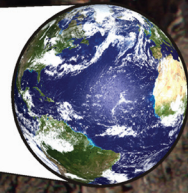


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Which olive tree are
you a part of?
The good or the wild?
Read Rom 11:24

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This magazine, **YAIY Beacon**, is published bi-monthly by Yahweh's Assembly in Yahshua, 2963 Co. Rd. 233, Kingdom City, MO 65262.

This magazine is sent free of charge, made possible through the tithes and offerings of those who desire to see the light of truth shine in our day.

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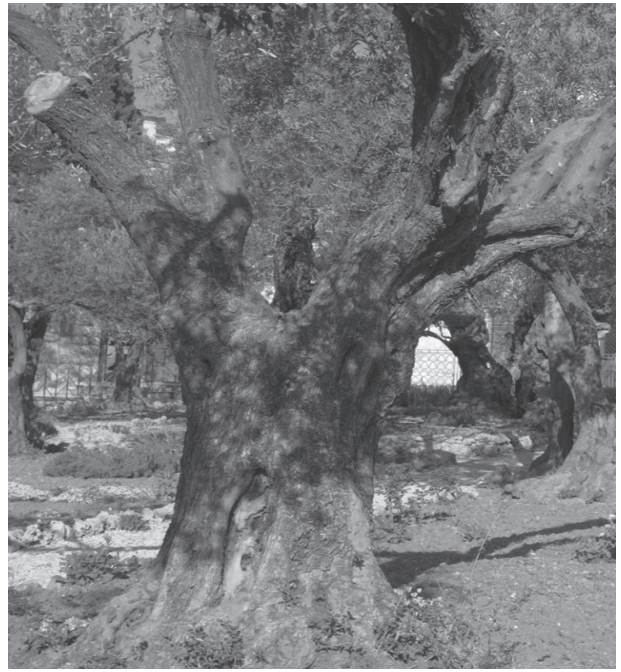
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Cover: courtesy dreamstime.com depicting an old olive tree believed to be in the Garden of Gethsemane during Yahshua's sojourn on earth.

The Tree That Yields Fruit



Then Elohim said, "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, whose seed is in itself, on the earth"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And Elohim saw that it was good. So the evening and the morning were the third day, Genesis 1:11-13.

According to its Kind

OK. Let's just think about this for a moment. It says, "according to its kind, whose seed is in itself," and "whose seed is in itself according to its kind." What do we learn here? Well, one thing we learn is, if anyone ever asks you, "What came first, the chicken or the egg?" you can point to Scripture, Genesis 1, verse 11 and 21, and tell them, "the chicken." Beyond that, we learn one of the truths about creation. We learn that Yahweh, through Yahshua (hence "Elohim", meaning THE Mighty One AND Mighty Ones), created living things first, containing the seed of that particular living thing within it. When I read, "according to its kind, whose seed is in itself," and "whose seed is in itself according to its kind," I hear the parent, then the child, who grows up to be a parent, producing a child of the same species it came from. This is the continuation of the species, without change, a replication of the original parent.

In the summary of Genesis, Chapter 1, in verse 29, Scripture reads:

And Elohim said, "See, I have given you every herb [meaning a glistening, tender, green shoot] that

yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food (sustenance)."

How many of the herbs on the face of all the earth does Scripture say Elohim created? Every herb! I looked up the word, every. It means every; and, it means "each" and "all". And, when did this happen? On the third day.

How many of the trees, how many sea creatures, how many birds, how many cattle, beasts and creeping things did Elohim create? He (or They) created EVERY, each and all fish, bird, reptile and beast on the face of the earth. Finally, on the sixth day, Elohim created man-kind. How many species of mankind did Elohim create?

So Elohim created man in His own image; in the image of Elohim He created him [singular]; male and female He created them [In verse 24 of chapter 2 in Genesis, male and female become one flesh], Genesis 1:27.

How many species are there of mankind? Scripture says there is one mankind.

And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living, Genesis 3:20.

These verses in Genesis serve as a literal or physical representation for a spiritual concept found throughout the Scripture.

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the unrighteous, nor stands in the path of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever he

does shall prosper, Psalm 1:1-3.

Blessed is the man who trusts in Yahweh, and whose hope is Yahweh. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, And will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit, Jeremiah 17:7-8.

The Fig Tree

He also spoke this parable: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. Then he said to the keeper of his vineyard, 'Look, for three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none. Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' But he answered and said to him, 'Sir [which is Kuros, from Kurios, meaning Master or Mighty One], let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and fertilize it. And if it bears fruit, well. But if not, after that you can cut it down,'" Luke 13:6-9.

Who does the "certain man" represent? Who speaks to the "keeper of his vineyard"? He is Yahweh, the owner of the land in which His Vineyard is planted. Who is the "keeper of Yahweh's vineyard"? He is Yahshua, the One who prunes, waters, fertilizes and presumably weeds the vineyard. Yahweh's Vineyard has to be a reference to Israel.

The Spirit of the Sovereign Yahweh is upon Me, because Yahweh has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of Yahweh, and the day of vengeance of our Elohim; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they may be called trees of righteous-

ness, the planting of Yahweh, that He may be glorified, Isaiah 61:1-3

Who are those mourning at present? There are those who witness now the abominations all around us. And, who are the ones mourning in Zion, meaning after Yahshua returns? Those who are not put to death at His return! And, who is granted consolation, beauty, joy and praise? The trees of righteousness, the planting of Yahweh!

Who or what is the "fig tree"? Or, we could consider it to be each of us, since we have been grafted in to the root. Why three years?

When you come into the land, and have planted all kinds of trees for food, then you shall count their fruit as uncircumcised. Three years it shall be as uncircumcised to you. It shall not be eaten. But in the fourth year all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to Yahweh. And in the fifth year you may eat its fruit, that it may yield to you its increase: I am Yahweh your Elohim, Leviticus 19:23-25.

What does it mean to "dig around it and fertilize it"? Agriculturally, it means to provide the necessary nutrients to sustain the tree and produce fruit. Figuratively, I believe it means to be called out and granted the Holy Spirit, a necessary ingredient for faith and obedience. What does it mean to "bear fruit"? Notice that the owner and the keeper of the vineyard DEPEND upon the tree bearing fruit for THEIR sustenance? We are important to Father Yahweh and Son Yahshua. That's why we are commanded to go forth and plant the seed from the fruit that we bear, the Seed of which is the Word of Yahweh, the physical Seed of which is Yahshua the Messiah. We are to be as Yahshua was, obedient to the Father; and we are to reproduce the Seed within us and plant that Seed to the ends of the earth.

For as the earth brings forth its bud, as the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring

forth, so the Almighty Yahweh will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations, Isaiah 61:11.

The Good and the Bad Seed

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn,"" Matthew 13:24-30.

So, if the time comes when, all of a sudden, people are MISSING, what might that really mean? Well, I suspect it would be a rapture of sorts; but, THIS rapture is written in black and white in Scripture, and the destination is not heaven!

Then Yahshua sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The

Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Matthew 13:36-43)

Yahshua, here, is speaking to those who, through the Holy Spirit, have been given ears to hear. He is making it plain to them.

For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks, Luke 6:43-45.

Likewise, we read in Matthew 7:15-23:

Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn-bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to Me, "Master!" shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but [only] he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Master! Master, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!"

Yahweh's Will Shall Prevail

What is the will of the Father? Yahshua gives us the clear answer: to not practice lawlessness, but to practice Law-Fullness. Yahshua IS the FULLNESS of the Law of Yahweh, and we are to fill ourselves FULL of Yahweh's Law. We are to fill ourselves with Yahshua.

Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill, Matthew 5:17.

Yahshua demonstrates what the fullness of the Law looks like, so that we can model our lives after His.

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love Yahweh, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn [the first resurrected from the grave; that is, the first 'born again'] among many brethren. Moreover, whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified, Romans 8:28-30.

Paul is speaking in the past tense, looking back from the days of the Kingdom of Yahweh on earth. What does it mean to be conformed to the image of Yahshua? It has to mean that we do what Yahshua did. He was obedient to His Father's Will, His Father's Word, His Father's Law. And we, too, must do the Will of Yahweh.

Provide for the Flesh?

And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in rev-

elry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Sovereign Yahshua, the Messiah, and make NO provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts, Romans 13:11-14.

How in the world do we make NO provision for the flesh?

But you have not so learned Messiah [Paul is comparing his students to others, as in verse 19, who are past feeling, and have given themselves over to lewdness to work all uncleanness with greediness], if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by Him; as the truth is in Yahshua: that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to Yahweh, in true righteousness and holiness, Ephesians 4:20-24.

We must renew our minds, according to the Spirit of Yahweh, so that we do not allow our bodies to engage in sinful behavior.

Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit ["new" is the Hebrew word, chadash, which means a renewed or repaired spirit] within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh [which means fresh and rosy], that they may walk in My statutes [My appointments] and keep My judgments [My government or rulings] and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their Elohim, Ezekiel 11:19-21.

Clearly, the purpose of receiving the Spirit is to freshen our desire to obey Yahweh and abide in the path, the cycles, the appointments of Yahweh that Yahshua kept.

Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, 2 Corinthians 9:10.

Let him who is taught the word [the Law of Yahweh, the Seed of Yahshua] share in all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived, Yahweh is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith, Galatians 6:6-10.

Substance and Evidence

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence [that is, the proof] of things not seen, Hebrews 11:1

Now, how many of us have been taught that faith is setting our hearts and minds on those things that are prophesied about the future and believing in stuff we can't see, like angels and demons? Well, that's NOT what Paul is teaching here. Faith is not about things hoped for or things not seen. Faith, Paul says in this passage, is about substance and evidence! Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. He is talking about stuff we CAN see and that is here, right in front of our eyes!

For the wrath of Yahweh is revealed from heaven against all unholiness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of Yahweh is manifest [meaning an obvious display] in them, for Yahweh has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen [Now, wait a minute, how can INVISIBLE attributes be CLEARLY SEEN? Well, good old Paul always explains what he means]. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes

are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made [Clearly, Paul does not subscribe to the idea of a universe coming into being through evolution – this universe was MADE, it was created by Yahweh. Further, when Paul says the word “seen,” he’s not talking about just viewing something with one’s eyes, he’s talking about understanding, or PERCEIVING also, with the heart. Now, “look” at what Paul says, pun intended, about what the heart can “see,” still in verse 20], even His eternal power and [now, the English translation says “Godhead,” but I will use, “Highest-Majesty,” because the Greek word is theiotes – interpreted by churchianity as the triune deity, father-son-and-holy-ghost, in spite of the fact that the word theiotes has absolutely nothing to do with three of anything. Theiotes simply means the Highest Majesty. And, how obvious is this truth? Listen to what Paul says, still in verse 20 ...], Highest-Majesty so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew Yahweh, [And, how did they know Him? They have seen creation – and must therefore know that there is, indeed, a Creator], they did not glorify Him as Elohim [as the Almighty], nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible Elohim into an image made like corruptible man – and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things [People became idolatrous. Today’s idolatry is professed by evolutionists, who claim that human kind is a corruption of microscopic organisms, fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, beasts and monkeys]. Therefore Yahweh also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts [envy] of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of Yahweh for the lie, and worshiped

and served the creature [that is, themselves] rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen, Romans 1:18-25.

(Note: one can go to the web site www.nazerite.net/king-james.html to see why “Amein” was used.)

What is the LIE?

What, exactly, is THE lie that Paul is speaking of, here? Typically, ideas or words that are first-mentioned in Scripture have a great influence on further use of that idea or that word. The rationale for this idea come from Isaiah 46:10,

Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done.

The phrase, “from the beginning” is M'Reshiyt, in Hebrew, literally meaning “out of the beginning”. So the verse should read: “Declaring the end out of the beginning, and out of ancient times things that are not yet done.” So, what is THE lie?

Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die. For Elohim knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like Elohim, knowing good and evil." So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked [that is, they became intimately aware of their evilness]; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings, Genesis 3:4-7.

So, what is the lie? Well, it's not just the words, “You will not surely die.” The lie is primarily that they could become like Yahweh, equivalent to Him, that they could evolve into something that they are not, nor could ever be. It's also about the lie that Elohim “knows” good and evil. The word “know” means to

“become intimate” or to “exist as,” but since when IS Elohim good and evil? Yahweh is not good AND evil; he is just GOOD. Many people will quote the Scripture to “prove” that Yahweh is the author of evil, but that is due to the misunderstanding of the translated word “evil.” When we read verses like the following from the King James language, it seems true that Yahweh is the author of evil, but is not:

Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? (Lamentations 3:38)

I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I Yahweh do all these things, Isaiah 45:7.

If this is true, then, how can the following verses be true?

For You are not an Elohim who takes pleasure in wickedness; no evil dwells with You. The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity, Psalm 5:4-5.

Therefore listen to me, you men of understanding: far be it from Elohim to do wickedness, and from the Almighty to commit iniquity. For He repays man according to his work,

and makes man to find a reward according to his way. Surely Elohim will never do wickedly, nor will the Almighty pervert justice, Job 34:10-12.

Is there a contradiction here? No. The Elizabethan language of the King James Bible uses the word “evil,” which we interpret as “sin.” Its Hebrew meaning is calamity or judgment. Yahweh hates wickedness and will judge and punish the wicked. This is not evidence of evil; but rather, it is evidence of righteousness. Yahweh is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), nor will He pervert justice.

The point is, however, that Satan lied to Adam and Eve about what they could BECOME. This, as it turns out, is the major theme of the Theory of Evolution. Yahweh is not an Elohim of evolution; He is the Creator of the universe, and His Son, Yahshua is the Master Craftsman.

Yahweh possessed me at the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I have been established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth. When there were no

depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth; while as yet He had not made the earth or the fields, or the primal dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens, I was there, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him as a master craftsman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight ----- was with the sons of men, Proverbs 8:22-31.

Produce Good Fruit

We are called to produce good fruit, beginning with the good Seed, the Seed of truth and wisdom of Yahweh.

And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them, Matt 7:15-20.

For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: For if Yahweh spared not the

natural branches, take heed lest



He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of Yahweh: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for Yahweh is able to graff them in again. For if thou wert cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and wert grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree: how much more shall these, which be the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree? (Rom 11:16-24)

seed and her Seed; He shall crush your head, and you shall bruise His heel, Genesis 3:15.

And Yahweh Elohim planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed. And out of the ground made Yahweh Elohim to grow every tree that is pleasant

to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil, Genesis 2:8-9.

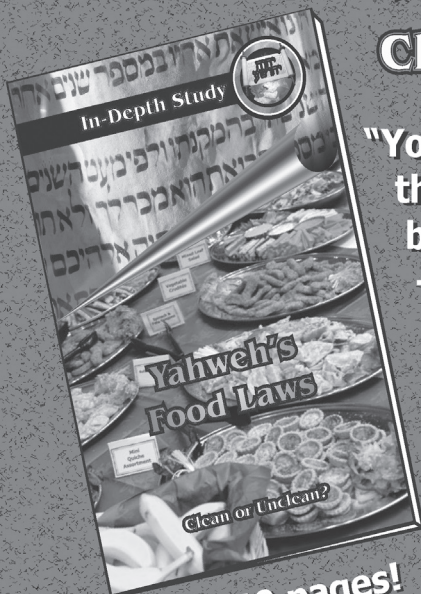
Then Yahweh Elohim took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And Yahweh Elohim commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die," Genesis 2:15-17.

We are free to eat of the Tree of Life or of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Tree of Life represents the Seed of Yahweh, the Truth, the Messiah, the Way of the Righteous, the Law and the Word of Yahweh. Eating from this tree means walking as Yahshua walked, in obedience to the Father, keeping the Appointed Times and giving ear to the wisdom found in Scripture. Eating from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil means participating in good and evil. Now, does that mean if I more often do what's right but

Yahweh's Food Laws

Clean or Unclean?

"You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and clean."
- Leviticus 10:10



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been born of Yahweh does not sin, for His seed [that is, again, the Messiah, the Law of Yahweh] remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of Yahweh, 1 John 3:4-9.

From which tree are you partaking? Are you eating

sometimes do what's wrong, that's OK? I'm saved; and once saved, always saved? All my sins are forgiven – those I did in the past, those I do now and those I will do in the future? I don't think so! Yahweh says to make NO provision for sin. Scripture also says,

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment ..., Hebrews 10:26-27.

Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness. And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of Yahweh was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has

from the tree that leads to acts of goodness and evil; like giving away Bibles – but teaching against the instructions that Yahweh gives to us; you know, the commandments that are found within those Bibles? Or, are you eating of the Tree that bears fruit leading to Eternal Life, and taking the Seeds from that fruit and spreading them to the world? Are you nurturing others with the Truth, caring for others physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually? Are you keeping yourself unspotted from the world?

If not, I pray that Yahweh awakens your heart, through whatever means He deems necessary, and brings you into His household, that you may live throughout eternity as a Child of the Most High. Blessings to you in the name of Yahshua the Messiah. HalleluYah!

Elder John Fisher

Playing Blind Isn't Smart



One way to help promote a falsehood is to remain silent and say nothing about it. In his controversial bestseller *The God Delusion*, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins wittingly or otherwise insulted the intelligence of the great majority of mankind who believe in the existence of Elohim and creation.

Liza Miller of Newsweek had an interview with Richard Dawkins (Newsweek, Oct. 5, 2009, p. 49), and subsequently alluded to him as Darwin's Rotweiler. To me, Mr. Dawkins is a Darwinian fanatic extraordinaire. You see, this scientist—still a far cry from Newton's or Einstein's stature—whose pronouncements are nothing new, but a parody of Darwin's theory or ideas, appears to be trying to outdo the father of evolution which he idolizes. Why? It's because Charles Darwin himself did not make fun of people who believe in the existence of Elohim, or resorted to derogatory parallelisms as regards the Elohim of the Old Testament. In contrast, Mr. Dawkins characterizes the OT Elohim to a hyped-up Ayatollah Khomeini, and at worst, to a monster, Newsweek, Oct. 5, 2009 p. 49.

I suppose Richard Dawkins exults in having the liberty to talk of Elohim in whatever derogatory or blasphemous manner with no fear for his life. And this, I believe, is because of western liberalism and leniency. Were this man living in Iran or in any fundamentalist Islamic state, and talked of Elohim (Allah) in like manner, we can only guess as to what an outraged mob could have done to him for his blasphemy. Mr. Dawkins is indeed lucky that he lives in a democratic country where blasphemy is not punishable.

As I look at Richard Dawkins' picture, concededly he is a good-looking guy exuding a surreptitious smile. He certainly looks nice, charming, and scholarly. Indeed, good looks and an evil heart of unbelief is a unique blend of attributes, and can be an excellent tool for the Master Deceiver to convince people that Elohim does not exist. Well, the Bible speaks of a Master Deceiver.

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations. For thou hast said

in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of El: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds: I will be like the Most High, Is. 14:12-14.

Lucifer, with his stunning beauty and cunning words, appears to have easily deceived Eve. And Richard Dawkins, handsome and somewhat imposing, is practically doing the same thing trying to blot out the concept of Elohim from man's mind.

The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after Elohim; Elohim is not in his thoughts, Psalms 10:4.

The Ugly Side of Science

Let it be on record that this writer harbors not a milliliter of bad blood against science as a whole. But like the story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, science does have its good and bad sides. It has been said that money is not bad, per se. And what is bad is the love of money—being the root of all evil, 1 Tim. 6:10. In like manner, science is not bad, per se. What is bad is the wrong use of science by man himself.

Science need not become the antithesis to religion. Rather, science and religion should be complementary. Together, true religion and conscientious science will greatly enhance man's understanding, knowledge and wisdom, and will surely elevate man's consciousness to loftier heights in relation to Elohim and other forms of life around him. It should be a partnership that will not only revive, but instead prop up the weakened old moral values and behavior.

Like many other good things, science happens to have a bad side—not bad by itself—but made bad by man himself. Look at the unregulated utilization of fossil fuels and other resources made possible by science and technology that led to the massive pollution of the earth's environment. At the rate it is happening, planet earth is fast becoming less and less an ideal place for human living. To put it bluntly, if I were an E.T. scouting for a new and better home, I would quickly rule out the earth and look somewhere among the billions of other solar systems.

Now comes the worst side. As scientists continue to gather a wealth of information and knowledge made easier with the PC, Hubble Space Telescope, and the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), a new breed of scientists became so puffed-up, fiercely conceited and haughty. They now stridently promote the self-sufficiency of man, i.e., without the need of Elohim. Very vocal and malicious of these new atheists is Richard Dawkins. Thousands of years ago, the psalmist had spoken of atheists like him.

The fool hath said in his heart, "There is no Elohim," Ps. 14:1.

Hear this you foolish and senseless people, who have eyes but do not see, who have ears but do not hear. Should you not fear Me? declares Yahweh. Should you not tremble in My presence? I made the sand a boundary for the sea, an everlasting barrier it cannot cross. The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail; they may roar, but they cannot cross it. But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts; they have turned aside and gone away, Je. 5:21-23.

Darwin's Magic Spell

Ruins of ancient monuments, temples and altars in many parts of the world, are mute but solid evidences that from olden times man inherently believed in the existence of the supernatural or deity. Even the illiterate North American Indians speak of the Great Spirit. Farther south, the Aztec, Inca, and MayaN peoples have their stone altars where they performed offerings to their deity. In Europe, the early inhabitants of England have their Stonehenge, and so on. Aside from these, many more records reveal that throughout the ages, man has always believed in Elohim—until Charles Darwin shook the whole world with his work, *The Origin of Species*.

Evolution, the substance of

Darwin's work, is a blanket denial of the Biblical account of creation. In one bold stroke, Darwin sought to demolish the two fundamental exigencies in the life of believers, namely: the Bible and the very existence of Elohim. From England, Darwinism quickly spread throughout the whole civilized world, creating doubts in people's minds as to whether there is really a creator or not. More forceful and effective than Harry Houdini's hocus-pocus (magic), Charles Darwin had cast a spell that engulfed the entire world. And, although indirectly, it put to question the legitimacy of the religious hierarchy.

Most amazingly, it was not the common people who easily succumbed to Darwin's spell—not the blue collar office worker or the semi-literate laborer, farmer or fisherman—but the academic community that legitimized and institutionalized evolution. The gist of the matter is that—however bitter or unpalatable evolution is—if you were a student, you just had to swallow it to finish college. Otherwise, you ended up relegated to the ranks of the school drop-outs. Just imagine, the academic communities, tasked to provide adequate and proper education to the youth of the land, are the very ones planting the seeds of agnosticism and atheism in everyone's mind.

Darwin's work spawned atheism and blossomed in the sudden appearance of Vladimir Lenin and eventual rise of the militant colossus, i.e., Russia or the Soviet Union. Thereupon, Lenin proceeded to close the Russian Orthodox Church and declared, "Religion is the opiate of the people."

For he hath said, "It profited a man nothing that he should delight himself with Elohim," Job 34:9 TWOY.

But none saith, Where is Elohim my maker, who giveth songs in the night; Who teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh

us wiser than the fowls of heaven? There they cry, but none giveth answer, because of the pride of evil men, Job 35:10-12.

From Russia the seemingly idealistic communist ideology became popular and swept other eastern European nations and half of Germany. It also went eastward to China, Mongolia, North Korea, and then the French colonies of Indochina, i.e., Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. For a time, it even threatened the United States when the communist movement established a foothold with Fidel Castro of Cuba.

Science vs. Creation

Most scientists believe that all life forms on earth had begun as a one-celled organism that supposedly evolved into thousands and thousands of species of flora and fauna—culminating into the appearance of "homo erectus" and eventually of "homo sapiens" some 250,000-150,000 years ago. As for the universe, physicists say that all the galaxies—the billions of stars having their own solar systems—began as an UNIMAGINABLY SMALL compressed volume (emphasis supplied). Then there comes the so-called big bang and the entire universe was born.

To the eminent scientists, that's how the universe and life on earth came to exist. And accordingly, there is no creator deity. Period. But if you don't believe what they say, Richard Dawkins thinks you are not smart. Does that mean being an atheist is to be smart? Here's what the Scriptures say,

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not Elohim made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of Elohim the world through its wisdom did not know Him, 1 Co. 1: 20-21.

The eminent scientists and philosophers epitomize the wisdom

of this world, and they are among those seated on top of the academic ladder. Is their wisdom worth emulating? Paul gave this admonition,

Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with Elohim. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their craftiness. And again, Yahweh knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain, 1 Cor. 3:18-20.

Who is Smart?

Richard Dawkins thinks that the biblical account of creation is fiction. What is fiction? In brief, here's what it is: a) any literary work portraying imaginary characters and events; and b) in law, something accepted as fact for convenience, although not necessarily true, Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language, Concise Edition.

Now let's go back to the scientific point of view about the origin of life. Biologists say that all life forms on earth began as a one-celled thing which happened to evolve into thousands and thousands of species and culminated in the appearance of man. This encapsulates what the scientists believe as to how all life forms on earth came to be. And Richard Dawkins, I repeat, thinks that unless you believe in evolution, you are not smart.

What Does It Take to be Smart?

Here in the Philippines, many times I have seen on TV a native breed of dog whose name is Saver. After using the toilet, Saver does not forget to flush it. When commanded, "Saver, put out the light," he runs and presses the switch. His owner and trainer asked, "Two plus one?" the dog barks three times. Then another question, "Three plus

one?" Saver barked three times in rapid succession, paused, and then barked one more time. These are just samples. Saver does many other things really amazing for a dog to do. Now Saver and his owner often received invitations to attend parties and other occasions. Reason? People say Saver is smart—really smart.

Question: Does Saver really know something about cleanliness or sanitation? Can the dog really count? The answer is a big NO. Why then is Saver able to do such tricks? Simple. Not only dogs, but other animals that have a measure of intelligence are able to do amazing tricks. How? Trainers motivate the animals to do something by giving a reward—usually tidbits of food—every time the animal performs as commanded until it acts like a programmed robot.

From Darwin's time biologists motivated people all over the world to become atheists the way animal trainers do with the inferior creatures. What's the treat? Scientific knowledge and of being "smart." That's what Richard Dawkins is doing now with his book, *The God Delusion*. But Mr. Dawkins is not smart in not considering that humankind is a vastly superior species and much different from the animal kind. He isn't smart in not knowing that man was created to belong to the Elohim kind. You see, the human brain is equipped with the mechanism or power of induction and deduction (logic), or a rational mind able to distinguish right from wrong and fact from fiction. That is why the great majority of people do not accept evolution which is really stranger than fiction.

For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths, 2 Tim 4:3-4.

Have Faith, or Nothing

Science should not be one-sided as to whether there is Elohim or not. Science's inability to prove the existence of a supernatural Being even with their most sensitive instruments is not a valid reason for denial. Firstly, Elohim exists in the spirit, and thus is invisible. Secondly, physics deals mainly on the study of matter and these two realities are in different realms or dimensions of existence. Science, therefore, should not rule out the existence of Elohim by reason of invisibility. The adage 'to see is to believe' doesn't apply here.

The fact is two invisible forces affect us daily: a) Gravity is invisible, but we know it exists, and without it we can't live in this world; and b) The wind is invisible, but we love its gentle breeze, or dread its force when a typhoon uproots trees, wrecks homes, or causes giant waves that toss and sink ships in the sea.

But there exists an incomparable Power able to subdue or control two forces that modern science and technology is powerless to control. Let's see and consider two incidents:

And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that a ship was covered with waves: but He was asleep. And His disciples came to him, and awoke Him, saying, "Master, save us, we perish." And He sayeth unto them, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" Then He rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was great calm. But the men marveled saying, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Mat. 8:24-27)

And in the fourth watch of the night Yahshua went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a spirit"; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Yahshua spake unto them, saying, "Be of

good cheer; it is I, be not afraid.” And Peter answered Him and said, “Master, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.” And He said “Come.” And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Yahshua. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, “Master, save me.” And immediately Yahshua stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said to him, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?” and when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased, Mat. 14:25-32.

These Scriptures give us a clear insight into the incontrovertible fact that Elohim exists, and is in control. In these two incidents, Yahshua, the Son of Yahweh, and the second member of the Elohim family, needs only to speak to subdue and control gravity and the winds—two forces of nature that are beyond the control of man.

But above all, in these episodes Yahshua raised the indispensability of FAITH, saying, “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” And He said to Peter, “O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt.” Notice. When Yahshua bid him to come, Peter, full of faith, came down out of the ship and walked on water, defying gravity. But when he saw the raging waves, fear and doubt gripped him and he began to sink.

But let him ask in faith, doubting nothing: for he that doubts is like the surge of the sea driven and tossed by the wind, Ja. 1:6.

But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to Elohim must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, Hebrews 11:6 TWOY.

Unseen Parallels Unveiled

A deeper analysis of the seemingly incompatible viewpoints be-

tween science and religion will show that it is superficial, and need not be the cause of the existing social, mental, and emotional division between the religious and scientific community. Let’s put aside prejudice and consider the facts.

a) Scientists say that in the beginning time and space did not exist. Bible-based religion holds the same viewpoint that before the creation only the spirit realm existed and that there’s only eternity, i.e., no time or space. Both sides are correct.

b) Scientists tell us the universe began as an UNIMAGINABLY SMALL compressed volume. Can we, with our finite minds, have a fair reckoning of how small that could really be? I think we can. Try to reckon down the line until you arrive at 99.99%, which is just .01% to Zero. At this point you will be compelled to stop, because down beyond is zero. Now, approximate this and the equivalent is 0, or NOTHINGNESS. The same is true in the Genesis account of creation. Before creation, there’s only nothingness. Again, no conflict here.

c) Physicists say there was a cosmic explosion (big bang) that blew up the unimaginably small thing, and when the debris cooled, the universe was born. What does the Bible say as to how the universe came to exist?

Through faith we understand that the worlds (i.e. universe) were framed by the Word of Yahweh, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear, Hebrews 11:3.

Notice the striking parallel which suggests that what the scientists call the Big Bang may refer to Yahweh’s WORDS when the Almighty Creator thundered, “Let there be...” and the universe appeared out of nothing.

By the WORD of Yahweh were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth, Psalms 33:6 TSS.

Considering all these, science and religion, after all, can be compatible. What, then, perpetuates the misunderstanding? Preconceived ideas, bias and conceit on the part of the scientist.

Conclusion

Scientists need to accept that even with the Large Hadron Collider, science can’t explain all the mysteries of nature and life. For example, what really, is gravity? We know it is neither matter nor gas, but it is powerful force that operates from the center of a star, planet, or moon. Consider this. Without gravity the continents would simply break apart and drift away from each other into space. But we learn from Scriptures that there is a greater Force or power that has control over gravity, i.e., Elohim in the person of Yahshua the Messiah when He walked on the water and let Peter do it also, Mat. 14:25-32.

Richard Dawkins admits that he is ignorant of many other things. So, in brushing aside the existence of Elohim, he is just playing blind. Not all scientists though, embrace atheism. Aside from Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein (two greatest minds in science), nowadays there is geneticist Francis Collins and others who believe in Elohim. As for Steven Weinberg, he hinted of the possibility that he may yet change his mind. I pray he does, and the sooner the better.

Do you not know? Have you not heard? Yahweh is the everlasting Elohim; the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and His understanding no one can fathom, Isaiah 40:28.

It’s better to have FAITH in Yahweh through His Son Yahshua, the true Messiah. Otherwise, without Elohim in your life, you will die like a rat and be lost forever. Believe it or not—Playing Blind Isn’t Smart.

Elder A. S. Untalan, Sr.



Halloween Is NOT Hallowed

The following article is a compilation of information available on the internet under the subject, "Halloween."

Origins – the Celts

History has recorded for us the origin of Halloween. Halloween's origins date back to the ancient Celtic festival called Samhain (pronounced sow-in). The Celtic people lived over 2,000 years ago in the area now called Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France. By the first century BC they spread over much of Europe.

The Celts believed that November 1 began their new year as it marked the end of summer and harvest time and the beginning of the dark, cold winter, a time of year often associated with human death. The Celts believed that the night before, October 31, stood as a boundary between the worlds of the living and the dead.

During the celebration, the Celts wore costumes, typically consisting of animal heads and skins, and attempted to tell each other's fortunes.

From Celtic and Anglo-Saxon times, October 31 was observed as the eve of the new year, a time of death and renewal, and was called Samhain, believed as the time when the ghosts of the dead returned to earth.

In general, the Celts believed that the sinful souls of those who died during the year had been transferred to the bodies of animals. They believed that their sins could be expiated by gifts and offerings and that their souls would be freed to claim a heavenly reward. At this time of the year the days are short and the Celts simulated the light and heat of the sun by building large bonfires, where the people gathered to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to the Celtic deities.

By A.D. 43, Romans had conquered the majority of Celtic territory. In the course of the four hundred years that they ruled the Celtic lands, two festivals of Roman origin were combined with the traditional Celtic celebration of Samhain.

The first was Feralia, a day in late October when

the Romans traditionally commemorated the passing of the dead. The second was a day to honor Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees. The symbol of Pomona is the apple and the incorporation of this celebration into Samhain probably explains the tradition of "bobbing" for apples that is practiced today on Halloween.

By the 800s, the influence of Christianity had spread into Celtic lands. In the seventh century, Pope Boniface IV designated November 1 All Saints' Day, a time to honor saints and martyrs. It is widely believed today that the pope was attempting to replace the Celtic festival of the dead with a related, but church-sanctioned holiday. The celebration was also called All-hallows or All-hallowmas (from Middle English Alholowmesse meaning All Saints' Day) and the night before it, the night of Samhain, began to be called All-hallows Eve and, eventually, Halloween. Even later, in A.D. 1000, the church would make November 2 All Souls' Day, a day to honor the dead. It was celebrated similarly to Samhain, with big bonfires, parades, and dressing up in costumes as saints, angels, and devils. Together, the three celebrations, the eve of All Saints', All Saints', and All Souls', were called Hallowmas.

The economy of the Celts was pastoral and agricultural, and they had no city life. Each tribe was headed by a king and was divided into three classes: Druids (priests), warrior nobles and commoners.

Druids

The earliest known records of the Druids come from the 3rd century BC. According to Julius Caesar, who is the principal source of information about the Druids, they seemed to frequent the oak forests and acted as priests, teachers and judges. Once a year the Druids assembled at a sacred place in the territory of the Carnutes, which was believed to be the center of all Gaul, and all legal disputes were there submitted

to the judgment of the Druids.

The Druids offered human sacrifices for those who were gravely sick or in danger of death in battle, even though they, themselves, abstained from warfare. Generally, they would choose to sacrifice criminals, but would choose innocent victims, if necessary.

In the early period, Druids, who were occupied with magico-religious duties, performed certain rites in clearings in the forest. Sacred buildings were used only later under Roman influence. The Druids were suppressed in Gaul by the Romans under Tiberius (reigned AD 14–37) and probably in Britain a little later. In Ireland they lost their priestly functions after the coming of Christianity and survived as poets, historians, and judges (filid, senchaidi, and brithemain). Many scholars believe that the Hindu Brahman in the East and the Celtic Druid in the West were lateral survivors of an ancient Indo-European priesthood.

The Druids principal doctrine was that the soul was immortal and passed at death from one person to another. Druidism is a religious faith of ancient Celtic inhabitants of Gaul and the British Isles from the second century BC to the second century AD. This religion included the belief in the immortal soul, which at death was believed to pass into the body of a newborn child.

The observances connected with Halloween are thought to have originated among the ancient Druids, who believed on that evening (October 31) Saman (Samhain), the lord of the dead, called forth hosts of evil spirits. The Druids customarily lit great fires on Halloween, apparently for the purpose of warding off all these spirits. Common to both the Druids and other pagan beliefs, it was a time when the dead came back to life to mingle with the living. Samhain was thought to be the judge of the souls who determined their future.

Celebrations, *The Complete Book of American Holidays*, p. 258, says that at this time the Druids offered sacrifices to their sun god and that "it was common for horses to be sacrificed since they were sacred to the Sun God. There were also human sacrifices. Men, mostly criminals, were imprisoned in wicker and thatch cages shaped like animals or giants. The Druid priests set fire to the tindery cages and the men were burned to death. In the Middle Ages in Europe, black cats were still being thrown to the flames in wicker cages, for they were thought to be the friends of witches or even transformed witches."

What we now call Halloween was not so-called by the Druids. They celebrated what was called the Feast of Samhain. When the feast was over, villagers donned

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Mini - Study

Let's Pull the Mask from HALLOWEEN

Every October 31 children across the land learn how extortion works through one of the most popular of ancient, pagan festivals. We know it as Halloween, which is a shortened combination of the words "Hallowed" and "evening." But there is nothing holy about this night.

"Trick or treat!" the bantam, masked marauders cry as they go from door to door coercing goodies from mostly compliant residents. Along with blackmail, the chance to deface private property and get away with it is also a big part of the "hallowed evening." Shaving cream, soap, and toilet paper are essential in the bag of tricks some of the mischievous have prepared especially for this weird, annual rite.

Imagine trying to explain the whole thing to a visitor from another planet!

Not Just for Youth Anymore

Visit many offices and department stores on October 31 and you'll see adult employees dressed in silly or grotesque costumes, perhaps with painted faces and fluorescent green hair.

They are psyching up for the Halloween party that night — when they'll get the chance to act foolishly without embarrassment. It seems that as our world sinks deeper into New Age paganism, this heathen, high holy day of the occult has zoomed to the top of the holiday charts. In fact, among adults Halloween is becoming as popular as Christmas.

But is Halloween just a harmless time of fun for the whole family, where they can practice their pumpkin-carving skills and then head for their store's costume department to try on the latest in the grotesque?

It's time to rip the mask from Halloween and expose it for what it is. What we find underneath should concern anyone who professes a belief or faith in the Bible.

masks and costumes to represent the souls of the dead and paraded to the outskirts of town to lead the ghosts away.

In some areas, food was set outside for the spirits so that they would leave the house untouched. The trick-or-treat custom of today only re-enacts this ancient superstition.

Catholic Church Involvement

The celebration in the Roman Catholic Church, which would later merge with the Feast of Samhain, was known as All Saints' Day. This celebration "originated in the 7th century when the Pantheon at Rome was wrested from the barbarians, made into a cathedral, and renamed the Church of the Blessed Virgin and All Martyrs. Thus, from honoring all gods (which is the meaning of the Greek word 'pantheon') the Pantheon became the center for glorifying all saints," Funk and Wagnall's Encyclopedia, Vol. 1, p. 363.

To increase the popularity of Catholicism (increase their membership) the Catholic Church merely incorporated these pagan beliefs into the Catholic beliefs.

Even though this day to honor all "the holy saints" was originally observed on the eve of May 13, Pope Gregory IV, in 835, decreed that November 1 should be universally observed as the day to honor the dead and to call it the Roman Catholic All Saints' Day. This is why October 31 is called "Halloween." It is the evening before the day when one was to hallow all the saints.

Halloween Comes to America

As European immigrants came to America, they brought their varied Halloween customs with them. Because of the rigid Protestant belief systems that characterized

early New England, celebration of Halloween in colonial times was extremely limited there.

It was much more common in Maryland and the southern colonies. As the beliefs and customs of different European ethnic groups, as well as the American Indians, meshed, a distinctly American version of Halloween began to emerge. The first celebrations included "play parties," public events held to celebrate the harvest, where neighbors would share stories of the dead, tell each other's fortunes, dance, and sing. Colonial Halloween festivities also featured the telling of ghost stories and mischief-making of all kinds. By the middle of the nineteenth century, annual autumn festivities were common, but Halloween was not yet celebrated everywhere in the country.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, America was flooded with new immigrants. These new immigrants, especially the millions of Irish fleeing Ireland's potato famine of 1846, helped to popularize the celebration of Halloween nationally. Taking from Irish and English traditions, Americans began to dress up in costumes and go house to house asking for food or money, a practice that eventually became today's "trick-or-treat" tradition. Young women believed that, on Halloween, they could divine the name or appearance of their future husband by doing tricks with yarn, apple parings, or mirrors.

In the late 1800s, there was a move in America to mold Halloween into a holiday more about community and neighborly get-togethers, than about ghosts, pranks, and witchcraft.

At the turn of the century, Halloween parties for both children and adults became the most common way to celebrate the day. Parties focused on games, foods of the season, and festive costumes. Parents were encouraged by newspapers and community lead-

ers to take anything "frightening" or "grotesque" out of Halloween celebrations. Because of their efforts, Halloween lost most of its superstitious and religious overtones by the beginning of the twentieth century. By the 1920's and 1930's, Halloween had become a secular, but community-centered holiday, with parades and town-wide parties as the featured entertainment. Despite the best efforts of many schools and communities, vandalism began to plague Halloween celebrations in many communities during this time. By the 1950's, town leaders had successfully limited vandalism and Halloween had evolved into a holiday directed mainly at the young. Due to the high numbers of young children during the fifties baby boom, parties moved from town civic centers into the classroom or home, where they could be more easily accommodated. Between 1920 and 1950, the centuries-old practice of trick-or-treating was also revived. Trick-or-treating was a relatively inexpensive way for an entire community to share the Halloween celebration. In theory, families could also prevent tricks being played on them by providing the neighborhood children with small treats. A new American tradition was born, and it has continued to grow. Today, Americans spend an estimated \$6.9 billion annually on Halloween, making it the country's second largest commercial holiday.

Traditions - *Trick-or-Treating*

Webster defines Halloween as "the evening of October 31; the eve of All Saints' Day; All hallows Eve: observed especially by children in costumes who solicit treats, often by threatening minor pranks." Have not most of us heard the phrase "trick or treat" uttered by children on this day? One can easily observe parents driving their children from block to block so they

can go door to door uttering this phrase in hopes of receiving candy and goodies from people.

Webster places the following definition on the phrase "trick or treat": "A children's Halloween custom, in which they call on neighbors, using this phrase, and threaten to play a trick if a treat is not given." Is it children only who follow this custom? If one is truly observant, one will see young adults doing the same. Is this not extortion?

Webster defines extortion as an act or instance of wresting or wringing (money, information, etc.) from a person by violence, intimidation, or abuse of authority.

On this day when a homeowner opens the front door and hears the chant "trick-or-treat" doesn't he quickly reach for the bowl of prepared treats to give away? The homeowner may simply believe no harm will be done if he gives free gifts. But, by doing so, he only promotes the celebration of the pagan beliefs of setting out gifts to ward off the evil spirits.

The American tradition of "trick-or-treating" probably dates back to the early All Souls' Day parades in England. During the festivities, poor citizens would beg for food and families would give them pastries called "soul cakes" in return for their promise to pray for the family's dead relatives.

Traditions - *Soul Cakes*

The distribution of soul cakes was encouraged by the church as a way to replace the ancient practice of leaving food and wine for roaming spirits. The practice, which was referred to as "going a-souling" was eventually taken up by children who would visit the houses in their neighborhood and be given ale, food, and money.

Traditions - *Costumes*

The tradition of dressing in costume for Halloween has both Euro-

pean and Celtic roots. Hundreds of years ago, winter was an uncertain and frightening time. Food supplies often ran low and, for the many people afraid of the dark, the short days of winter were full of constant worry. On Halloween, when it was believed that ghosts came back to the earthly world, people thought that they would encounter ghosts if they left their homes. To avoid being recognized by these ghosts, people would wear masks when they left their homes after dark so that the ghosts would mistake them for fellow spirits. On Halloween, to keep ghosts away from their houses, people would place bowls of food outside their homes to appease the ghosts and prevent them from attempting to enter.

The use of large, or small, pumpkins, with a somewhat grotesque face carved on it, is representative of Samhain, the god of the dead, who would ward off evil spirits that night.

Traditions — Jack-O-Lantern

People have been making jack o'lanterns at Halloween for centuries. The practice originated from an Irish myth about a man nicknamed "Stingy Jack." According to the story, Stingy Jack invited the Devil to have a drink with him. True to his name, Stingy Jack didn't want to pay for his drink, so he convinced the Devil to turn himself into a coin that Jack could use to buy their drinks. Once the Devil did so, Jack decided to keep the money and put it into his pocket next to a silver cross, which prevented the Devil from changing back into his original form. Jack eventually freed the Devil, under the condition that he would not bother Jack for one year and that, should Jack die, he would not claim his soul. The next year, Jack again tricked the Devil into climbing into a tree to pick a piece of fruit. While he was up in the tree, Jack carved a sign of the

cross into the tree's bark so that the Devil could not come down until the Devil promised Jack not to bother him for ten more years.

Soon after, Jack died. As the legend goes, God would not allow such an unsavory figure into heaven. The Devil, upset by the trick Jack had played on him and keeping his word not to claim his soul, would not allow Jack into hell. He sent Jack off into the dark night with only a burning coal to light his way. Jack put the coal into a carved-out turnip and has been roaming the Earth with it ever since. The Irish began to refer to this ghostly figure as "Jack of the Lantern," and then, simply "Jack O'Lantern."

In Ireland and Scotland, people began to make their own versions of Jack's lanterns by carving scary faces into turnips or potatoes and placing them into windows or near doors to frighten away Stingy Jack and other wandering evil spirits. In England, large beets are used. Immigrants from these countries brought the jack o'lantern tradition with them when they came to the United States. They soon found that pumpkins, a fruit native to America, make perfect jack o'lanterns.

Superstitions

Halloween has always been a holiday filled with mystery, magic and superstition. It began as a Celtic end-of-summer festival during which people felt especially close to deceased relatives and friends. For these friendly spirits, they set places at the dinner table, left treats on doorsteps and along the side of the road and lit candles to help loved ones find their way back to the spirit world.

Today's Halloween ghosts are often depicted as more fearsome and malevolent, and our customs and superstitions are scarier too. We avoid crossing paths with black cats, afraid that they might bring us bad luck. This idea has its roots in

the Middle Ages, when many people believed that witches avoided detection by turning themselves into cats. We try not to walk under ladders for the same reason. This superstition may have come from the ancient Egyptians, who believed that triangles were sacred; it also may have something to do with the fact that walking under a leaning ladder tends to be fairly unsafe. And around Halloween, especially, we try to avoid breaking mirrors, stepping on cracks in the road or spilling salt.

The word "witch" comes from the Anglo-Saxon "wicce" meaning "wise one." Witches are said to use living talismans through which they derive their mystical powers. Witch hunting during "Halloween" became almost a national pastime in the early colonial times.

The ABC's of Witchcraft, p. 48, reports that the broomstick is a symbol of the male organ on which the witch mounts and leaps high around the fields to "teach" the crops how high to grow.

The skeleton is called the witches' "horned god." Under "skull," the *Dictionary of Lore and Legend* says, "symbol of death, often with crossed bones beneath." Like the head of Osiris in Egypt, the skulls of ancestors are worshipped in order to establish connections with the spirits of the dead.

But the Scriptures give a strong warning about this:

When men tell you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their Elohim? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? (Isa. 8:19-20, NIV).

But what about the Halloween traditions and beliefs that today's trick-or-treaters have forgotten all about? Many of these obsolete rituals focused on the future instead of the past and the living instead of the dead. In particular, many had to do

<see **Halloween** page 23>

End Time Prophecy

Note: NASB used throughout

Thousands of years ago there was a man named Daniel who worshiped the Ancient of Days - the One Who Was and Who Is and Who Will Be - Yahweh the Almighty. Today there are a people who, like Daniel, pray to Yahweh and call upon His proper name, worshipping Him in Spirit and truth.

Daniel was given insight because Yahweh was with him. Yahweh is also with His people today and they have, for some time now, been granted more and more insight into what Scripture has to say about the future.

Daniel was told to close the words of future prophecy that were to be sealed until the time of the end. It looks as though those words have, evidently on a scroll, been slowly revealed within the last century through the Spirit of Yahweh to a called out people.

Satan has also been at work instilling false ideas that are putting people at ease and keeping them in the dark. This, too, was foretold.

Sweet Lullaby Lies

For years now people have been given the soothing messages that the heavenly Father (or His Son) will be taking His people out of the coming tribulation. They will not be harmed by the punishment which will be forthcoming on an adulterous and morally corrupted world.

The messages of the so-called "Pre-Trib Rapture" are liken to lullabies which have put most people in a deep semi-conscious spiritual state. They don't feel a need to think much about the coming trouble because they believe they will be taken out of it. As sweet sounding and appealing as it is, it is nevertheless untrue and the ones who are held in its grasp are in for a rude awakening.

Blinded by the Light

When fiction has been taught as fact for a long time, people are often solidified in their thinking and cannot believe the truth even when it is clearly shown to them. It's similar to the deer in the headlights analogy. Light can be blinding to those in the dark.

Galileo was confronted with this in times past when he discovered evidence that Jupiter had moons revolving around it. His ideas, the evidence that our moon traveled around the earth and the earth and moon revolving around the sun, was re-

jected out of hand by most at that time. Even when he showed his critics through the new invention of the telescope, they replied they could not see the moons of Jupiter even though they were clearly there. They were blinded by the light of truth and could not admit to the error of their established thinking and doctrine.

The doctrine at that time, by the Roman Catholic Church, was that the earth was the center of the universe. Any other teaching was looked upon as heresy and rejected. Many inquisitions took place in which people who openly disagreed or taught contrary teachings of the established law of the "Church" were put to death by being burned at the stake, among other means.

Yahweh's People Helped

Those close to Yahweh, like Daniel was in the past, will be given help in times of need ahead of us. Yahweh's promise of not forsaking His people is truth that can be relied upon in times of difficulty and stress. We know that the promise of the resurrection and life eternal, even though we are destined to die a first death, is an assurance that can help us to see the figurative calm after the storm.

Consider the protection and power given to the taught ones of the Messiah, the Son of Yahweh, Yahshua. The 12 disciples were indeed given power. In Luke 9:1-2 we read, "*And He called the twelve together, and gave them power and authority over all the demons and to heal diseases. And He sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of Yahweh and to perform healing.*"

There were 70 other followers of the Jewish Savior who were also given special authority - those whose names were written in Heaven, having accepted Yahshua. We read, "*Now after this the Master appointed seventy others, and sent them in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come...Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing will injure you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven,*" Luke 10:1, 19-20.

Paul's Spiritual Strength

Paul was no lightweight when it came to knowing

the power of both Yahweh's Word and His Spirit. Paul had Yahweh's Power to give sight to the blind, as well as to blind those who had sight.

When they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-yahshua, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of Elohim. But Elymas the magician (for so his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze on him, and said, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of Yahweh? Now, behold, the hand of Yahweh is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand. Then the proconsul believed when he saw what had happened, being amazed at the teaching of Yahweh, Acts 13:6-12.

Noteworthy is the fact that the proconsul (governor) believed after he saw what happened. The question comes to mind: What will it take for those who've been blinded by Satan to see the truth?

Certainly Yahweh is the One who ultimately opens the mind of an individual, and He does it by the power of His Spirit. That was Paul's spiritual strength, but what about the future for Yahweh's people in the end times?

Miraculous signs seemed to have eventually waned for Paul. One of the last miracles we hear about him performing was restoring life to the young man who became tired and fell out of the upper window where Paul had been dis-

cussing Scripture that night, Acts 20:8-10.

Early and Latter Rains

Scripture mentions the concept of "the early and latter rain," as a farmer would wait for each year, Joel 2:23. The spiritual application we find, and the understanding it gives for the future, is profound. This is especially true when considering how powerful the Spirit was in the disciples and in individuals like the Apostle Paul during the 1st century of the Common Era, nearly 2000 years ago.

How much of Yahweh's Spirit will we need to proclaim the message of the coming Kingdom? Will there be a resurgence of Yahweh's Spirit in the last days?

The Two Witnesses

We find in Scripture the two witnesses will receive power from Yahweh. It will be a spiritual power this world has not seen for quite some time.

And I will grant authority to my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days, clothed in sackcloth.' These are the two olive trees and the two lampstands that stand before Yahweh of the earth. And if anyone wants to harm them, fire flows out of their mouth and devours their enemies; so if anyone wants to harm them, he must be killed in this way. These have the power to shut up the sky, so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying; and they have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire, Rev 11:3-6.

There are some essential points to consider about the two witnesses:

1. They will prophesy for twelve hundred and sixty days: 3 ½ years (42 months).

2. They are clothed in sackcloth, figuratively showing they've shed everything worldly and are

in a complete attitude of prayer and humbleness toward Yahweh through Yahshua.

3. They are the two olive trees and the two lampstands (menorahs) that stand before Yahweh.

4. They have the power to shut up the sky so that rain will not fall during the days of their prophesying.

5. They have power over the waters to turn them into blood, and to strike the earth with every plague, as often as they desire.

6. They are not actually said to be "two individuals" or "two persons."

Enoch and Elijah are often mentioned as being the two witnesses, or alternatively, Moses and Elijah. For example, Moses turned Egypt's water into blood, Elijah brought fire down from heaven and also caused drought and rainfall. The fact is, though, they've died and are not currently living. *All these died in faith*, Heb. 11:13a. They will be resurrected just as all the dead will be; they've not already been raised. They were only transferred out of harm's way, evidently to live out their lives in peace because Yahweh was pleased with them. It's important to note the two witnesses will be living. We know this because the prophecy is that they'll die, but only for a short time (3 ½ days) due to the Beast/Anti-messiah, Rev. 11:7-8.

Two Houses of Israel

Could the two witnesses be the two houses of Israel at the end of the age? The House of Judah and the House of Israel (the lost ten tribes) that are fully submitting themselves to Yahweh in the Messiah?

In Zechariah chapter 4, we find two olive trees and two anointed ones spoken of:

He said to me, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see, and behold, a lampstand all of gold with its bowl on the top of it, and its seven lamps

on it with seven spouts belonging to each of the lamps which are on the top of it; also two olive trees by it, one on the right side of the bowl and the other on its left side..." Then he said, "These are the two anointed ones who are standing by Yahweh of the whole earth," Zech. 4:2-3, 14.

Dr. Ryrie, in his Study Bible, notes that two olive trees and the two anointed ones are "Joshua and Zerubbabal," because of the priestly office they hold. Yet, interestingly enough, he also mentions that "Israel is [Yahweh's] witness."

We should keep in mind that all of Yahweh's people today, in Messiah, are called a "royal priesthood, a holy nation," 1 Pet 2:9. We are literally being grafted into Israel today (Jer 11:16-17; Rom 11:17-18) through our elder Brother, Yahshua, Who Himself is also an Israelite through the line of Judah.

Understanding that we must go through one of the 12 gates to enter into the coming Kingdom helps with understanding many other areas of Scripture. Each of the 12 gates are named after the 12 tribes of Israel, Rev 21:12-13.

Throughout Scripture we find a common theme, that is, Israel. They are referred to as not only the two houses, but also the two nations, two sisters, two branches, two sticks. The two loaves mentioned in Leviticus chapter 23 are also most likely figuratively representing both houses of Israel, Judah and Ephraim...all twelve tribes.

Jacob's Trouble

As more and more prophecy is revealed, it is as if the scroll of Daniel is being opened more and more to us today. But with its opening, we find we are getting much closer to the time of Jacob's trouble. A time when the seven years of tribulation will begin in earnest. A time that is coming upon the whole earth and will affect Yahweh's people, because they will not be "Raptured"

out.

Still, Yahweh does promise protection. Will this make Yahweh's people stand out from the others in the tribulation? Did the disciples and apostles stand out with the initial outpouring of the Spirit being given to them? We find the answer is an emphatic, "Yes."

There are seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven bowls in the Book of Revelation which describe the seven year period of judgment to come. And, make no mistake, the descendants of Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel) will not be taken out of it - at least not completely.

Keeping in mind that Yahweh's people are sealed in the forehead with not only the Father's Sacred Name, but also that of the Son (Rev 14:1); notice, during the fifth trumpet blast, what is says:

They [locust] were told not to hurt the grass of the earth, nor any green thing, nor any tree, but only the men who do not have the seal of Yahweh on their foreheads, Rev 9:4.

Verse 5 goes on to say this period of time, during the tribulation, will last five months.

Being the fifth seal we know this will be sometime during the tribulation, perhaps near the mid-point or immediately after the mid-point. Nevertheless, if one is wanting to know whom Yahweh's people are at this particular time, this type of filter will show just who is who.

Yahweh's people are not removed, but neither do they have to suffer from the plague. They are protected. This was also true of ancient Israel when in the land of Goshen. Initially they suffered the things that came upon Egypt, Yahweh then started putting the plagues on Egyptians only. The people of Israel were protected and were blessed to be distinguished from the other people. A similar situation is prophesied for the future time of tribulation.

Mark of the Beast

There is another type of filter. This one will help identify the people who have not taken the mark. We read in Rev. 16:2, the first bowl judgment,

So the first angel went and poured out his bowl on the earth; and it became a loathsome and malignant sore on the people who had the mark of the beast and who worshiped his image.

We know those that take the mark of the Beast will not repent and be saved.

And they [those that received the mark of the Beast] blasphemed the Elohim of heaven because of their pains and their sores; and they did not repent of their deeds, Rev. 16:11.

Notice verse 15,

Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his clothes, so that he will not walk about naked and men will not see his shame.

This figuratively goes back to the Armor of Yahweh. The helmet and breastplate protect the mind and Spirit, but figuratively they also speak of putting on Messiah.

Those during the tribulation who are in Messiah, will not walk in shame, but will at times be readily identifiable as they are protected. They will also not be thrown into the lake of fire. Rev. 14:9-12 says,

Then another angel, a third one, followed them, saying with a loud voice, "If anyone worships the beast and his image, and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink of the wine of the wrath of Yahweh, which is mixed in full strength in the cup of His anger; and he will be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever; they have no rest day and night, those who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his

name." Here is the perseverance of the saints who keep the commandments of Yahweh and their faith in Yahshua."

Studying Prophecy

One of the reasons for understanding what is to come is to prepare now for that time. Will those who believe they'll be "Raptured" be prepared?

Something else also to be understood is the idea of duality and figurative speech, as well as singular and literal meanings, in Scripture.

Duality of prophecy is where something happens at one point, but then happens later at another point in a slightly different way (Similar to the early and latter rains concept Scripture mentions).

Antiochus Epiphanies sacrificed a pig on the altar of the temple in the 1st century. We see another example of this happening in the future when the man of sin goes into the Holy of Holies and defiles it:

And he will make a firm covenant with the many for one week [7 years], but in the middle of the week [3 ½ years] he will put a stop to sacrifice and grain offering; and on the wing of abominations will come one who makes desolate, even until a complete destruction, one that is decreed, is poured out on the one who makes desolate, Dan 9:27.

Things go further with the Man of Sin as we read on in Daniel (but with the added insight of what Yahweh's people will be doing and what will happen to them).

Forces from him will arise, desecrate the sanctuary fortress, and do away with the regular sacrifice. And they will set up the abomination of desolation. By smooth words he will turn to unrighteousness those who act wickedly toward the covenant, but the people who know their Elohim will display strength and take action. Those

who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many; yet they will fall by sword and by flame, by captivity and by plunder for many days. Now when they fall they will be granted a little help, and many will join with them in hypocrisy. Some of those who have insight will fall, in order to refine, purge and make them pure until the end time; because it is still to come at the appointed time, Dan 11:31-35.

Things to note:

1. The people who know their Elohim will display strength and take action.

2. Those who have insight among the people will give understanding to the many.

3. They will be granted a little help.

After the Man of Sin enters the Holy of Holies, the people knowing Yahweh (they have a relationship with Him) will stand strong. Some will fall to the wayside - weak for a time (many days) - by fire, sword, and even held prisoner to help them to grow spiritually. Eventually they'll be given extra spiritual help from Yahweh. Make no mistake, a little of Yahweh's Strength is a lot! In fact, many will flatter them when they see that strength in action.

There is nothing pleasant about going through hardship, but we see there is a benefit for those that have Yahweh in their lives. Yahweh's Spirit is strengthened within. It is like what Yahshua told the Apostle Paul,

My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness, 2 Cor. 12:9a.

The Beast, it is revealed, will also have strength (empowered by Satan) to do his damage for 3 ½ years. False teachers are also said to have some evil powers, Matt. 24:24.

This same 3 ½ year time period is likely when the two witnesses will be strengthened with Yahweh's Spirit power (having been prepared by the hardships of the previous 3 ½

years). They will be able to prophesy/teach fully, Rev. 11:3. However, in verse 7, the Beast is, at this time, able to overcome the saints, which is evidently at the end of the time period of forty-two months.

There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him, Rev. 13:5. (see also Rev. 11:2)

Judah, Then Ephraim

It seems strange to many people today to think of Israel as any people other than Judah. Judah is more readily identifiable today, but Yahweh indicates that not one kernel of Israel is going to be lost, Amos 9:9. In other words, Yahweh knows where everyone is and whom He will be bringing into the coming Kingdom.

Yahweh also will save the tents of Judah first, so that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem will not be magnified above Judah. In that day Yahweh will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the one who is feeble among them in that day will be like David, and the house of David will be like Elohim, like the angel of Yahweh before them. And in that day I will set about to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem, Zech. 12:7-9.

It is not by [human] strength or by [human] might, but by My Spirit says Yahweh, Zech. 4:6b.

It's interesting to note that Judah here is saved first, just as the message went to the Jews first in the 1st century. Yahweh will intervene in a strong way for Judah, but what will then happen to the rest of Israel?

The anger of Yahweh will not turn back until He has performed and carried out the purposes of His heart; In the last days you will clearly understand it, Jer. 23:20; 30:24.

How will we understand His wrath? As fact is sometimes strang-

er than fiction, could it be that the rest of Yahweh's people will have a part in pouring out wrath? Jacob's trouble is mentioned in between these two statements, with the message that Jacob will be saved out of it, Jer 30:7. This looks to be speaking of the last 3 ½ years time period, but we should take a closer look at the overall period of the tribulation to confirm it.

Tribulation Timeline

Most scholars are in agreement that there is a seven year period for the tribulation. They also agree that there is a mid-point in-between. Basically, it is agreed that there is a three and a half year period before, and a three and a half year period after the mid-point.

To this we also agree, but let's look at the significant scriptures that give us our bearings as to when certain things will take place on the timeline.

Starting out before the mid-point, the Man of Sin intends to make his own laws, and will wear down the saints for 3 ½ years.

He will speak out against the Most High and wear down the saints (the chosen) of the Highest One, and he will intend to make alterations in times and in law; and they will be given into his hand for a time, times, and half a time. [There's evidently a stretch of time here between verse 25 and 26] But the court will sit for judgment, and his dominion will be taken away, annihilated and destroyed forever. Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him, Dan. 7:25-27.

The wording, "he will intend" literally has the meaning of, "he will try" or, "he will plan," but as we know plans don't always work out.

There are a couple of questions

that can arise at this point. Don't we hear that Yahweh's people will be protected like on two wings of a great eagle?

How many times has Yahweh already stepped in to help Israel, specifically Judah, since 1948. However, the prophecy is deeper and more complex in its scope and reach.

We must understand that the former exodus was out of Egypt, and the future exodus is also out of Egypt, but in a figurative sense. Right now, there is a movement of people coming out of the world and drawing close to Yahweh through His Son. They are following that symbolic pillar of smoke by day and pillar of fire by night. They are following Yahweh's Spirit that has been placed within them.

There is, however, another form of the exodus. And, believe it or not, it's actually out of the physical land of Jerusalem.

Judah Protected First

Then the woman fled into the wilderness where she had a place prepared by Elohim, so that there she would be nourished for one thousand two hundred and sixty days... And when the dragon saw that he was thrown down to the earth, he persecuted the woman who gave birth to the male child. But the two wings of the great eagle were given to the woman, so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time, from the presence of the serpent, Rev 12:6, 13, 14.

Who is it that gave birth to the male child in verse 13? Shouldn't the male child be noted as actually speaking of the Messiah? Didn't He come through the line of Judah? It is submitted, for your consideration, that it is Judah who is nourished and protected from the Beast for 3 ½ years after being brought out from the land of Israel on great wings of an eagle.

Then the Dragon goes after the rest of the obedient children of Israel (Lost 10 Tribes), those holding to the faith in Yahshua and who have recognized and are moved within to be law keepers of Yahweh's commandments.

This will no doubt give Judah the time to examine the Messianic prophecies. The Apostle Paul evidently did the same thing by going away for three years to study. Paul says in Gal. 1:17-18,

Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went away to Arabia, and returned once more to Damascus. Then three years later I went up to Jerusalem to become acquainted with Cephas, and stayed with him fifteen days.

Acts 9:22 says,

Saul kept increasing in strength and confounding the Jews who lived at Damascus by proving that this Yahshua is the Messiah.

Paul would have done it by proclaiming the Old Testament prophecies alluding to the Messiah, like Isaiah chapter 53. He had to study the Scriptures and consider the faith that he had previously been fighting against.

There are other reasons for thinking Judah is the one going to a place of safety. Matt 24:16 says, *...those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains.*

There is also insight from the Book of Joel:

It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Even on the male and female servants I will pour out My Spirit in those days (Joel 2:23 early and latter rains). I will display wonders in the sky and on the earth, blood, fire and columns of smoke [volcanoes?]. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood [just] before the great and awesome day of Yahweh comes. And it will come about

that whoever calls on the name of the Yahweh will be delivered; for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem There will be those who escape, as Yahweh has said, even among the survivors whom Yahweh calls, Joel 2:28-32.

It says "before the great and awesome day of Yahweh comes" which is understood as the more intense aspect of the seven year tribulation. It is called the "Day of Yahweh," and it will be a very great and terrible time ahead of us.

It is most likely that this severe and more intense tribulation time starts at the mid-point of the seven years. It may, in fact, be immediately after the "Man of Sin" goes into the yet to be built temple. It is noted by some scholars that the rebuilt temple could actually be a tent type structure set up as the tabernacle was originally in the wilderness.

We know that the temple implements, such as gold bowls, laver, menorah, etc., along with the training of using them, has already begun.

After Mid-point

Getting a grasp of the overall period of the seven years of tribulation is easy enough to do when considering one of the main scriptural reference points: The abomination of desolation, which occurs at the mid-point.

Therefore when you see the abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. Whoever is on the housetop must not go down to get the things out that are in his house. Whoever is in the field must not turn back to get his cloak. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! But pray that your flight will not be in the winter, or on a Sabbath. For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not

occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short, Matt 24:15-22.

Armageddon

The following sections of Scripture, as tied in with the previous, speaks of a battle known as Armageddon, which will take place in the valley of Jezreel after the mid-point of the tribulation period. It also initially tells of the restoration which may have some duality in it because of Judah already being restored into the land in 1948. But ultimately, it has its fulfillment with the going into the promised land of the coming Kingdom of Yahweh.

For behold, in those days and at that time, then I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem, I will gather all the nations and bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Then I will enter into judgment with them there on behalf of My people and My inheritance, Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations; and they have divided up My land, Joel 3:1-2.

Now this will be the plague with which Yahweh will strike all the peoples who have gone to war against Jerusalem; their flesh will rot while they stand on their feet, and their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongue will rot in their mouth. It will come about in that day that a great panic from Yahweh will fall on them; and they will seize one another's hand, and the hand of one will be lifted against the hand of another. Judah also will fight at Jerusalem; and the wealth of all the surrounding nations will be gathered, gold and silver and garments in great abundance. So also like this plague will be the plague on the horse, the mule, the camel, the donkey and all the cattle that will be in those camps. Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to

year to worship the King, Yahweh of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths," Zech. 14:12-16.

A couple points of interest. One: dictionaries point out that the neutron bomb (1959) is a nuclear bomb designed to provide lethal neutrons but without as much blast power and fire as a standard nuclear bomb. It is a way to save the buildings, but waste the people; something that the enemy would most likely consider in their strategy to wipe Israel (the people of) off the map.

Two: we read of Judah fighting. How can this be if they escape to a place of safety? Could it be that there will be a Israeli military force that stays to fight? If that's true, how could they survive a nuclear attack? Remember the nuclear bunkers that were promoted in the Cold War past? Well, from what we understand, the Israeli military (many who are of Judah), have an underground air-force base that not only houses many fighter jets, but also the military personell to fly them.

The End of the Age

Are the words given to Daniel still completely sealed? Or is the scroll opening up to us today? It has been said we are closer to the end of the age now than at any other time, or at any other previous generation. It is certainly a true statement and it does look like we are fast approaching a destiny that has been foretold thousands of years in advance by Yahweh, through His faithful prophets.

Will we who are here at this time in history, heed their warning? There is a blessing, if we do.

I heard the man dressed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, as he raised his right hand and his left toward heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever that it would be for a time, times, and half a time; and as soon as they finish shattering the power of the holy people, all these events

will be completed. As for me, I heard but could not understand; so I said, "My Master, what will be the outcome of these events?" He said, "Go your way, Daniel, for these words are concealed and sealed up until the end time. Many will be purged, purified and refined, but the wicked will act wickedly; and none of the wicked will understand, but those who have insight will understand. From the time that the regular sacrifice is abolished and the abomination of desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. How blessed is he who keeps waiting and attains to the 1,335 days!" (Dan. 12:7-12).

The phrase, "...they finish shattering the power of the holy people" seems to be a reference to the end of the age, as it continues to say, "all these events will be completed."

Why would the one who waits until 1335 days, a full month and a half later, be blessed? Most likely because the Kingdom will then be firmly established and under Yahshua's complete and absolute rulership. The law will be taught, people will be turning their weapons into implements for planting, and there will finally be a firm and eternal peace and prosperity that has long been desired of many.

In Conclusion

We find insight and understanding today with the help of Yahweh's Spirit and men like Daniel who have related prophecies even for our own time. As knowledge increases we should be preparing more fervently to be spiritually ready for Yahshua's return and the seven years of tribulation that precedes it.

Not everything is completely clear concerning prophecy, but a foundation has been laid and Yahweh's people will be given further insight as world events continue to unfold. Because He loves us, He has promised to disclose what will

happen before it happens, Amos 3:7. Let us therefore give praise to the Ancient of Days, who has revealed the end from the beginning.

HalleluYah! Praise, O servants of Yahweh, praise the name of Yahweh. Blessed be the name of Yahweh from this time forth and forever. From the rising of the sun to its setting, The name of Yahweh is to be praised, Psalm 113:1-3.

Elder David Brett

<Halloween from page 16>

with helping young women identify their future husbands and reassuring them that they would someday--with luck, by next Halloween!--be married.

In 18th-century Ireland, a match-making cook might bury a ring in her mashed potatoes on Halloween night, hoping to bring true love to the diner who found it. In Scotland, fortune-tellers recommended that an eligible young woman name a hazelnut for each of her suitors and then toss the nuts into the fireplace. The nut that burned to ashes rather than popping or exploding, the story went, represented the girl's future husband. (In some versions of this legend, confusingly, the opposite was true: The nut that burned away symbolized a love that would not last.) Another tale had it that if a young woman ate a sugary concoction made out of walnuts, hazelnuts and nutmeg before bed on Halloween night, she would dream about her future husband. Young women tossed apple-peels over their shoulders, hoping that the peels would fall on the floor in the shape of their future husbands' initials; tried to learn about their futures by peering at egg yolks floating in a bowl of water; and stood in front of mirrors in darkened rooms, holding candles and looking over their shoulders for their husbands' faces.

Other rituals were more competitive. At some Halloween parties,

the first guest to find a burr on a chestnut-hunt would be the first to marry; at others, the first successful apple-bobber would be the first down the aisle.

Of course, whether we're asking for romantic advice or trying to avoid seven years of bad luck, each one of these Halloween superstitions relies on the good will of the very same "spirits" whose presence the early Celts felt so keenly. Ours is not such a different holiday after all!

Let the Scriptures Be Our Guide

Many parents will say to let their children go out on Halloween night and enjoy some innocent fun. They're not hurting anyone. Can the origins of Halloween be anything but pagan? Allowing children to participate is nothing short of saying pagan ways are alright. But, Yahweh says in Jer. 10:2,

Learn not the way of the heathen, and be not dismayed at the signs of heaven; for the heathen are dismayed at them.

Yahweh further says in Deut. 18:12-13:

For all that do these things are an abomination unto Yahweh: and because of these abominations Yahweh your Elohim does drive them out from before you. You shall be perfect with Yahweh your Elohim.

We are to strive towards perfection. We shall not achieve perfection until Yahshua returns to set up the Kingdom. Matthew 5:48 says,

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

Just because an act seems innocent in no way guarantees Yahweh's approval. Halloween is just another occasion enshrouded with pagan connections.

Elder Roger G. Meyer

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