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Yahweh tells us:

**“Though your sins be as scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow.”**

YAIY Beacon



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION

STATEMENT



The Old Covenant 3 (The Blood Covenant)

Some think there are exactly two covenants - the Old and the New Covenants. But there are more.

by Elder David Brett

Our Mission and purpose is to reach people around the world with the message of the revealed personal Names of Yahweh and His Son Yahshua the Messiah, as well as teaching the salvation truths that have been neglected for centuries.

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He Gives More Grace 11

Whom does Yahweh give grace to? What is meant by the word "grace"?

by Elder John Fisher

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Do We Know The Tribulation Witnesses? 17

Scripture tells us that there are to be two witnesses, but who are they?

by Elder Ralph Henrie (deceased)

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QUESTION & ANSWER 21

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Revealing The Truth TV Schedule 23

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The Old Covenant

(The Blood Covenant)

When speaking of covenants, we are typically talking about agreements between two parties. We'll start out looking at a couple of covenants agreed upon with blood, between Yahweh and man. We'll also look at a few other covenants.

Eventually we'll want to answer the question of what the Old Covenant is. What was referred to in the New Covenant times as the Old Covenant? Without question, we know it is a covenant agreed upon and signed in blood.

Abram/Abraham

Let's rewind a bit and go back to a man we call Abraham. Abraham was an obedient and faithful individual that Yahweh called out of the land he was living in to enter into another land. He was called out of Ur of the Chaldees.

In many ways we're just like him, being called out of pagan society and on a journey to the Promised Land. The city of Ur was also called the "moon city" according to the Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim. He says:

"...the bricks still found there bear the very name of Hur on them. Now this word points to Hurki, the ancient moon-god, and Ur of the Chaldees was the great 'Moon-city,' the very centre of the Chaldean moon-worship!" Bible History: Old Testament, by Alfred Edersheim.

Here is what Yahweh spoke to Abraham (originally Abram) in Genesis 15:18 NASB,

On that day Yahweh made a covenant with Abram, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, from the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates."

Research shows that "On that day" points to the 14th of Abib. In other words, it was the day of Passover when Yahshua was killed in the New Testament, under the New Covenant promise of eternal life and heirs to everything as children of Yahweh.

This covenant was made with Abraham, as an individual, but notice that the descendants are included in the promised heirs of physical land and protection, etc., but not eternal life as Spirit beings. Rather, temporary lives as physical beings with a future resurrection and judgment at that time.

The land being spoken of is reaching from the Euphrates to the river of Egypt. Essentially, from Babylon to Egypt.

In this particular chapter, you have what's called the cutting of the covenant. This covenant was ratified or agreed upon with blood, just like in the New Covenant agreement (Yahshua's blood being shed for us).

Yahweh made an oath to bless Abraham, but Abraham faithfully obeyed first before Yahweh made this agreement with him. His name was Abram, and was changed to Abraham because he was blessed and promised by oath to be an exalted father of a multitude, rather than just an exalted father. This is what the name Abram originally meant.

You and Your Seed

This is My covenant which you guard between Me and you, and your seed after you: every male child among you is to be circumcised. "And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall become a sign of the covenant between Me and you," Genesis 17:10–11 TS.

Is this a separate covenant or part of the Old Covenant? As we go through these, we'll find that they are in some ways separate, but are also in some ways connected.

It's like going back into Genesis and looking at the 7th day Sabbath. Everything we know about the Sabbath is not just found in the book of Genesis. I think we'll find that the same thing is true with the Old Covenant, or more accurately, the First Agreement.

Everlasting

And a son of eight days is circumcised by you, every male child in your generations, he who is born in your house or bought with silver from any foreigner who is not of your seed. He who is born in your house, and he who is bought with your silver, has to be circumcised. So shall My covenant be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And an uncircumcised male child, who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, his life shall be cut off from his people—he has broken My covenant, Genesis 17:12–14 TS.

Very serious. It's said here to be an everlasting covenant. Any male who is not circumcised will be cut off. The uncircumcised will not be considered part of Israel, the covenant, nor receive of the Promised Land.

Some believe that this is a requirement in the New Covenant, since it's a restoring covenant with the people being grafted back in, after being divorced by Yahweh for previous transgressions. Cir-

cumcision is, however, in the spiritual sense, only of the heart. Even women have their hearts circumcised in the New Covenant.

While physical circumcision is a sign or token of the blood agreement in the old, the blood of Messiah and the insertion of the Holy Spirit within our heart is the sealing of the covenant for us in the New Agreement.

As with Abraham, to receive the agreement, we have to believe and be obedient to Yahweh.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Messiah Yahshua. And if you belong to Messiah, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise, Galatians 3:28–29 NASB.

Interesting that it says, "neither male nor female," but are all one in Messiah in the New Covenant. Interesting also, that when we become grafted into Israel, through the Messiah, we become children of Israel and therefore heirs of the promises.

It's important that we understand that the promises are through Isaac, who had Jacob, who was renamed Israel, and had 12 sons, who were the 12 tribes of Israel, of which Judah is just one tribe, but an important one, since Messiah came through the line of Judah.

This blood covenant starts with Abraham, but goes through Isaac and eventually through David to the Messiah, ending up with us today.

The promise, as we'll see, is for the children of Israel to become as the sands of the sea and the stars of the heavens. It's an allusion to both a physical and spiritual people coming from the loins of Abraham. Those in Messiah will, no doubt, be the spiritual stars of heaven and they will inherit everything.

Back to Genesis

Going back again into Genesis:

As for Me, this is My covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. I will establish My covenant as an everlasting covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your Elohim and the Elohim of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their Elohim, Genesis 17:4–8 NIV.

In the coming Kingdom of Yahweh, there not only will be spiritual people, but also a physical people. The First and the Second Covenants appear to be in effect during the 1000 year reign on earth, according to the book of Ezekiel chapters 40 and on. A physical people learning, never having accepted the Messiah or the New Covenant correctly, which entails more than just believing. We also know that patriarchs of old will be raised up, at least physically, to be in this Kingdom. The New Covenant people will be there as well, but as Spirit beings ruling with Yahshua.

Which law was the Apostle Paul talking about in Galatians 3:15–17 (NASB)?

Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Messiah. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a cove-

nant previously ratified by Yahweh, so as to nullify the promise.

What law came after 430 years? Is it the 10 Commandments and other laws and statutes? How did the Covenant with Abraham become approved and solidified? With blood, right? What laws have to do with the Exodus?

Passover sacrifice is the first one they have to have. They even had to put the blood on the door posts and lintel.

Again, Paul explains,

For if by law be the inheritance, it is no more by promise, but to Abraham through promise did Yahweh grant it. Why, then, the law? On account of the transgressions it was added, till the seed might come to which the promise hath been made, having been set in order through messengers in the hand of a mediator, Galatians 3:18–19 YLT.

Some translations say “angels,” but the word literally means “messengers.” What law was added because of transgressions? Wasn’t it the sacrificial laws? Death due to sin, blood or life had to be taken. This is just as we’ve already seen, like the Passover sacrifice.

If we consider the word “angel,” as messenger, what messengers would there be in the hand of a mediator? Are we talking about the priestly order of the Levites with a high priest officiating? In context, it may be. Could it be referring to Moses, the 70 elders along with a few others at Mount Sinai and the giving of the commandments there?

Moses wrote down all the words of Yahweh. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to Yahweh. Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of

the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, “All that Yahweh has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient.” So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh has made with you in accordance with all these words.” Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, Exodus 24:4–9 NASB.

This is an agreement; it is agreed upon with blood. Is this part of the Abrahamic covenant? In the scope of what Yahweh had planned for the children of Israel and any who would join them, yes. Yahweh wanted His way lived out in the people.

Faith Equals Obedience

Here we now have a book and agreement ratified and agreed upon, not just by Abraham, but by all the children of Israel. They said, “All that Yahweh has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!”

Abraham also had faith and obeyed Yahweh’s Word and it appears he was not unaware of much of what Moses shared with the people. A core understanding of Yahweh’s instructions was known to Abraham who was going to live a covenant way, that is, Yahweh’s way. Isaac was reminded of his father’s obedience to Yahweh:

And Yahweh appeared unto him, and said, go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;

because that Abraham obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws, Genesis 26:2–5.

The last word is Torah, the Hebrew word meaning instructions.

The word “voice” is identifying that the words were spoken before they were written down. You’ll remember Yahshua quoting the book of Deuteronomy, the very book that was put on the side of the Ark of the Covenant, Deut. 31:26. The constitution, if you will, for the Promised Land.

Yahshua even quoted the last part of Deuteronomy 8:3, saying, “man is not to live by bread alone, but is to live by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of Yahweh.” Those words are written down for us today, so that we’ll pay attention and not forget them.

For example, you have Israel keeping the 7th day Sabbath before Mt. Sinai. Yahweh’s instructions were written, at least, in part, beforehand.

And Yahweh said to Moses, “How long will you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws? See! Yahweh has given you the Sabbath; therefore on the sixth day He gives you bread for two days. Remain each of you in his place; let no one go out of his place on the seventh day.” So the people rested on the seventh day, Exodus 16:28–30 ESV.

Here’s the question, “Where are the 10 Commandments listed?” Deuteronomy 4 and also Exodus 20, right? Skipping down to verses 33 and 34 of chapter 16 of Exodus, we read:

And Moses said to Aaron, “Take a jar, and put an omer of manna in it, and place it before Yahweh to be kept throughout your generations.” As Yahweh commanded Moses, so Aaron placed it before the testimony to be kept, Exodus 16:33–35 ESV.

Scholars mostly agree that this would have to be the 10 Com-

mandments, but they weren't given officially on stone until they arrived at Mt. Sinai. Yet, by the mouth of Yahweh they would have known His Commandments and written them down as a testimony of His Word to be kept.

Hence, they knew to keep the 7th day as a day of rest, just as Yahweh had done Himself from Creation. Again, this is why Yahweh was angry and spoke, "How long will you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?" in Exodus 16:28. You'll notice that He didn't say, "Moses' commandments and laws."

A Closer Look

When taking a closer look, we find that the Sabbath was made as a covenant, since it was an aspect of Yahweh's way of life.

The Israelites were to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. It will be a sign between Me and the Israelites forever, for in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed, Exodus 31:16–17 NIV.

Think about it. Would Yahweh leave such an important agreement out of the New Covenant? Or do these commandments and laws and statutes also belong in the New Covenant? What does "forever" mean?

When we consider Yahweh's ways, and how He expects us to live, we can understand how living on higher ground involves living by His heavenly principles, judgments, commandments and laws, all written down for us to look at and study. To live by the very words that come from Yahweh's mouth is to live His way.

The blending or continuance of the covenant of Abraham and his children become clear as we look up the word Covenant in Scripture and see Yahweh also establishing His covenant with Isaac and Ja-

cob.

After the children were in Egypt, Yahweh remembered the covenant with them.

So Elohim heard their groaning; and Elohim remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Elohim saw the sons of Israel, and Elohim took notice of them, Exodus 2:24–25 NASB.

Yes, the promise of physical land was in the agreement. And, yes, Yahweh expected the people to live according to His ways, just as Abraham did. This is where the agreement between Yahweh and Israel comes in.

Is this the Old Covenant, the blood covenant, which is referred to in the New Covenant times? Blood, just as a reminder, signifies life, and there is life in the agreements Yahweh makes with His people and all those who will join in doing His will.

Original Covenants

Before going further, let's first look at some of the original covenants in Scripture; some conditional and some unconditional. If placed in chronological order they could look like the following:

1. With Adam and Eve (in the garden of Eden),
2. With Noah (after the flood),
3. With Abraham (and his descendants through Isaac),
4. With Moses and all of Israel (at Mt. Sinai),
5. With Aaron and his sons (as Levitical priests), and
6. With David (and his seed, leading to Yahshua the Messiah, who lived Yahweh's way and set the example for us)

If we look at the covenants of Scripture from the law of first discovery, we end up seeing a type of agreement with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden to tend or take care of things and to be fruitful and produce, but they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

While there isn't any mention of a covenant, we can imagine that Adam and Eve agreed to what Yahweh was telling them to do.

According to The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary, "covenant" means, "agreement enacted between two parties in which one or both make promises under oath to perform or refrain from certain actions."

This somewhat limits what we can call a covenant in Scripture. The reason for bringing up Adam and Eve, as a type of covenant, is because we can assume Adam and Eve were both in agreement with Yahweh concerning what He wanted. Every indication is there; however, it does not say they made an oath nor did they cut a covenant with Him.

After they did eat of the tree, there was a promise of a curse. Satan would be placed low and his head bruised. We find later in Scripture that he'll eventually be crushed, which means, destroyed,

And the Elohim of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Master Yahshua Messiah be with you, Rom. 16:20.

Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve would no longer be able to stay in the Garden of Eden, and they would also die a first death. Paradise deteriorated to thorns and thistles. The whole area is now a desert, if you look at that area of land today in which scholars think it may have been.

Though not a blood covenant, when sin entered the picture, there was a first type of animal sacrifice made for Adam and Eve in which they wore the skins thereof to cover their nakedness; a type of "law added because of transgressions," which we see in Scripture.

As we focus on two blood covenants, we'll see they tend to blend in many respects to the original agreement with Abraham and his descendants though Isaac. With the New Testament writings (let-

ters), we can more readily find what was understood as the First Covenant.

But now He (speaking of Yahshua) has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. For finding fault with them, He says, "BEHOLD, DAYS ARE COMING, SAYS YAHWEH, WHEN I WILL EFFECT A NEW COVENANT WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AND WITH THE HOUSE OF JUDAH; NOT LIKE THE COVENANT WHICH I MADE WITH THEIR FATHERS ON THE DAY WHEN I TOOK THEM BY THE HAND TO LEAD THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT; FOR THEY DID NOT CONTINUE IN MY COVENANT, AND I DID NOT CARE FOR THEM, SAYS YAHWEH," Hebrews 8:6–9 NASB.

Better promises in the New Covenant? What is that? We'll take a look. First, what was the fault of the First Covenant? It was with the people who didn't have the heart to adhere to it.

The fathers mentioned in verse 9 are the elders of Israel, as they were addressed by Moses about what was going to be agreed upon at Mt. Sinai. Continuing:

FOR THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS YAHWEH: I WILL PUT MY LAWS INTO THEIR MINDS, AND I WILL WRITE THEM ON THEIR HEARTS. AND I WILL BE THEIR ELOHIM, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE. AND THEY SHALL NOT TEACH EVERYONE HIS FELLOW CITIZEN, AND EVERYONE HIS BROTHER, SAYING, "KNOW YAHWEH," FOR ALL WILL KNOW ME, FROM THE LEAST TO THE GREATEST OF THEM. FOR I WILL BE MERCIFUL TO THEIR INIQUITIES, AND

I WILL REMEMBER THEIR SINS NO MORE. When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear, Hebrews 8:10–13 NASB.

There are a number of things to notice here. First, that the majority of this quote is actually a quote from Jeremiah 31:31-34 (all caps in the NASB). Yahweh's own voice telling what the First Covenant is and what the New Covenant would be like. It is with Israel (seed of Abraham) from the time that Yahweh took them by the hand out of Egypt.

Passover blood covered them then, and Passover blood covers us now in the New Covenant. The difference is, it is Yahshua's blood that covers us in the Second Agreement with the Spirit being given so we have more knowledge and understanding of Yahshua and Yahweh and help to obey Them from the heart, with a desire to get the things we are to be doing on our mind.

We can see this clarified by the inspired author in the book of Hebrews.

And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying, "THIS IS THE COVENANT THAT I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, SAYS YAHWEH: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEART, AND ON THEIR MIND I WILL WRITE THEM," Hebrews 10:15–16 NASB.

Are we still growing? "Yes." We are to grow in knowledge and understanding. It's Yahweh's Spirit that is accomplishing this and those of us in Messiah have made an agreement to forsake sin and live according to Yahweh's Word.

We hear Yahweh's Word expounded upon in messages and in writings, the main writings being from Scripture; not much different than what was expected from Israel or, for that matter, from Abra-

ham, Isaac, and Jacob. They were all to do Yahweh's will - the words that proceeded out of His mouth.

There is unity between the Abrahamic covenant and the covenant with Israel; the unity and beauty of it is that Yahweh is going to bring Israel and the patriarchs, like Abraham, into the future coming Kingdom.

Yahweh promised this in the Abrahamic Covenant unconditionally, and to his seed Israel in which the Old Covenant was confirmed. It has not disappeared yet. So the indication is "it" will eventually, but how it will disappear we don't fully understand.

Will it disappear when the physical people in the Kingdom are granted to eat of the Tree of Life? Will they be as Adam and Eve were originally intended to be, that is, to live forever? With bodies that never wear out, their youth stays intact as it continually renews itself? If we think about a renewed heavens and earth (*Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness,* 2 Pet. 3:13), the possibilities open up.

Or will it be that those coming into the coming Kingdom will be able to, at the end of the 1000 years, become full Spirit beings, like the Firstfruits will be at Yahshua's return?

Scripture doesn't tell us exactly, but Hebrews 9:15 says,

For this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

This would indicate that those who have died a first death from disobedience of the Old Covenant, may not have to die a second death, if they are granted entrance into life through the Messiah when they are resurrected or after time in

the coming Kingdom.

Is it important for us to know? It's not a salvational issue for us. What is important, and what is a salvation issue for us, is what we do with what we know now.

Walk in The Light

In the Messiah, we are to be sensitive to the Spirit Yahweh has given, and grow in understanding, walking in the light and truth of Yahweh's Word.

If we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Yahshua His Son cleanses (purifies) us from all sin, 1 John 1:7 NASB.

Do we make mistakes? Can we repent? Does Yahweh remember the blood that covers those immersed into Yahshua's Name? Does He see the Messiah working with us in His Spirit? Yet, Scripture indicates we can willfully push past Him, Heb. 6:4-8, 10:26-36. It's a warning for those in Messiah.

The NASB probably highlighted the word "Light" here in 1 John 1:7 to emphasize the trinity idea, that the Holy Spirit is a so-called personage. What they don't understand is if you have a portion of Yahweh's Spirit within you, then you have part of Yahweh within you, to make you a son and daughter. This will fully take place when one is transformed fully into a Spirit being.

Even now, we are referred to as having been adopted into the family and set apart for a special purpose. In this sense, we are even called Saints. But, we are to strive to overcome and make our calling and election sure so we can be fully transformed and be Firstfruits. We are not yet, but it is our hope.

As did Israel, we can break the covenant with Yahweh. We can forfeit our right to the inheritance through Abraham. We can symbolically trample underfoot the blood of Yahshua in the New Covenant. We can choose defiantly to get out

of synch with Yahweh's Spirit and with His truth and be disqualified in this race we are in, just as the Apostle Paul spoke about, 1 Cor. 9:24-27,

Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

The reward Paul spoke about is a symbolic crown of eternal life and rulership with Yahshua. It is true that there will also be rewards of various responsibilities; one may be given ten cities to manage while another may have four.

We read about such things in the parables relating to different things, even the coming Kingdom of Yahweh, Matt. 25:14-30. A warning comes with it - not to hide away your talents and gifts to further the work of Yahweh. The end result is to be cast into the lake of fire which will destroy both body and spirit,

Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell, Matt. 10:28.

Old Covenant Question

Have we answered the question, "What was the Old Covenant?" Let's take a look at Ezekiel 20:11-12 TS, which says,

And I gave them My laws and showed them My right-rulings, which, if a man does, he shall live by them. And I also gave them My Sabbaths, to be a sign between them and Me, to know that I am Yahweh who sets them apart.

To essentially answer the ques-

tion of what the Old Covenant is, if we haven't already done so, that it is the Covenant that Yahweh had in mind when He took Israel by the hand. It also was, no doubt, what He had in mind with Abraham when the covenant was made with him, so there would be descendants to work with. Ultimately, Yahshua, is from Israel (through the line of Judah) and allows us to be grafted back into Israel, since Yahweh had essentially given Israel of old a bill of divorce for their continued defiance of His laws, statutes, and judgments.

As we've already seen, the laws statutes, judgments, etc., were obeyed, even by Abraham. Laws were before, in between, and after, but the Old Covenant can be viewed as the Sinai Covenant, in which Abraham's Covenant allowed Yahweh to proceed in working with his descendants to give them the Promised Land.

We are expected to do the same in the New Covenant. We are expected to obey and continue to look forward to eternal life as fully begotten Spirit beings, now promised to us, if we overcome to the end. And, yes, even the Promised Land will be ours, but we will be ruling in it with the Messiah, rather than just living there in peace. Again, we are to overcome to the end, not breaking covenant with Yahweh. This is one of the better promises we are given in the New Covenant.

Don't Break Covenant!

How does one break covenant? We can do like the man who went out and worked to gather wood on the Sabbath,

Now while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the sabbath day. Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation; and they put him in custody because it had not been declared what should be done to him. Then

Yahweh said to Moses, "The man shall surely be put to death; all the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp." So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as Yahweh had commanded Moses, Num. 15:32-36.

The man may have not even been an Israelite, but was expected to abide by the house rules, as would any who joined themselves to Israel.

But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming Yahweh; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. Because he has despised the word of Yahweh and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt will be on him, Num. 15:30-31 NASU.

This principle of our unchanging Elohim works the same in the New Covenant.

We can despise the commandments and the Spirit and push past both to do our own will. The man was put to death, he died a first death under the First Covenant.

We can die a second death under the New Covenant for willful (high handed) sins. Let's not break covenant, but continue to overcome, rather than being overcome by the flesh and the things of this world which are contrary to Yahweh's ways.

Interestingly enough, the 7th day Sabbath can be looked upon as being included in the Old Covenant, even though it was made holy from Creation. Similarly is the covenant with Noah and the sign of the rainbow. We could even say it's similar to the blood token of circumcision in the flesh, a sign of the covenant.

Sabbaths (plural) are a sign unto Yahweh and His people. We are to follow Yahweh's example of resting on the 7th day; we are to follow in Yahshua's footsteps as He rested

on the Sabbath day also...even though He was falsely accused of breaking it. We are told, and the examples teach us, that He never sinned but was a perfect unblemished sacrifice and example for us,

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One Who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin, Heb. 4:15.

Other Covenant Details

Are there other covenants or agreements in Scripture? Sure, if we go back to our original list. We find a few we haven't really looked at closely.

There is, of course, the Worldwide Flood agreement with Noah and his descendants, in which Yahweh promised to never flood the earth again. A token or sign of that agreement is found with the rainbow we sometimes see today. That's the reason it is there. It's a one sided agreement if you look at it, as Yahweh says that He is the one making the agreement with Noah his sons and all flesh, speaking of the animals,

Then Elohim spoke to Noah and to his sons with him, saying, "Now behold, I Myself do establish My covenant with you, and with your descendants after you; and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the cattle, and every beast of the earth with you; of all that comes out of the ark, even every beast of the earth. I establish My covenant with you; and all flesh shall never again be cut off by the water of the flood, neither shall there again be a flood to destroy the earth." Elohim said, "This is the sign of the covenant which I am making between Me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all successive generations; I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth, Gen. 9:8-13.

There is the agreement with Abraham which we've looked at.

It focuses on his descendants through Isaac with a promised inheritance as the sands of the sea and the stars of heaven and of land. He was faithful and obedient. The same expectation is of his children whether in the Old Covenant or the New Covenant.

There is the Mt. Sinai agreement with Israel, which we've also looked at. After being brought out of Egypt, blessings and curses are mentioned and we still have similar blessings or curses today for obedience or, alternatively, disobedience. The disobedience is why the tribulation is coming to this earth, and faithful obedience is why Yahshua is coming back to this earth. It's not the only reason, but we know the obedient children are awaiting His return.

There is the agreement with Aaron and his sons (Levites) to officiate over the animal sacrifices and Temple duties, which included teaching from the laws of Yahweh. Some of them did not do so well, like Aaron's sons Nabad and Abihu, who brought in strange fire and were destroyed because they didn't follow the instructions they were given. However, there would be those that would do well with the special anointing, which set them apart for Yahweh's special purpose.

And thou shalt bring Aaron and his sons unto the door of the tent of meeting, and shalt wash them with water. And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments; and thou shalt anoint him, and sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office. And thou shalt bring his sons, and put coats upon them; and thou shalt anoint them, as thou didst anoint their father, that they may minister unto Me in the priest's office: and their anointing shall be to them for an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations, Exodus 40:12-15 ASV.

One of the main reasons the Levites were chosen to do the work

they were given to do, was the fact that they are the ones who stood with Moses when he came down from the mountain and saw a calf they had made. He said, "Whoever is for Yahweh, come to me!" The sons of Levi came, and they were instructed to put on swords and go and put to death the sinners. They did and 3000 died at their hand, before Yahweh had said it was enough. So the Levites were ones that could certainly handle the sacrifices, being good with the swords (which are essentially large knives), but more importantly, they heard the call to come to Yahweh and they obeyed the instructions they were given; a lesson for us.

Unique Davidic Covenant

There is one final covenant that we want to look at. It is the covenant with David and His descendants, in which the Messiah would come. This also goes back to the covenant with Abraham and the promises of kings coming forth from his loins.

He is the one who will build a house for My Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his Father, and he will be My son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But My love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you, 2 Samuel 7:12–15 NIV.

So David received a special anointing as King with the promise of Yahweh not taking His Spirit (alluded to as love here) from him. Is this because of David's repentive heart, which Yahweh knew he had, rather than what Saul had? Or could it be that Yahweh made a special agreement and commitment to David, so that not even murder would break the covenant? It's important to consider, that with this covenant, it is more unconditional than not.

In other words, let's not think that because King David got away with certain things, that we can. If we consider the severity of his punishments and those that died around him, he really didn't get away with anything. His own child died after just being born, and the sword pursued him. David's enemies stemmed from his own household. These are just a few things that his transgressions caused. Yet, in the agreement Yahweh made, His Spirit would not be taken from David.

Yahweh stated the outcome very clearly in Jeremiah 33:20–21 NASB, which says,

Thus says Yahweh, "If you can break My covenant for the day and My covenant for the night, so that day and night will not be at their appointed time, then My covenant may also be broken with David My servant so that he will not have a son to reign on his throne, and with the Levitical priests, My ministers."

In Closing

We can see we're at the end of the list of Original Covenants in which we've been talking about, even though there are others we could look at. When we speak of the Old Covenant, we're talking about the one the New Covenant alludes to and even stems from, out of the need for the Spirit of Yahweh to be implanted within the covenant people.

Therefore He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant. For where a will is involved, the death of the one who made it must be established. For a will takes effect only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive. Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. For when every command-

ment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "this is the blood of the covenant that Yahweh commanded for you," Hebrews 9:15-20 ASV.

Not only does the blood of the New Covenant draw its relationship from the Old Covenant, it draws upon it though the Messiah a better Priesthood through the Order of Melchisedec, rather than the Levitical Priesthood. It also brings into play the Abrahamic Covenant to fulfill, through Messiah, the promise of the descendants being as the stars of the heavens, relating to a spiritual people, to be brought into eternity as Spirit beings.

In the New Covenant, those that overcome to the end will receive the promises and inheritance, having already been grafted into Israel. In Messiah, we are given the circumcision made without physical hands and given the Spirit as a seal.

What the Spirit does for us today, it does knowing the fault of the people in the past. It gives us the strength and fortitude to stay on the straight and narrow, and to not break covenant with the Creator of the Universe. It was planned from before creation that we would be called into His glorious Light.

The Old Covenant was planned to come first, but for us today we are given something much better, with the help to succeed, where ancient Israel had failed. But, in all of this, we'll want to remember that concerning Israel, Yahweh says not one kernel will be lost.

As we've already seen, through blood, life is obtainable, even eternal life.

Elder David Brett

He Gives More Grace

Have you ever considered any of the following questions?

List 1

1. Who created us?
2. Was His capacity in that creation perfect?
3. Were Adam and Eve perfect – before the Fall? (In the day that you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall die).
4. After the Fall, was mankind changed? (Imperfect, chained to sin).
5. Were we changed to a particular “nature,” a way of “being,” a “propensity” of behavior? (We were born into sin, and in need of salvation).
6. In what ways are we ALL the same, as products of the Creator? (We all think, we all feel and we all act out of our feelings). For as he thinks within himself, so he is, Proverbs 23:7.
7. What is sin? (Not thinking upon, not feeling about, and not doing Yahweh’s will, His Law, but thinking, feeling, and doing OUR will – and making our own laws and traditions).

In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth, Genesis 1:1 NKJV.

B^aree'shiyt baaraa' 'Elohiym 'eet hashaaamayim w^a'eet haa'aarets, Genesis 1:1 ITB.

The Universe was created by Elohim. “Elohim” is a plural Hebrew word meaning, “Most High,” and translated into English variously as “God,” “gods,” “magistrates” and “judges.” When the Old Testament uses “Elohim” to point to Yahweh, the Heavenly Father, “Elohim” is preceded by the article, “Ha,” meaning “the” - thē Elohim, or “HaElohim.” Genesis 1:1 is not pointing to the Father alone, but to the Father and the Son. In the beginning, the Father and the Son, Yahweh and Yahshua, created the heavens and the earth. Yahweh, the Father, gave all power to His Son, Yahshua, Who set the Universe into being.

Yahshua and the Father are perfectly One, and the Son had made Himself known in bodily form to Adam and Eve with whom He walked in the Garden. He made Himself known to Moses, to whom He spoke on Mount Sinai. He made Himself known to Abraham, to whom He presented Himself as Melchizedek [Malkitzedek, which means “Righteous King], King of Salem [Shalom, King of Peace]. He made Himself known to Noah, Judges 13:2, and his barren wife, to whom He prophesied the birth of Samson, who would conquer the Philistines. He made Himself known to Jacob, with whom He wrestled and re-named him “Israel.” He made Himself known to Gideon, who defeated the

Midianites and the Amelikes with the help of Yahweh. And, He made Himself known to the people in the land of Israel about 2,000 years ago, when He offered His Life as a propitiation for our sin, in the City of Jerusalem.

The Hebrew *'elohiym* (el-o-heem'), plural of OT:433, gods in the ordinary sense; but specifically used (in the plural thus, especially with the article) of the supreme God; occasionally applied by way of deference to magistrates; and sometimes as a superlative,” B&IBT.

The commentary, Barnes’ Notes, discusses Genesis 1:1, and states, “The root [of the word, “Elohim”] probably means to be ‘lasting, binding, firm, [and] strong.’ Hence, the noun means the Everlasting, and in the plural, **the Eternal Powers** [emphasis is mine] ... Its indirect applications point with equal steadiness to this primary and fundamental meaning. Thus, it is employed in a relative and well-defined sense to denote one appointed of God to stand in a certain divine relation to another. This relation is that of authoritative revealer or administrator of the will of God.”

Now, Who could be better summed up as the “**authoritative revealer or administrator of the will of Yahweh**”, if not Yahshua Messiah? I bet my life that there is none other!

Yahshua answered them, "Is it not written in your Law, 'I have said you are "gods"'? If He called them 'gods,' to whom the word of 'God' came — and the Scripture cannot be broken— what about the One Whom the Father set apart as His very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse Me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am "God's" Son'?" (John 10:34-36 NIV.)

I said, "You are 'gods'; you are all sons of the Most High," Psalm 82:6 NIV.

Out of the ground [Yahweh Elohim] caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Genesis 2:9 NASU.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, Genesis 2:17 KJV.

For I joyfully concur with the law of Yahweh in the INNER man, but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members, Romans 7:22-23 NASU.

Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul, 1 Peter 2:11NASU.

List 2

1. What is OUR will? (pleasure)
2. What is pleasure? (feelin' good)
3. What are some good feelings? (worth, empowerment, innocence, safety and security, connectedness and bondedness, satisfaction)
4. So, is it WRONG to DESIRE these feelings? (No, it's wrong to obtain these feelings in ways that are contrary to the Law of Yahweh).
5. Does Yahweh have a means to provide for our desires? (Yes, through His Law):

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Yahshua said to him, "You shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart [cardia – brokenness, passion], with all your soul [psuche – life], and with all your mind [dianoia - thoughts]." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it [homoia from homou – the same, or together]: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets, Matthew 22:36-40 NKJV.

It is in our loving of others that we achieve the Lawful desires of our hearts. But, there is a cost. For the righteous, the cost is worldly pleasure. For the sinful, the cost is eternal life.

There is a battlefield in which the Law of Yahweh wages war against evil, AGAINST the fulfilling of the desires of our hearts through sin. That battle takes place in the field of RELATIONSHIP. Sin is the fiery arrow that creates conflict and destroys relationship(s). Righteousness is the Sword that destroys conflict and builds relationship (That is the double-edged aspect of the Sword of Righteousness).

Sin is the act of intending to cause emotional pain in another person (The fact that we INTEND to cause emotional pain is usually

hidden from us – only when we see the CONSEQUENCES of our words or our actions do we know this for sure). Righteousness is the act of LIFTING UP the spirit, the emotional joy, the righteous pleasure, of those around us.

Sin, though its PURPOSE in the individual is to obtain feelings of power, worth, satisfaction, intimacy and security – all positive emotions – (are they not?) invariably and ultimately creates the opposite. Righteousness, having the same PURPOSE in the individual – to obtain feelings of power (or strength), worth, satisfaction, intimacy and security – invariably and ultimately creates those feelings in both parties. It's a double-edged sword in that it destroys guilt, shame, and fear and, at the same time, builds feelings of innocence, worth and security.

Is Yahweh's ultimate desire for us that we should feel guilty, ashamed, worthless, powerless, hopeless, and afraid of others? If that were the case, then why did He allow His Son to suffer FOR US? Why would He command us to care for others? Why would He even HAVE a plan of SALVATION? And ... Salvation from WHAT? ... Salvation from a sinful existence.

Weapons of War Against Satan

Are you skilled in using the weapons of war against Satan? Are you equipped and trained in the art of destroying CHAOS and disorder? Do you know how to wield the Sword of truth to restore joy to the hearts of those you love? Or, are you skilled in the crafts of Satan, acting to create guilt and shame and fear and worthlessness in the hearts of those you INTEND to love? Sadly, I know, only too well, how well-equipped the world is in training us to use fiery darts to hurt others for our personal gain. I have used them all my life, and I

resort to them at times, when I feel ashamed, afraid, alienated, powerless or worthless. All of these feelings turn into ANGER; then we act out our anger, attempting to restore the positive; but failing – for a lack of knowledge.

What are these crafts of the Devil? It would be useful to know these, wouldn't it? Then, we might be able to avoid them. But, that's only half the battle – the other part is learning the tools of Righteousness: gathering together in harmony, "putting away lying one unto another, speaking truth," "being angry – without sinning," showing compassion, and pushing past the ruts of familiarity that keep us chained to sin.

Well, back to the methodology of Satan. Here they are, and in giving them to you, my hope is to destroy the works of Satan, so that Righteousness might prevail among the brethren. Ready? There are 8 ways that we have been taught by the world to destroy relationships:

1 – JUDGMENT(S) – Not discernment, but condemnation. How many times have we uttered through our own lips, or even thought words like, "You are nothing but a ... (expletive deleted)!"? Or, "What are you, stupid?" "You idiot!" Now, what is the purpose for issuing these judgments? One of the things I've noticed about myself, and it seems to be true by others who have examined themselves, is this: "My destructive actions are founded in the negative state of my own mind and heart." To clarify: I tend to threaten or attack someone, verbally, when I am feeling afraid. I tend to issue commands or make demands when I am feeling powerless. I tend to blame others for my plight when I am feeling guilty. I am trying to restore security by preventing someone from doing something which scares me. I am trying to restore a feeling of power by making some-

one do something *I* want them to do, not what *they* want to do. I'm trying to restore INNOCENCE in myself by trying to get others to take the blame.

These actions are FIERY DARTS (even though my attempt is to acquire those good feelings that Yahweh wants me to have) because I'm trying to obtain them at the expense of others' innocence, security, empowerment and worth. We end up destroying those we have committed ourselves to build up, to lift up. Our adversaries are not our parents, our spouse, our children, our boss, our friends – or, our brethren. We have only ONE adversary. ... Let's not think evil about any other human, especially those we've promised Yahweh to love and honor.

2 – *THREATS* – When we promise to inflict pain (physical or emotional), if they don't do what we want them to do. Our attempt is to create fear within the other person. "If you don't (do what I want you to do), then I will (do something to cause you pain)!"

Other is the list are:

3 – *PUT-DOWNS*,

4 – *GUILT-TRIPS*,

5 – *SARCASM*,

6 – *BLAME*,

7 – *COMMAND AND DEMANDS*, and

8 – *SILENCE*.

OK. These are the "crafts" we have been taught in the world: by our parents, our teachers and other authority figures – about how to act when we are angry and when we are not getting OUR desires met. But, the consequence of getting our desires fulfilled in this way is finding ourselves on the pathway to destruction – of ourselves and others. It is Satan's way of defeating Yahweh. But we all know who wins the war. As Yahweh has often announced, referring to the end of times, "Then they shall know that I am Yah-

weh!"

So, how do we overcome our worldliness?

How do we know that something is right? How do we know that something is wrong? I submit to you that if what you're doing does not result in the lifting up of all whom you encounter, then it is wrong. (Are we not commanded to love those, even those, who would do us harm?)

But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He is kind to the ungrateful and the selfish. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful, Luke 6:35-36 RSV.

Are we capable of choosing right and wrong? We did eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil! So, yes, we are capable of choosing.

Can we, mankind, change our nature? No, only Yahweh can do that, and He WILL do that some day.

Can we change our thinking? Yes.

Can we change our feelings? Yes.

Can we change our behavior? Yes.

For, if we cannot change these things, what can it possibly mean to "endure to the end"? Or, "Fight the good fight." And, if we cannot change these things, then exactly who are the "overcomers"? Repentance means to turn around, to stop acting or behaving in sinful ways. Turn! Change! However, its primary meaning is to have a change of heart, to feel sorrow for our behavior. To repent means to recognize that we've done something wrong, and then to feel guilty. It means to recognize that "there is something 'wrong' with us" – and then to feel ashamed – so that we will change our behavior."

"Repent" is the translation of

the Hebrew - OT:#5162 – *nach-am*, to sigh, i.e., breathe strongly; by implication, to be sorry, i.e., to pity, console or (reflexively) rue.

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, Matthew 3:2.

This is the irony: through the understanding of Scripture we discover what sin is, feel guilty and ashamed, then turn and do right. However, when WE act with the INTENT of creating these negative feelings in others, we create ... a mess.

What causes wars, and what causes fightings among you? Is it not your passions that are at war in your members? (James 4:1 RSV.)

Another translation says, "Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?" (NKJV)

"Passions" is the translation of the Greek - NT:2237 *hedone* (hay-don-ay'); from *handano* (to please); sensual delight; by implication, desire: KJV - lust, pleasure.

They have forsaken the right way and gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness, 2 Peter 2:15 NKJV.

"Wages" is the translation of the Greek NT:3408 *misthos* (mis-thos'); pay for services (literally or figuratively), good or bad: KJV - hire, reward, wage.

You desire and do not have; so you kill [not just the body, but the spirit]. And you covet and cannot obtain; so you fight and wage war. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. Unfaithful creatures! [literally, adulteresses, as in the Assembly, the Bride who abandons her first love, Yahweh, and worships falsely]. Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with Elohim? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of

the world makes himself an enemy of Elohim. Or do you suppose it is in vain that the scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? (James 4:2-5)

He YEARNS ... He craves! ... desires! ... aches! ... covets! ... and He longs to witness our works of Righteousness.

Why does He do this?

For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away, Matthew 25:29 NASU.

His desire is to give; not money. This is not about prosperity; this is about love. His desire is to give us more capacity to love. Even within His perfect loving kindness, He does not desire to keep forgiving our iniquities, only to see us turn our backs on Him. That's why verse 6 of James 4 says:

But He gives more grace; therefore it says, "Elohim opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

When we pray for grace, are we praying for more forgiveness, because of our vast iniquities? Or, are we praying for the gift of an increased capacity to love – more of that kind of grace that only He can give, because our desire is obedience?

Submit yourselves therefore to Elohim. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to Elohim and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you men of double mind. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to dejection. Humble yourselves before Yahweh and He will exalt you. Do not speak evil against one another, brethren. He that speaks evil against a brother or judges his brother, speaks evil against the Law and judges [condemns or punishes] the Law. But if you judge the

Law, you are not a doer of the Law but a judge. There is One Lawgiver and Judge, He Who is able to save and to destroy. But who are you that you judge your neighbor? (James 4:7-12.)

Also, the prophet Isaiah says in Isaiah 57:15 NASU,

For thus says the high and exalted One Who lives forever, whose Name is Set-apart, "I dwell on a high and holy place, and also with the contrite and lowly of spirit in order to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."

Loving Yahweh

In Matthew 22:36 Yahshua was asked:

Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?

Yahshua gives the answer in verse 37:

Yahshua said to him, "You shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart [cardia – brokenness, passion], with all your soul [psuche – life], and with all your mind [dianoia - thoughts]."

Yahshua is quoting Deuteronomy 6:5 (*And thou shalt love Yahweh thy Elohim with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*), which differs slightly in the Old and New Testament. "Heart" and "soul" are translated the same. However, "Mind" in the New Testament is "Might" in the Old. "You shall love Yahweh your Elohim with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your ... MIGHT." ["might" means "vehemence (strength, vigor and enthusiasm) or ardor (zeal, devotion and commitment)"]. Interesting. Perhaps the combination of the Old and New is telling us that our "Strength is in our Mind," or that "Our Mind IS our Strength." Else why would Yahweh invite us to, "Come, let us REASON together," in Isaiah 1:18?

In Matthew 22:36, Yahshua is telling us to Love Yahweh Almighty, with ALL of our THINKING

(mind), with ALL of our FEELING (heart) and ALL of our ... SOULING? Hmm. Now, we have a pretty good idea of what "thinking" and "feeling" are. For example, if I read the Scripture and discover all the things I've done that are called "sin," and read a little more about the punishment for sin, I might think, or decide, "something terrible is going to happen to me," for it also says that "all have sinned" – and then, I might feel afraid. (That's why it is written, "Blessed is the man who fears Yahweh," Psalm 112:1). I also might think, or believe, "I did something wrong;" and feel guilty. Or, I might think, or come to perceive, "There's something wrong with me." And then feel ashamed.

That's easy. But, exactly how does one ... SOUL? If we are to love the Father with all of our soul, how shall we come to know that we are in fact doing so? Well, "soul" ... or "psuche" (in Greek) means "life" or "LIVING." So, how do we examine how we are LIVING? Well, we LOOK at our BEHAVIOR. What are we DOING? I submit for your consideration that, once you know what you are DOING in your LIFE, you will know to WHAT you are devoting your SOUL.

For where your treasure is, there will your HEART be also, Matthew 6:21 KJV.

In other words, Your "treasure" is the physical evidence of what you are DOING. What you DO, you do out of your FEELINGS.

Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life, Proverbs 4:23 NASU.

"Heart" - OT:3820 *leb* (labe); a form of OT:3824; the heart; also used (figuratively) very widely for the feelings, the will and even the intellect; likewise for the center of anything.

Loving Our Neighbor

Yahshua continued His answer in Matthew 22:39,

And the second is (the same):

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. (NKJV)

When Yahshua uses the word translated as "LOVE," what is the Hebrew understanding? To Think, Feel and Act toward others in the GRACE that He gives us as we contemplate His Word.

Why do you THINK we are called "Believers"? Because, we "meditate," we THINK about the Word of Yahweh, and we BELIEVE what He is telling us. Now, is it useful and beneficial for us to think this way; and to feel ... afraid, guilty and ashamed? Of course it is! How else is it even possible to REPENT, if we do not think these thoughts and feel these emotions? Repentance is the ACT, the BEHAVIOR, which is required to return to Yahweh, walking in the footsteps of Yahshua.

Do you see the connection between THOUGHTS, FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOR? Scripture clearly tells us how Yahweh designed us. I submit for your consideration: IF we were not designed this way, AND IF we do not understand this design, then we could not be REDEEMED. I am NOT talking about "Salvation" here. Salvation is a free gift to the world. Redemption, in my understanding, occurs to choose. On the Last Great Day, those who choose Truth will be redeemed. All others, including Satan and his own, will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. As James says,

But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? (James 2:20 KJV)

We BEHAVE out of our FEELINGS. We FEEL out of our THOUGHTS.

For as he THINKS within himself, so he IS, Proverbs 23:7.

The THOUGHT of foolishness is SIN: and the scorner is an abomination to men, Proverbs 24:9.

Sin, the ACTION, begins with

THINKING outside the realm of Yahweh's Truth.

What is Yahweh's promise if we Think, Feel and DO these things?

And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of YAHWEH thy Elohim, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that YAHWEH thy Elohim will set thee on high above all nations of the earth: and all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of YAHWEH thy Elohim. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field. Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. YAHWEH shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee before thee seven ways. YAHWEH shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto; and he shall bless thee in the land which YAHWEH thy Elohim giveth thee. YAHWEH shall establish thee an holy people unto himself, as he hath sworn unto thee, if thou shalt keep the commandments of YAHWEH thy Elohim, and walk in his ways. And all people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of YAHWEH; and they shall be afraid of thee. And YAHWEH shall make thee plenteous in goods, in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground, in the land which YAHWEH swore unto thy fathers to give thee. YAHWEH shall open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain unto thy land in his season, and to bless all

the work of thine hand: and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow. And YAHWEH shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of YAHWEH thy Elohim, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them: and thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day, to the right hand, or to the left, to go after other elohim to serve them, Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

He Gives More Grace

Is that ALL? (Well, THAT's awfully pretentious of you, John! What more do you WANT?) [While here at the altar, sometimes my "alter-ego" makes his presence known]. I mean, apart from the physical blessings He promises? James 4 verse 6 says: "But He gives more grace;" Maybe there is something BEYOND the physical that He gives us. Maybe He gives us PEACE.

Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid, John 14:27.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world, John 16:33.

But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, Romans 2:10.

"Peace" is translated from the Greek *eirene* (i-ray'-nay); # NT:1515; probably from a primary verb *eiro* (to join); peace (literally or figuratively); by implication, prosperity. (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright (c) 1994, Biblesoft and Inter-

national Bible Translators, Inc.)

And the peace of Elohim, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your HEARTS and MINDS through Yahshua Messiah. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO: and the Elohim of peace shall be with you, Philippians 4:7-9.

The question of how we use this understanding, or its PRACTICE, is a topic for another discussion. There is much to understand if we are going to be successful in loving others. But, it is all in Scripture. Search the Word diligently. I suggest you pay attention to the myriad of references to thoughts, feelings and actions – and especially to how they are connected. In this understanding is wisdom, not the wisdom of the world; for the world is flesh ... and will be destroyed. "Let Yahweh be true and all men liars," Romans 3:4.

Consider This

Yes, consider this: if we, out of our guilt and fear, bring ourselves into alignment with Yahweh's (and hence, Yahshua's) commandments, doing righteous works to those around us, what will we THINK concerning ourselves? We will KNOW, we will have CONFIDENCE, that we are doing what is right. Believing that we are doing something right, creates what feeling inside of us? Guilt? No! The feeling of ... innocence. Now, in which of these two feelings would you be experiencing Yahweh's "Peace?" Innocence, of course.

If I am walking the righteous path of Yahshua, will I think that a terrible thing is going to happen to

me? No, my hope ... my thoughts will be of being welcomed into the Kingdom, and hearing the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" Will I feel afraid when I think these things? No. I will feel secure and safe, no matter what befalls me in this life. Which of these is "the Peace that passeth all understanding?" Fear? Or Safety and Security?

When I look around me, at the conflicts, chaos, abominations, and plagues that surround us, I know that the world does not at all understand that which has been given to us through His Word and through His Spirit. I praise Yahweh for the understanding that He makes known to us; and how He guides us in our lives to deal with adversity, trials, persecution and the "love that waxes cold through iniquity."

Since "love" means to Think, Feel and Act in Righteousness, put that definition in place of the word, love, in the following quotes:

If ye [Think, Feel and Act in Righteousness toward] me, you will keep My commandments, John 14:15. (And vice-versa)

He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who [Thinks, Feels and Acts in Righteousness toward] Me; and he who [Thinks, Feels and Acts in Righteousness toward] Me will be [Thought of, Felt for and Acted for in Righteousness] by My Father, and I will [Think, Feel and Act in Righteousness toward] him and will disclose Myself to him, John 14:21.

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My [Thinking, Feeling and Acting in Righteousness]; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His [Thinking, Feeling and Acting in Righteousness], John 15:10.

By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is

not in him; but whoever keeps His word, in him the [Thinking, Feeling and Acting in Righteousness] of Elohim has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked, 1 John 2:3-6.

We [Think, Feel and Act in Righteousness], *because He first [Thought of, Felt for and Acted for in Righteousness toward] us. If someone says, "I [Think, Feel and Act in Righteousness toward] Yahweh," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not [Think, Feel and Act in Righteousness toward] his brother whom he has seen, cannot [Think, Feel and Act in Righteousness toward] Yahweh Whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who [Thinks, Feels and Acts in Righteousness toward] Elohim should [Think, Feel and Act in Righteousness toward] his brother also, 1 John 4:19-21.*

For this is the [Thinking, Feeling and Acting in Righteousness] of Yahweh, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome, 1 John 5:3.

And this is [Thinking, Feeling and Acting in Righteousness], that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it, 2 John 6.

May His Peace be with you, or in Hebrew, "Shalom Aleichem."

In the Name of Yahshua, the Messiah, Prince of Peace; or in Hebrew, "B'shem Yahshua, HaMeshiach, Sar Shalom!"

And, I say, Praise Yahweh, or in Hebrew, "HalleluYah!"

Elder John Fisher

Do We Know The Tribulation Witnesses?

Contrary to popular belief, when the disciples asked Yahshua why He spoke to the people in parables He told them, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them." Further, He said, "Though seeing they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand." (Matt. 13:10-14, NIV)

Not everything in Scripture is stated as a parable, however. Many things are so obvious people can't help seeing them, yet they do not recognize what they see. They hear them preached over and over yet they do not understand what they hear.

Many renowned Bible scholars and church prelates who are convinced that they have been given the knowledge to understand the secret hidden wisdom in Yahweh's Word do not seem to see the relationship of many things to prophecy or its significance to understanding prophecy.

Dual Meaning of Doubles

Duality is probably the most obvious feature that permeates nearly everything in the Bible from Genesis 1:1 to Revelations 22:21. There seems to be two of everything.

There are two mediators of two covenants and two testimonies to the covenants. There are two creations: the physical heaven and earth spoken about in Genesis 1:1, and the new heaven and earth prophesied in Isaiah 65:17 and seen in John's vision (Rev. 21:1).

We are told about two births, two deaths, and two bodies. The Apostle Paul gives us a very important clue to understanding this duality in 1 Corinthians 15:46, where he said,

The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.

The New Testament clearly reveals that there are even two Mighty Ones—Yahweh the Father and Yahshua the Messiah. This wisdom was hidden from Old Covenant Israelites. To this day Jews who reject the New Testament as Yahweh's Word will not believe that the Messiah is a mighty one.

Their rejection is based upon their understanding of the *shema*, which in Hebrew reads, "Shema Yisrael Yahweh Elohenu Yahweh Echad," Deuteronomy 6:4. It's commonly mistranslated, "Hear O Israel, the

Lord our God, the Lord is One." *Elohenu* is Hebrew for "our Elohim." "Elohim," mistranslated "God," is plural and means "mighty ones." The Hebrew word *echad* (Strong's Concordance No. 259) means one but also properly means two acting together as one, a unity. (See Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon to the Old Testament and the Companion Bible's margin note on Isa. 65:25.)

I mention this only to point out how cunningly Yahweh has concealed wisdom in His Word from even astute Bible students until the time He has appointed for its revelation. Upon learning the revelation everyone is amazed and skeptical. After all, the Scripture has been right before our eyes all this time and even the scholars don't perceive it or understand it like that.

Even though a great deal of wisdom hidden in the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament, much is hidden in the New Testament that will not be revealed until Yahweh allows. Consequently, a great deal of doctrine is founded upon misunderstood Scripture.

When Yahweh opens someone's mind to correctly grasp some previously misunderstood passage, most people will refuse to look at it. Why? Probably because a change in understanding would mean they would have to quit doing something they love to do, but which is not pleasing to Yahweh. Or, maybe a change in belief and practice would result in their being shunned by friends and relatives.

Many books have been published in recent years that expound upon end-time prophecy. The interpretation of prophecy in these works varies according to the authors' doctrinal predilection and denominational predisposition.

One doctrine that has created about as much misunderstanding of Scriptures as anything else is the widely held belief that the church will be raptured before the Great Tribulation at the end of the age. This belief leads to the conclusion that, since the church will not be around during the tribulation, that the two end-time witnesses prophesied in the Bible's pages must be resurrected human beings.

Even many people who do not believe in the rapture of the church twist Scriptures in an attempt to support a belief that the two witnesses will be either

a resurrected Moses and Elijah, or Moses and Enoch or maybe even Joshua and Zerubbabel.

Israel, the Church as Witnesses?

One book, *The Beginning of the End* by Steve Shearer, disavows the idea of a rapture and shows that the church will be around during the Tribulation. Mr. Shearer maintains that the Tribulation is Yahweh's great test of the peoples of the nations—not of Christians.

He also points out (correctly) that Yahweh's law in both the Old and New Covenants demands the testimony of at least two witnesses before judgment can be administered. Because the church will be here, there is no need for Yahweh to resurrect two humans and give them supernatural powers.

Mr. Shearer says the two end-time Tribulation witnesses are Israel and the church.

Though much closer to the truth than the idea of two resurrected human beings, the idea that the witnesses are Israel and the Church cannot be true. Would an apostate Judaism and an apostate Christian Church bear witness to Yahweh's Spirit and truth during the Tribulation?

We are told about Yahweh's two witnesses in Revelation 11:1-12. During the terrible troubles just prior to Yahshua's return, these witnesses will be testifying Yahweh's way of spirit and truth to the peoples of this world, witnessing their lawlessness and prophesying the coming judgment upon them.

When Yahweh has decided the time for their witnessing is up, He will allow Satan to put them out of business. Scores will celebrate and rejoice because they will no longer be troubled by them.

After they have been allowed to rejoice and celebrate for a short time, Yahweh will call to his witnesses saying, "Come up here." At the call, the witnesses will rise up

from the earth and ascend into the clouds while people watch, Revelation 11:11-12. This will undoubtedly take place at the last trump, 1 Corinthians 15:52.

Obviously, prophecies such as this are not open to the understanding of even serious Bible students whose minds are filled with the false doctrines of men.

The fact that there is prophesied two witnesses symbolized by two olive trees and two lampstands hints at the duality hidden in this prophecy. It is like a parable in that it refers to familiar physical things to convey a spiritual message. On top of that, it is stated in symbolic language. Before the prophecy can be correctly understood, the interpretation of the symbols must be found. Familiar things like lampstands, olive trees, men, and bodies are not only parabolic, but also symbolic.

The difficulty of correctly understanding this prophecy is compounded by such erroneous beliefs as the Tribulation is Yahweh's test of the peoples of the nations and not of His elect. The belief that Christians are Yahweh's elect causes a great deal of error. This is evident in Mr. Shearer's statement that the Tribulation is not a test of Christians.

Yahshua warns His followers in John 15:18-21 that the world will hate and persecute them. In Matthew 24:9 He warns that they will even be put to death because of Him. Yahweh tests Yahshua's followers to see whether they will endure to the end in spite of any natural disasters they might experience such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, famines or pestilences.

Will they continue in spirit and truth regardless of wars, betrayal by friends, family, and even brethren? Will they remain faithful in spite of being hated for their faith and even killed by religious leaders who think they are serving Yahweh?

The testing of Yahweh's elect is called the great tribulation in Revelation 7:14.

Symbolism in the Witnesses

A question that should make those who really seek understanding of Yahweh's Word pause for thought is: Is that great multitude of people from every nation, tribe, and language which comes out of the great tribulation composed only of True Worshipers from the last generation on earth prior to Yahshua's return?

Read Revelation 11:1-12. In order to identify the two witnesses it must be realized that the statements about them in these verses are symbolic. The witnesses are referred to as men. The Bible often refers to mankind and people as men (see Ex. 9:22,25).

The witnesses are also said to have bodies. People who are baptized in Yahshua's name become members of His visible, physical body (see 1 Cor. 11:12-27 and 12:13, 27). As a man on earth, Yahshua had a physical body, but after His resurrection He returned to His spiritual body and is now said to be a life-giving Spirit (John 6:63; 1 Cor. 15:20-23, 2 Cor. 3:6).

Ephesians 4:4 tells us there is only one body and one spirit. Paul says in I Corinthians 15:46 that the natural, physical body comes first then the spiritual. This is not exactly the case with Yahshua the Messiah, but it is with humans.

Revelation 11 says there are two witnesses—two bodies—symbolized by two olive trees and two lampstands (NIV). Can these two bodies be Israel and the church when New Covenant people who are baptized in Yahshua's Name become Israelites by adoption? There is only one Israel!

No doubt many assemblies of True Worshipers exist around the globe, but there is only one Body, 1 Corinthians 12:12. The fact that

we are told there are two witnesses hints at, but does not reveal, the physical-spiritual duality in the witnessing of only one body of True Worshipers.

Yahshua is the Word, John 1:1-2. The Word is truth, John 17:17, and the Word is Spirit, John 6:63. Who but those who have Yahshua's Spirit abiding in them could bear witness to Yahweh's spirit and truth?

The spoken word is physical. A person must see it written or hear it spoken before it can convey thoughts to one's understanding. The thoughts induced by man's words are metaphysical. Thoughts induced by Yahshua's Word are spiritual.

The physical aspect of Yahweh's witnesses is alluded to by reference to two olive trees. The Spirit is present in the First Covenant, but the emphasis is upon a physical relationship to Yahweh.

In the New Covenant, Yahweh has not removed His people from the physical world, but emphasis is shifted from a physical to a spiritual relationship to Yahweh.

In verse 1 of Isaiah 43:1-10 we note that Yahweh is speaking to only one group of people. He calls them Jacob one time and Israel another. Note what He says to Israel in verses 7 and 10, "Everyone who is called by My name" and "...you are My witnesses."

In Revelation 11 He calls His witnesses olive trees and lampstands, yet He is speaking of Israel in the same manner that He called Israel by two names in Isaiah 43. Psalm 52:8 and Jeremiah 11:16 tell us that people called by His Name are like green olive trees to Him.

Lamps Give Light

What do the seven golden lampstands (candlesticks, KJV) mentioned in Revelation 2:1 symbolize? True, they are associated with seven first-century assemblies in the Roman world, but these seven

assemblies are hardly the only assemblies of converts in that world. Certainly Yahshua would not be limited only to seven if there were other assemblies of True Worshipers. Seven is the number always associated with spiritual perfection in the Bible and two is always associated with either division or with union or unity.

In the case of the witnesses, the number two has to symbolize union of the Old and New covenant witnessing; the physical and spiritual union of the Word and the division of life in the spirit and death in the flesh.

Why are the witnesses called lampstands (candlesticks, KJV)? As long as Yahshua was in this world physically He was the light of the world, John 9:5. Now that Yahshua is no longer in the world physically, Israelites are the light of the world, Matthew 5:14.

What are they to do with the light? They are commanded not to hide the light. Instead, they are to set it on a lampstand where everyone can see the light and the witnesses' good deeds, Matthew 5:15-16. "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path," Psalm 119:105.

Yahshua is the Word, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. His witnesses are to hold up His light so that anyone who will open their eyes can walk in His path.

But John 3:19 tells us that people whose deeds are evil love darkness and hate the light, verse 20. They also will hate those who hold up the light before men, Luke 6:22.

How long are the witnesses to hold up the light and prophesy the coming wrath because of people's evil deeds? Ephesians 5:3-7. This amounts to the same question the disciples asked in Matthew 24:6: "When will this happen?" Yahshua told them that only Yahweh knows the day and the hour.

The disciples were told to watch

events to know that the end of the age was upon them. In addition, we are also told in Revelation 11 about events to look for. But, we are told, too, that the witnesses will not know the time or date that Yahweh has set for the completion of their testimony, Acts 1:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3.

When the disciples saw the prophesied events coming to pass, they were convinced Yahshua's return was at hand. They did not understand the duality of prophecy any more than do present-day Bible students.

Yahshua did not explain to the disciples that the events they would see at the end of the Old Covenant age would be only a prototype of the events that would occur at the end of the New Covenant age. Nor did He explain that the events limited to the Roman world they knew would be more physical and less spiritual than the universal events with far more spiritual ramifications that would come to pass at the end of the New Covenant age.

The Bible refers to periods of time as ages (*aion*, Strong's Greek Dictionary No. 165). The Old Covenant age is the time from Moses to Yahshua's first coming. The New Covenant age is the time from Yahshua's first coming to His return.

Yahshua's 1,000-year reign on earth will be the kingdom age. The disciples lived at the end of the Old Covenant age. They did not know, and it was not revealed to them, that there would be another age and we are not told how long it will be. Because Yahshua mediated a New Covenant, thinking of the period of time between His first and second coming as the New Covenant age rather than the church ages, helps to eliminate some of the misunderstanding of prophecies about that time.

Without wasting time attempting to determine exact days and hours of prophesied events, let's look around and see whether we

can understand the relationship between what we see and what we are told.

Revelation 11:2-3 tells us that the Gentiles will trample on the holy city and the witnesses will be prophesying for 42 months. Revelation 13:5 tells us that Satan's beast religion will be exercising authority and blaspheming during the same 42 months. In fact, Revelation 13 tells us what the people of the earth, under the influence of the beast, will be doing during the 42 months.

The 42 months will end when Yahweh allows the beast to overpower His witnesses. Then for a short time, designated by the symbolic $3\frac{1}{2}$ days, Satan's beast religion will exercise unrestrained authority on earth, Revelation 13:15-17. Satan's supreme "3 $\frac{1}{2}$ day rule" on earth will end with the first resurrection and the return of Yahshua, Revelation 11:11-15.

The numbers 42, 1,260, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ are symbolic. They don't necessarily indicate time periods of literally 42 months, 1,260 years and only $3\frac{1}{2}$ years. Forty-two is one way or another always associated with Yahshua's coming. For example, Matthew 1:17 tells us there were 42 generations from Abraham to Yahshua's first coming.

Forty-two 30-day months is 1,260 days. Saying that 1,260 days and $3\frac{1}{2}$ days mean 1,260 years and $3\frac{1}{2}$ years of literal time is logic based on Yahweh's allowing Ezekiel a year for a day in Ezekiel 4:6. But what about Psalm 90:4, which says 1,000 years is but a day that is past to Yahweh? If we allow 1,000 years for a day instead of a year, we are inferring the witnesses will be prophesying for 1,260,000 years!

A period of time so outlandish isn't even considered by scholars or anyone else who attempts to set dates. Yet, what some scholars and Bible students are saying amounts to telling us that the $3\frac{1}{2}$ days in

Revelation 11:11 is the same period of time as the 42 months in Revelation 13:5.

Though we can't determine exactly when Yahweh will consider that the witnesses have finished their testimony and prophesying, history and the Bible tell us exactly when it began. The witnessing to the nations—Gentiles—began immediately after the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost.

When did the Gentiles begin trampling on the Holy City? Right after the destruction of the temple and the dispersion of the Jews in 70 C.E. Take 70 years from 1988, the present year, and we can see that the Gentiles have been trampling on the city for 1,918 years.

The most probable year of Yahshua's impalement and ascension is 30 or 31 C.E., about 40 years before the destruction of the temple. That means Yahweh's witnesses have been active for about 1,958 years and they haven't been put out of business yet.

That 698 years of difference between the actual years of witnessing and the supposed limit of 1,260 years has scholars searching for an explanation that isn't totally inconsistent with everything else they have been expounding about end-time prophecy.

Beast Religion Alive and Well

The return of Jews to Jerusalem in 1948 may very likely be the beginning of the fulfillment of prophecies concerning the return of Israel from around the world. But we cannot say Jerusalem is no longer being trampled on by the Gentiles. If nothing else, the Arab Gentiles still have a beast-religion mosque on the Temple site.

Compare Matthew 24:29-30 and Luke 21:25-27 with Revelation 11:12-15. No question about it. Yahweh's end-time witnesses will be resurrected with all the elect Yahshua will raise from the dead

when He returns. There is no question, either, that the Gentile trampling on the holy city will end at that time also.

Revelation 11 tells us that the witnesses will have been killed and people of the world will rejoice over their dead bodies for a short time before the witnesses are called up to meet the coming Messiah.

What are we to look for to understand the signs of the times? Compare 2 Thessalonians 2:3 and 2:7-8 with Revelation 11:7-10 and 13:1-17.

We can't set dates, but we can know from these Scriptures that the beast religion has been uttering blasphemies and exercising authority for as long as Yahweh's witnesses have been prophesying. When we see a man in a temple claiming to be Yahweh and having power to bring down fire from heaven, we must understand that Yahweh has removed His restraint from the Man of Sin. We will then be seeing the end-time fulfillment of Yahshua's prophecy about the abomination that causes desolation.

The disciples were warned to flee to the mountains when they saw that prototype fulfillment. The end-time witnesses had better heed the warning because the persecutions experienced by the first-century disciples were a prototype of what they can expect from the Man of Sin.

All the end-time witnesses can do is watch so that the day does not come upon them unexpectedly, Luke 21:34; run when they see it, Matthew 24:16; and pray that they will be able to escape, Luke 21:36. As for other symbols associated with the witnesses in Revelation 11, these can be correctly understood if their interpretation is looked for in other Scriptures. For example: "Fire comes out of their mouths," Revelation 11:5. Now read Psalm 18.

<see **Witnesses** page 22>

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q "Lights & Perfections" does not clarify for me the meaning of the Urim & Thummin. From Ex. 28:30, Numbers 27:21 and Deut. 33:8-11, it was something over the High Priest's heart which somehow had something to do with judgment.

A The Companion Bible explains the Urim and Thumim were probably two precious stones that were placed in the bag of the breastplate of judgment. Called "Lights" and "Perfections" the stones were drawn out and made a judicial decision of guilt and innocence by the high priest. When the land was divided "by lot," judgment of Yahweh was by the "Urim" and "Thumin." The technique whereby guidance was made plain has not been recorded, according to the New Bible Dictionary, J.D. Douglas. There are no negative answers recorded.

Q What did Yahshua mean when He told the Disciples, "Whoever is not against us is for us when they saw a man casting out demons in His name?"

A The verses are probably the following. The man casting out demons did so in Yahshua's name and though not closely associated with the Savior was doing the work. There are others that Yahweh is calling out of the world that we know very little about.

And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us. But Yahshua said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name, that can lightly speak evil of Me, Mark 9:38-39 AV.

The question is often asked about this follower of Yahshua, for we know very little about him. He is probably one of the early believers found in Luke 10:1-22, the sending out of the 70, two by two. He may have been one who was himself baptized when

the Holy Spirit came to earth on Pentecost or may have influenced others that Yahshua was indeed the promised Messiah, who then were immersed, Acts 2:41.

Q In Rev. 11:7; 20:7, are the two witnesses witnessing before or after 1,000 years?

A The two witnesses are likely two groups of people who are upholding Yahweh's truth, and will be killed just before Yahshua comes. Note that Rev. 11:7 says the Beast will make war with them. Now, why would a world ruler "make war" against two people? A potentate could send a contingent of soldiers after them and get rid of them quickly. But this man "makes war" against the witnesses and they are not limited to two men. Verse 11:11 says the Holy Spirit enters into them and they ascend to heaven and meet Yahshua in the air, as seen in 1Cor. 15:50-55, which is likely the first resurrection.

Q At the second resurrection, will there be found people worthy to enter the kingdom, after tasting 1,000 years of peaceful rule of Yahshua, or will some who change be received into the Kingdom during the 1,000 year rule?

A Those who are in the first resurrection will be no more physical, but will be made spirit beings when Yahshua resurrects them into immortality at the last trump. They are called the "firstfruits" which means the grand harvest of humans will be when they all keep His laws as a way of life. Just when the grand body of believers who come up in the second resurrection will be made spirit beings is not clear. However, because those in the first resurrection are termed the "FIRSTFRUITS" indicates there will be more (second) "fruits" to follow. Be determined to be in that first resurrection. It is the best one!

Q Gen. 4:11-15 seems to indicate Cain did not repent. He is hidden from the face of Yahweh. Do we have Cain generation in the world today? What was the sign that Yahweh put on Cain to avoid his being killed?

A The Cain generation died out in Noah's flood where all wicked humans died, except for the eight in the ark. Interestingly, the Hebrew does not say the mark or sign was put "upon" Cain, but put "for" Cain—like a cloud or something over him.

Q Yahshua will be ruling for 1,000 years, Rev. 20:6. Does the Bible give time limits for how long man will rule himself before Yahshua begins the rule?

A We understand that Yahshua will begin His rule when he returns and sets His foot on the earth as in Zech 14:1-4. Just when that will be we don't know. It is the next big event.

Just how others will be made immortal we are not told. We are to keep about His work—"occupy until He comes."

Q Can a baptized person with the Holy Spirit be forgiven if he/she was out of control accidentally?

A Certainly, Yahweh understands our frailties and weaknesses. As long as we do not deliberately flout His laws and way of life, His tender mercies will prevail. But we cannot expect Yahweh to tolerate sin. Yahshua paid the price for our sin if we repent and accept His sacrifice.

<Witnesses from page 20>

In this psalm, Yahweh is called a rock. In 1 Corinthians 10:4 Yahshua is called a rock. We understand the symbolism of "rock" in these verses. The references are not to a literal, actual rock. Neither is the fire coming from the rock's mouth in Psalm 18:8 literal. That fire is a symbol of the spiritual power of Yahweh's Word.

Yahweh's Word is spirit and truth. In Jeremiah 5:14 we are told that Yahweh's Word is a fire in His prophet's mouth. Read that verse again and note that the fire coming from the prophet's mouth will consume the people. What people? Who else but the inhabitants of the earth who gloat, celebrate, and rejoice over the death of the witnesses.

Such people will be like the people of Noah's day, Matthew 24:36-39. They will laugh, scoff, mock, and refuse to believe it until the day they stand before the judgment throne and are judged by the Word: condemned because they refused to see or hear it and repent of their evil ways.

They will believe the Word then, but it will be too late! From them will come wailing, Matthew 13:42, crying like Esau over their loss, Hebrews 12:17, but they will stand in jeopardy of being consumed in

the lake of fire, called the second death, Revelation 20:14.

Yahshua told His disciples in Matthew 24, "When you see all these things, you know it is near, right at the door," verse 33. He also said, "...this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened," verse 34.

The big problem with understanding this prophecy is that Yahshua didn't give His disciples a clue to the duality in this prophecy. He did not differentiate between its first and second fulfillment. He runs it all together.

The disciples did not grasp that what they would experience after they saw the abomination that makes desolate in the temple would only be a prototype of what Yahweh's end-time witnesses will experience after they see the Man of Sin revealed in the temple. Not everyone in the generation in which Yahshua walked this earth believed His Word and became His disciple. Neither will everyone in the end-time generation believe the witnesses and repent of their evil.

It is doubtful that all the disciples died before the end of the Old Covenant age, but certainly many, even perhaps a great many people of the disciples' day, saw the end of the Old Covenant age.

So also will many people of

the end-time generation live from the revelation of the Man of Sin to the end of the New Covenant age at Yahshua's return. Yahweh gave Yahshua's disciples (apostles only?) power to perform miracles during their witnessing.

He has promised that His end-time witnesses will be given power, too. When? It will have to be some time before the Man of Sin reveals himself. Why? After he has the power to stand in the temple, he will also have the power to put an end to the witnessing of Yahweh's Word.

Anyone to whom it has been given to understand correctly what is going on in the world when the witnessing is silenced will very likely be able to set the date of Yahshua's return.

This is because the number 3½ probably indicates the demise of the witnessing at the midpoint in time between the revelation of the Man of Sin and the resurrection of the saints at Yahshua's return. The number 3 is associated with the resurrection and the ½ part may indicate that the event will occur halfway between the two other events.

These are the author's inspirations. Yahweh says, "Test the spirits" that speak to you. It is our prayer that you do just that.

Elder Ralph Henrie (deceased)



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