Ignatius, a pupil of John, was exceedingly zealous in his mission and ministry (*Foxe's Book of Martyrs* by Marie Gentert King, ed., 1978, p. 16).

About A.D. 110 Ignatius was arrested by Roman authorities at Syrian Antioch, the city that once served as Paul's headquarters. He was sent under military guard to Rome where he was to be exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheater (*New Testament History* by F. F. Bruce, 1972, p. 428; *The History of Europe and the Church* by Keith W. Stump, p. 7). On his way to Rome Ignatius wrote seven epistles. He mentioned deacons in some of his writings—usually mentioning their names—and he believed they were an important part of establishing church unity.

The focus of Ignatius' writings was church unity, brought about by obedience to the bishop, presbyters and deacons in each local church. "The local church is not an amorphous collection of believers, but an organized body under a properly constituted ministry of bishop, presbyters and deacons. Without a regular ministry such as this the community has no claim to be called a church. ... None the less the fact remains that the only form of regular ministry known to Ignatius is the ministry organized in the three-fold ranks of bishop, presbyters and deacons" (*The Historic Church* by J. C. V. Durell, 1969, p. 31).

Ephesian Deacons Visit

While under guard and on his way to Rome, Ignatius spent some time in Smyrna, an Asian city just a few miles inland from the Aegean Sea. There are numerous references to "leaven" and "unleavened" in Ignatius' epistles, which indicate this delay at Smyrna may have been caused by winter and the spring feasts were not far away. It is possible that the soldiers awaited spring and the opening of the sailing routes.

Meanwhile, 30 miles to the southeast, there was a problem with the church at

Ephesus having respect for Onesimus, its bishop. Perhaps the church at Ephesus had difficulties getting used to their new pastor after the death of the Apostle John.

When the church at Ephesus learned that Ignatius was just 30 miles away in Smyrna, they sent Onesimus and four deacons—Burrhus, Crocus, Euclus and Fronto—to him with their greetings. Ignatius described this meeting in his epistle to the Ephesians:

"For hearing that I came bound from Syria for the common name and hope, trusting through your prayers to fight with beasts at Rome; so that by suffering I may become indeed the disciple of him who gave himself to God, an offering and sacrifice for us; (ye hastened to see me). I received, therefore, in the name of God, your whole multitude in Onesimus, who, ...according to the flesh is your bishop; whom I beseech you, by Jesus Christ, to love; and that you should all strive to be like him. And blessed be God, who has granted unto you, who are so worthy of him, to enjoy such an excellent bishop" (Eph. 1:4-5).

In the next two verses, Ignatius mentions the deacons who came with Onesimus; one he asks to stay longer and another refreshes him: "For what concerns my fellow servant Burrhus, and your most blessed deacon in things pertaining to God: I entreat you that he may tarry longer, both for yours and your bishop's honour. And Crocus ... has in all things refreshed me, as the father of our Lord Jesus Christ shall refresh him; together with Onesimus, and Burrhus, and Euclus, and Fronto, in whom I have, as to your charity, seen all of you ..."

Magnesian Deacons Visit

About 10 miles inland from Ephesus lay the city of Magnesia. There was a Church of God in this city, with a bishop named Damas, two teachers and a deacon.

Damas was a young man and, like Timothy, had a difficult time gaining the respect of his congregation. When Damas learned that Ignatius was a prisoner on his way to Rome and was wintering over in Smyrna, about 35 miles to the north, he and his fellow ministers and deacon journeyed to see Ignatius.

Ignatius wrote the following in his letter to the Magnesians:

"Seeing then I have been judged worthy to see you, by Damas, your most excellent bishop; and by your very worthy

presbyters, Bassus and Apollonius; and by my fellow-servant Sotio, the deacon; in whom I rejoice, forasmuch as he is subject unto his bishop as to the grace of God, and to the prebytery as to the law of Christ; I determined to write unto you" (Magnesians 1:4-5).

Note that Ignatius referred to the deacon as his "fellow-servant" and praised him for submitting to the elders over him.

Ignatius: Submit to Deacons

Twenty miles east of Magnesia was the city of Tralles. The Church of God in that community was administered by Bishop Polybius. Polybius traveled 30 miles to visit Ignatius in Smyrna. Ignatius then wrote a short letter to the Church of God at Tralles, telling the brethren to be subject to the bishop, and then added:

"The deacons also, as being the ministers of the mysteries of Jesus Christ, must by all means please ye. For they are not the ministers of meat and drink, but of the church of God. Wherefore they must avoid all offences, as they would do fire. In like manner let us reverence the deacons as Jesus Christ; and the bishop as the Father; and the presbyters as the Sanhedrin of God, and the college of the Apostles. Without these there is no church" (Trallians 1:7-9).

Ignatius Writes to Philadelphians

After spending several months in Smyrna, the Roman soldiers moved Ignatius and other prisoners onward to Rome. They sailed north from Smyrna 110 miles up the coast of Asia to the port city of Troas. While in Troas (where Paul once had a vision before spreading the Gospel into Europe), Ignatius wrote to the Church of God in Philadelphia, where he again mentioned deacons:

"Ignatius, who is called Theophorus, to the church of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, which is at Philadelphia in Asia ... which also I salute ... especially if they are at unity with the bishop, and presbyters who are with him, and the deacons appointed according to the mind of Jesus Christ; whom he has settled according to his own will in all firmness by his holy spirit" (Ephesians 1:1).

Notice that Jesus Christ appoints deacons—it is his decision.

DEACONS

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Love

Continued from Page 3

English, we have the term “lovesick” to describe this.

“Now after this it was so that Absalom the son of David had a lovely sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became sick; for she was a virgin. And it was improper for Amnon to do anything to her” (2 Sam. 13:1-2).

There is a FORBIDDEN love! A romantic attraction can exist between two people who should NOT be involved romantically. God expects us to CONTROL our sexual or romantic appetites and *not act upon every impulse*. Incest, adultery and fornication are sins that can be initiated by a form of love (romantic, sexual attraction), but these sins are WRONG ACTIONS.

Notice how *fickle* this romantic kind of love is! It’s not a committed dedication that seeks the well-being of others! It can *change* to HATE! After Amnon forced Tamar to have sex with him, “Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her” (v. 15).

7. Solomon and His Wives

David’s son, Solomon, replaced him on the throne. Solomon’s downfall was his love for foreign women. He had been commanded by God NOT to intermarry with the women of the land but he did not control his appetite for romantic, sexual love.

Solomon’s love for his 700 wives and 300 concubines could NOT have been a *committed* relationship that *sought the best* for those women. Instead, we see someone unable to tame his sexual appetite. When he looked upon a beautiful woman, he took her as his wife. He undoubtedly loved her with passion until he spotted the next beautiful woman.

The Bible does not say Solomon loved any one wife over another; or that he loved some and hated others. It says, “But King Solomon loved many foreign women” (1 Kings 11:1) and adds, “Solomon clung to these in love.”

Solomon’s wives were able to *influence* him. Because he loved them, they were able to turn his heart after their gods. Solomon’s heart did not remain loyal to God. His *love for women* OVERPOWERED his *love for God* (v. 4).

8. Instructions to a Young Man

Solomon offered great words of wisdom

when he authored the book of Proverbs.

In chapter 5, he tells his son to focus his romantic, sexual drives upon the one person who deserves this attention: his wife. He should find satisfaction in her love for him. He should not look for this kind of love elsewhere.

“Drink water from your own cistern, and running water out of your own well ... As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured in her love. For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, and be embraced by the arms of a seductress?” (vv. 15, 19-20).

Here we see that romantic, sexual love should be expressed between a husband and wife—not outside of marriage!

9. Love Requires Action

Proper romantic love is a feeling, an emotion that, if not acted upon, does no good for the person being loved. It is possible to keep a romantic attraction concealed and it may never blossom into a relationship. Solomon wrote, “Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed” (Prov. 27:5).

10. Song of Solomon

The lovers in Song of Solomon have a deep love for each other that includes romantic, sexual love. Often in this book, the Hebrew word *dowd* is used instead of *aheb*. *Dowd* is a sexual love that includes kissing and caressing. But *aheb* also is used.

The Shulamite woman says of her lover, “Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—for your love [*dowd*] is better than wine. Because of the fragrance of your good ointments, your name is ointment poured forth; therefore the virgins love [*aheb*] you” (Song 1:3).

The Shulamite woman has the relationship with the beloved man. The virgins DO NOT. Yet, the virgins “love” him. They find him attractive; they see him as romantic. But they are happy for the Shulamite woman and encourage her in her relationship. They tell her, “We will be glad and rejoice in you” (v. 4). They DON’T *act upon their impulses* with improper action as did Amnon with Tamar. The Shulamite recognizes their self-control and praises these women by saying, “Rightly do they love [*aheb*] you” (v. 4).
(To be continued!)

Know Your Bible Answers

- 1) Disobeying God’s laws. 2) Terah.
- 3) He numbered Israel. 4) Manasseh.

Fun Fact

of creation, history, holidays & the Bible



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The first Presidential mansion was located at No.1 Cherry Street, the Franklin House at the corner of Franklin and Cherry Streets in New York City. President Washington occupied it from 1789 until 1790.

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.

Getting Together

“This might be one of [George] Washington’s most important lessons for us today. No one man, no matter how respected or powerful (and there certainly aren’t many of those) can do it all. We all need help. We all have strengths and weaknesses and only by listening to, and working with others can we maximize the positives and minimize the negatives.

“This is one of the reasons I’ve been so obsessed lately with physically getting people together in their communities. We all have a tendency lately ... to rely on email or the Web or cell phones to communicate with each other. But that doesn’t really connect us; it doesn’t let us see each other eye to eye, shake hands, and get to know each other.”

Prov. 11:14, 27:17; Eccles. 4:9-12;
Gal. 6:1-2; Heb. 10:24-25

Quotable Quotes

“Profit is both the result and the reward of doing things right and doing the right thing.”

—David McNally

Memory Scripture

“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.”

—Prov. 27:17

Deacons

Continued from Page 3

In Chapter 3, Ignatius tells the Philadelphians that persecution has stopped in Antioch and recommends that they send a deacon there: "It is at peace; it will become you, as the church of God, to ordain some deacon to go to them thither as the ambassador of God; that he may rejoice with them when they meet together and glorify God's name" (v. 1).

Other churches had already sent ministers and deacons there: "as also the other neighboring churches have sent them, some bishops, some priests and deacons" (v. 2).

Ignatius then mentions two deacons who are helping him on his way to Rome: "As concerning Philo the deacon of Cilicia, a most worthy man, he still ministers unto me in the word of God: together with Rheus of Agathopolis, a singular good person, who has followed me even from Syria, not regarding his life" (v. 4).

This letter was sent to Philadelphia at the hand of Burrhus, the deacon from Ephesus we have already mentioned (v. 6).

Smyrnaeans to Respect Deacons

While in Troas, Ignatius wrote to the church at Smyrna, "See that ye all follow your bishop, as Jesus Christ, the Father; and presbytery, as the Apostles. And reverence the deacons, as the command of God" (Smynaeans 3:1).

Ignatius thanked them for their hospitality toward the deacons he had sent to them: "Ye have done well in that ye have received Philo, and Rheus Agathopolis, who followed me for the word of God, as the deacons of Christ our Lord. Who also gave thanks unto the Lord for you, forasmuch as ye have refreshed them in all things. Nor shall anything that you have done be lost to you" (Ch. 3:11-12).

Ignatius Is Martyred

Shortly after completing an epistle to Polycarp, Ignatius and the other prisoners were loaded onto a ship. They sailed from Troas to Neapolis, the same route Paul had taken A.D. 50 (Acts 16:11). From there they traveled overland to Rome.

Ignatius, the former pupil of the Apostle John, died when lions devoured him in the Roman arena A.D. 110 (Stump, p. 7).

His writings have survived (if indeed these are authentic writings) and they reveal a glimpse at the work performed by deacons in the early second century.

(The quotes from Ignatius' epistles are taken from the book, *The Lost Books of the Bible*, 1979, pp. 166-192.)

(To be continued!)



'Brexit' Endangers London's Banker Status

"In March, Prime Minister Theresa May set in motion Britain's pending divorce from the European Union, starting talks with Europe to resolve future dealings across the English Channel. ...

"It's the British who will lose the most,' [newly elected French President] Mr. [Emmanuel] Macron said in a post-election interview. ... 'The British are making a serious mistake over the long term.'

"If a rupture across the channel results, global banks like Citi stand to feel significant consequences.

"Somewhere between one-fifth and one-third of London's financial undertakings now involve clients based in Europe. ...

"Brexit, as it is known, has jeopardized London's status as banker to the planet" ("Brexit' Imperils London's Claim as Banker to the Planet" by Peter S. Goodman, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, May 11, 2017, pp. 1-3).

The British people are descended from Joseph, a tribe of Israel. Because of its national sins, Britain will lose its strong financial status (Deut. 28:1-2, 12-13; 15-20, 43-44). Its sins will eventually lead to national captivity (vv. 63-64).

Ebola Outbreak Declared

"An Ebola outbreak has been declared in northern Democratic Republic of Congo and has killed at least three people in the past three weeks, the World Health Organization said on Friday [May 12]" ("Ebola outbreak Is declared in Congo, With at Least 3 Dead" by Kimiko de Freytas-Tamura, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, May 12, 2017, p. 1).

"Pestilences" are a sign that we are nearing the end time (Mat. 24:3, 7-8).

Eight Die in Shootings

"A man in Mississippi killed eight people, including a police officer, in a shooting spree that spanned three locations on Saturday and Sunday [May 27-28], the local authorities said. ...

"In an interview on Sunday, ... Eugene Edwards of the New Zion Union M.B. Church in Bogue Chitto said he had known Mr. [Willie] Godbolt [the shooter] for 19 years.

"He had a very bad temper,' he said. 'If you didn't think like he thought, he'd get upset with you.'

"Several of the victims had connections to the church" ("Eight Die, Including Police Officer, in Mississippi Shootings" by Daniel Victor, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, May 28, 2017, pp. 1-2).

The last days are prophesied to be a lawless, perilous time when love grows cold (Mat. 24:3, 10, 12, 2 Tim. 3:1-3).

Rift Coming Between U.S. and Europe

"In a geopolitical whirl this week, the new American president had barely left Europe ... before [German] Chancellor Angela Merkel, the Continent's No. 1 leader, suggested that Mr. Trump's America was no longer a reliably close ally" ("China Sees an Opening in Rift Between Trump and Germany" by Alison Smale and Jane Perlez, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, May 31, 2017, p. 1).

Since Germany is descended from Assyria and the U.S. is descended from Joseph, a tribe of Israel, God may use a Germany to punish a sinful American nation (Isa. 10:5-7). National captivity is in America's future (Deut. 28:33-41, 47-50, 64-68).

N. Korea Fires Missiles

"North Korea fired several cruise missiles from its east coast on Thursday [June 8], the South Korean military said. ... It was the 10th time this year that North Korea tested missiles" ("North Korea Fires More Missiles as Seoul Puts Off U.S. Defense System" by Motoyo Rich, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, June 7, 2017, p. 1).

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).