

An Exposition of the Seven Church Ages

Chapter Three The Ephesian Church Age

Introduction To The Church Ages

In order for you to fully understand the message of the Church Ages I would like to explain the various principles that allowed me to arrive at the names of the messengers, the length of the ages, and other factors involved therein.

Since this study was to be the most serious one I had ever undertaken up to this time, I sought God for many days for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Then only did I read the Scriptures on the Church Ages and delve into the many church histories written by the most unbiased historians that I could find. God did not fail to answer my prayer, for while I read the Word and the histories, I was enabled by the Holy Spirit to see unfolded a pattern that runs through the centuries and right into this present, last day.

The key given me of the Lord whereby I was able to determine the messenger for each age is a most Scriptural one. In fact it might be called the Keystone of the Bible. It is the revelation that God never changes, and that His ways are as unchangeable as He is. In Heb. 13:8 it says

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and for ever".

Ecclesiastes 3:14,15,

"I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before Him.

That which hath been is now; and that which is to be hath already been; and God requireth that which is past."

Here it is: an unchanging God with unchanging ways. What He did at the FIRST He will have to keep on doing until it is done for the LAST time. There will never be a change. Apply that to the Church Ages. The kind of man that God chose for the first age, and how God manifested in that man's ministry, would be the example for all other ages. What God did in the first church age is what He wants to do in all other ages.

Now we know exactly from the Word which was recorded by the Holy Spirit how the first, or original church, was founded and how God manifested Himself in her. The Word can't change or be changed because the Word is God. John 1:1,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

To change one word of it, as did Eve, brings sin and death, even as it says in Revelation 22:18-19,

"... If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Thus, what the church was at Pentecost is the standard. That is the pattern. There is no other pattern. No matter what the scholars say, God has NOT changed that pattern. What God did at Pentecost He has to keep on doing until the church ages close.

Though scholars may tell you the apostolic age is over, don't you believe it. Such a statement is wrong on two counts. First of all, it is wrong to suppose there aren't any more apostles, just because the original twelve are dead. An apostle means a sent one'; and there are many sent ones today, but they are called missionaries. As long as men are being called and sent forth with the Word of Life there is an apostolic age going on. Secondly, they refer to an age of manifested Holy Ghost power' as being over since the Bible has been completed. That is untrue. There is not even one Scripture that suggests that, but many conclusively state otherwise. Here is our proof that both of these charges

are false. Acts 2:38,39.

"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The promise of power with which the apostles were endued at Pentecost is to "you (Jews), and to your children (Jews), and to all that are afar off (Gentiles), and to as many as the Lord our God shall call (both Jew and Gentile)". Until He stops calling, the Pentecostal message and power will NOT CEASE.

What the church had at Pentecost is her inalienable right. Originally, she had the pure Word of God. She had the power of the Spirit manifested in divers signs and wonders and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Hebrews 2:1-4,

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

For if the Word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience (to the Word) received a just recompense of reward;

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him;

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to His own will?"

That original church was not organized by men. It was led by the Holy Ghost. It wasn't very big. It was hated and despised. It was oppressed. It was persecuted unto death. But it was true to God. It stayed with the original Word pattern.

Now don't get led astray here. When I said that God and His ways never change, I did not say that the church and its messengers could not change. The church isn't God. So she can change. But what I said was that because of the unchanging God with unchanging ways we can go back to the beginning and see the first and perfect act of God and then judge by that standard. That is how it is done. The True Church will always try to be like the original at Pentecost. The True Church of today will try to approximate that early first one. And the messengers to the churches, having the same Spirit of God in them, will try to approximate the apostle Paul. They won't be exactly like him; but the true messengers will be the ones that come the closest to Paul, who was free of all men, sold out to God, and gave forth the Word of God only, and manifested the Holy Ghost in power. None else would do. You have to work from the original. As like begets like, the True Church will always be the one that tries to follow in the steps of her founders at Pentecost and her messengers will follow the apostle Paul, the first messenger to the first church age. It is that simple, and that wonderful.

With this key, so simple, yet so wonderful, I was able, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to read the Book of Revelation and the histories and find therein each age, each messenger, the duration of each age, and the part each played in the purpose of God from Pentecost to the consummation of those ages.

Since you now understand how we judge what the True Church was like (what she was at Pentecost and what she was in the apostolic age as set forth in the Word in the Book of Acts) we can apply the same rule to show us how the church failed. The basic error, or errors, that crept into the first church and were revealed in the Book of Acts and Revelation and also in the Epistles will become more and more visibly manifested in each subsequent age, until we come to a complete blackout of truth in the last, or Laodicean Age.

Now out of this first key that we have received of the Lord, there comes another and slightly less wonderful truth. I said that the True Church would always try to be like it was in the Book of Acts. That is exactly right. But we have discovered that the Word also teaches an invasion of error until there is a complete blackout of truth in the last day when the Lord is about to appear. The question now arises in our minds; does God forsake His own and let them fall into a state of complete deception? On no account, for the Scripture says very clearly in Matthew 24:24, that the Elect' CANNOT be deceived.

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, IF IT WERE POSSIBLE, they shall deceive the very elect."

What then? The answer is clear before us. There is a True Church and a false church.

There is a True Vine and a false vine. But of course that false church, false vine body, will always try to usurp the position of the True Church and contend that she, and not the Elect, are the real and authentic. The false will try to kill the True. That is how it was in the Book of Acts, that is how it is set forth in the seven ages, and that is how it is declared in the various Epistles. That is how it has been. That is how it is now. That is how it will be. It can't change.

Now let us be very careful that we are not confused at this point. Thus we will seek the Word to validate this claim. Let us go back to the Book of the beginning, Genesis. In the Garden of Eden there were TWO trees. One was good; one was evil. One produced LIFE, the other produced Death. There were two children who originally offered sacrifices to God. Let me repeat that, they BOTH offered sacrifices to God. Genesis 4:3-5,

"And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD.

And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering:

But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect..."

But one (Cain) was evil, being of his father (that Wicked One), while Abel was righteous before the Lord. Again, there were two children from the flesh of the same parents. They were the twins of Isaac and Rebekah. One was the elect of God and the other was reprobate. Both worshipped God. In every single case there was worship of God involved. In every case the evil hated the righteous and persecuted the righteous. In some cases the evil destroyed the righteous. But notice. They were planted together. They lived together. They both made claims upon God and worshipped God.

These illustrations depict perfectly the parable of the Lord Jesus Christ when He said that the kingdom of heaven was like unto a man who sowed good seed, only to have an enemy come and plant tares amongst those good seeds. God did not plant the tares. Satan planted those tares right amongst the good seed of God. Those two kinds of plants (people), from two different seeds, grew up together. They partook of the nourishment in the same earth, they shared in the same sun, rain, and all other benefits, and both were harvested in their turn. Do you see it? Don't ever forget these truths as we study the church ages and later the seals. And above all, don't forget that it is in this last age, when the tares are getting bound for their burning, that they will shove out the wheat that is to be garnered by the Lord.

I want to carry this thought all the way through, so let us go a step further. Have you ever studied the history of revivals? Now a revival signifies a move of God in power. And every time God moves, Satan is there to move also. It never fails. In the days of the great Welsh revival (and most people don't know this), the insane asylums filled up quickly, and there was a great display of devil power to take away the attention from God. It is written that in Wesley's day the people would do most peculiar things that were definitely of Satan to try to mock the goodness and power of God. In Luther's day it is said that the miracle of his ministry did not lie in the fact that he successfully protested the Roman Catholic Church, but the miracle lay in the fact he could, and did, stay sound and sane amidst the fanatics who were often filled with, and guided by, wrong spirits. And if you have been aware of this last day ministry, you will have noted the same invasion of false and wicked spirits. It has to be that way. Now I hope and trust you are spiritual minded enough to get that, and capitalize on it.

Just to seal this point on the True and false vines mingling and demonstrating the two spirits that are at work, let us look into I John 4:1-4, and Jude 3,4,12.

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and EVEN NOW ALREADY is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: (antichrist spirit) because greater is He, (God's Spirit) that is in you than he that is in the world."

Jude 3,4,12.

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the SAINTS.

For there are CERTAIN MEN (not Saints) crept in unawares (these have not come into the fold by means of the DOOR and are therefore robbers), who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, UNGODLY men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast WITH you, feeding themselves without fear..."

It cannot be denied in the face of these Scriptures that the True Church and the false church are intertwined, having been planted together but of different seeds.

Now then, I think there is something else you ought to know. The seven churches which are addressed by John are in Asia Minor and are all Gentile churches. He does not speak to the church at Jerusalem which was mostly Jewish with perhaps just a few Gentiles in it. The reason is that God had turned from the Jews to the Gentiles. Thus the whole of the church ages is God dealing with the Gentiles, and calling out a Gentile Bride to Himself. That makes the Church Ages' and The Fulness of the Gentiles' the one and the same thing. Acts 13:44-48,

"And the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God.

But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy, and spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming.

Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.

For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.

And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Romans 11:1-8,

"I say then, Hath God cast away His people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin.

God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew. Wot ye not what the Scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel, say- ing,

Lord, they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down Thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to Myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal.

Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant According to the election of grace.

And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work.

What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded

(According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day."

Romans 11:25-29,

"For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits, that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in.

And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob;

For this is My covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins.

As concerning the Gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

These seven churches located in Asia Minor contained certain characteristics within them, at that ancient date, which became the mature fruit of later ages. What were just seed plants back there came out later in a mature harvest, even as Jesus said,

"For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Luke 23: 31.

The Message To The Ephesian Church Age

Revelation 2:1-7

Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith He That holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.

He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree of Life, Which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

The Messenger

The messenger (angel) to the church of Ephesus was the apostle Paul. That he was the messenger to the first age of the Gentile era cannot be denied. Though to Peter was granted the authority to open the doors to the Gentiles, it was given to Paul to be their apostle and prophet. He was the Prophet-Messenger to the Gentiles. His prophetic office, by which he received the full revelation of the Word for the Gentiles, authenticated him as their apostolic messenger. To this agreed the other apostles at Jerusalem. Galatians 1:12-19,

"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it:

And profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers.

But when it pleased God, Who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace,

To reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood:

Neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus.

Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days.

But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother."

Galatians 2:2,

"And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that Gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain."

Galatians 2:6-9,

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me:

But contrariwise, when they saw that the Gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the Gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter:

(For He That wrought effectually in Peter to the apostle-ship of the circumcision, the Same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision."

Romans 11:13,

"For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office."

Paul founded the church at Ephesus about the middle of the first century. This enables us to set the date of the beginning of the Ephesian Church Age; about 53 A.D.

His manner of ministering set the pattern that all future messengers were to aspire to, and actually sets the pattern for every true minister of God, though he would not attain to such heights in the prophetic realm as did Paul. Paul's ministry had a threefold quality and was as follows:

First of all, Paul was absolutely true to the Word. He never deviated from it no matter what the cost. Galatians 1:8-9,

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."

Galatians 2:11,14,

"But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed."

"But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the Gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?"

I Corinthians 14:36-37,

"What? came the Word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."

Notice that Paul was unorganized, but Spirit-led, as when God moved upon Moses to lead Israel out of Egypt. Jerusalem's council never sent Paul out, nor did it have any power or jurisdiction over him. God, and God alone, did the sending and the leading. Paul was not of men, but of God. Galatians 1:1,

"Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, Who raised Him from the dead:)"

Galatians 2:3-5,

"But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the Gospel might continue with you."

Secondly, his ministry was in the power of the Spirit, thereby demonstrating the spoken and written Word. I Corinthians 2:1-5,

"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God.

For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.

And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power:

That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Acts 14:8-10,

"And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked:

The same heard Paul speak: who steadfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed,

Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked."

Acts 20:9-12,

"And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted."

Acts 28:7-9,

"In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously.

And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him.

So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed."

II Corinthians 12:12,

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."

Thirdly, he had the evident fruit of his God-given ministry. II Corinthians 12:11,

"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing."

I Corinthians 9:2,

"If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you: for the seal of mine apostle-ship are ye in the Lord."

II Corinthians 11:2,

"For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Paul had been the means of bringing in multitudes of the Gentile sheep; he fed them, and cared for them, until they brought forth righteous fruit and were prepared to meet the Lord as a part of the Gentile bride.

At the time of the giving of the Revelation, according to tradition, Paul had already died a martyr, but John was carrying on in his stead exactly as Paul had done in the days of his ministry. The death of Paul, before the Revelation was given, does not at all annul the fact that he was the messenger to the Ephesian Church Age, for the messenger to every age, regardless of when he appears or goes, is the one who influences that age for God by means of a Word-manifested ministry. Paul was that man.

The City Of Ephesus

The city of Ephesus was one of the three greatest cities of Asia. It was often called the third city of Christian faith, with Jerusalem first, and Antioch second. It was a very rich city. The government was Roman but the language was Greek. Historians believe that John, Mary, Peter, Andrew and Philip were all buried in this beautiful city. Paul, who founded the true faith in this city, pastored here only about three years; but when he was absent from the flock he was continually, prayerfully, mindful of them. Timothy was its first bishop. I Timothy 1:1-3,

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, Which is our hope;

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father

and Jesus Christ our Lord.

As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."

The very name, Ephesus, has a strange compound meaning, "Aimed at", and "Relaxed". The high aspirations of this age that had begun with the fullness of the Spirit, "the depth of God", whereby they were aiming at the high calling of God, began to give way to a less watchful attitude. A less ardent following of Jesus Christ began to manifest itself as an omen that in the future ages the physical vehicle called the church would sink to the awfulness of the "depth of Satan". It had become relaxed and was drifting. Already the age was backsliding. It had left its first love. The tiny seed planted in that Ephesian Age would one day grow in the spirit of error until all foul birds of the air would roost in its branches. So inoffensive to human reasoning would that little plant appear to that New Eve (the New Church) that again she would be deceived by Satan. The Ephesian Age had presented to her the opportunity for God's best, and for awhile she prevailed, and then relaxed, and in that unguarded moment Satan planted the seed of complete ruination.

The very religion of Ephesus types out perfectly this first church age and sets the tenor of the ages to come. In the first place, the magnificent temple of Diana, that was so many years in building, housed in its sacred courts the most lusterless and unobtrusive, image of Diana that one could imagine. She was absolutely unlike any other of her images seated in the other temples dedicated to her. She was simply an almost shapeless female figure that finally sunk into the block of wood from which she was carved. And her two arms were formed of two simple bars of iron. How perfectly this depicts the spirit of antichrist loosed in the first age. There he was loosed in the midst of the people, and yet took no shape as to alarm the people. Yet the two arms of iron bars showed that it was his intent to crush the work of God as he made his inroads. And no one seemed to notice him or what he was doing. But one day they would notice, when with those arms of iron his deeds' became doctrine', and his doctrine became the law of an empire.

The order of temple service is also very revealing. There were, first of all, priests who were eunuchs. This sterile priesthood presaged the sterility of a people who would drift from the Word, for a people who claim to know God apart from the Word are as barren of life as is a sterile eunuch. Secondly, the temple had within its confines the virgin priestesses who performed the religious acts of the temple. This showed forth the day that ceremony and form, ritual and works, would take the place of the Holy Spirit and no longer would charismatic manifestation fill the temple of God. Over them all was the high priest, a man of political power and public influence, portraying what was already in progress, though not too manifested, that is, the church would soon be given over to the leadership of man with man's plans and man's ambitions and "thus saith the Holy Ghost" would no longer be a living reality. And underneath them all were the temple slaves who had no choice but obedience to the religious hierarchy. What can this mean but the day would come when the vested clergy, by political maneuvering, state help, and the substitution of Word and Spirit for creeds, dogmas, and human leadership, would enslave the laity while the leaders luxuriated in ill gotten wealth and enjoyed their filthy pleasures, and the poor people who were to be served according to God, now became the servants.

Jesus, His Messenger And Churches

Revelation 2:1,

"... These things saith He That holdeth the seven stars in His right hand, Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."

This is He of Whom it is said, This Same Jesus is BOTH Lord and Christ.' There He is, the One and Only Lord God Almighty, and beside Him there is no other. There He is, the Saviour ("... salvation is of the Lord", Jonah 2:9) walking in the midst of the churches throughout the seven ages. What He was in the first age He is in all ages. To every believer, He is Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, and today, and forever. What He did once He is still doing, and will keep on doing.

Now you will notice that Jesus is walking alone in the midst of His churches. There is no one else with Him. Neither indeed can there be, for He alone wrought her salvation, and having purchased her with His own blood He owns her. He is her Lord and Master.

She gives Him all the glory and that glory He will not share with another. There is no pope with Him. There is no archbishop with Him. Mary, the mother of His earthly body, is not with Him. He does not speak and turn to a Father, for He is the Father. He does not turn to give orders to a Holy Spirit, for He is God, eternal Spirit, and it is His Life that is flowing and pulsating in the church giving her life, and without Him there would be no life. Salvation is of the Lord.

There was no one with Him when He trod the fierceness of the wrath of the fiery furnace. It was not another, but HIM Who hung upon the cross and gave His blood. He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. He is the Alpha and Omega of our salvation. We are espoused to Him and not another. We don't belong to the church. We belong to Him. His Word is law. Creeds, dogmas, by-laws and constitutions have no effect on us. Yes, it is Jesus ALONE Who walks in the midst of the churches. It is God in her, willing and doing of His good pleasure. Never forget that. You have only one relationship to God and God has only one relationship to you - that is JESUS, and JESUS ALONE.

There He is with the seven stars in His right hand. The right hand or arm signifies the power and authority of God. Psalms 44:3,

"For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them: but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them."

In that right hand of power are seven stars, who, according to Revelation 1:20, are the seven church messengers. This signifies that the very power and authority of God are behind His messengers to every age. They go forth in the fire and power of the Holy Ghost with the Word. They are stars because they reflect light. The light they reflect is His light. They have no light of their own. They kindle not their own fires that men may walk in the light of their sparks. Isaiah 50:11. It is night, for that is when the stars come out. It is the night of the blackness of sin, for all (even the whole world), have sinned and are constantly falling short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23.

These seven messengers are making God known to the people. He that receiveth them, receiveth Him That sent them. John 13:20. They speak and act upon His authority. He stands behind them with all the power of Godhead. Matthew 28:18-20,

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ALL POWER is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, even unto the end of the world (consummation of the ages)."

So there they are, full of the Holy Ghost and faith, on fire with the fire of God, holding forth the Word of truth, and there He stands to back them up. And think of it, not one believer of any age need cry in his heart, "Oh, that I might have been back there in the first age when the apostles were first sent out." There is NO need to look back. LOOK UP! Behold Him Who is even now walking in the midst of the churches through all ages. Behold Him Who is the same yesterday and today, and forever; and Who never changes either in essence or in His ways. Where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there He is in their midst! And not only in their midst as a complacent onlooker, or as a recording angel; but there He stands expressing exactly what He is - the Life and Sustainer and Giver of all good gifts to the church. Hallelujah!

"Who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks." How meaningful are those words when viewed in the light of the Scripture, which describes Him as "Christ Who is our Life". For Christ, indeed, is the life of the church. She has no other life. Without Him she is simply a religious society, a club, a meaningless gathering of the people. As a corpse bejeweled and dressed is still a corpse, so the church, no matter what her programs and her gracious efforts might achieve, without Christ she is a corpse also. But with Him in her midst, with Him motivating her, she becomes to the wonderment of all "His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." And this very hour He is walking in the midst of the last age's golden candlestick. What He was as He walked in the first age He is even now in this last age. Jesus Christ the SAME, YESTERDAY, and TODAY, and FOREVER.

"Seven golden candlesticks." In Exodus 25:31, it says,

"And thou shalt make a candlestick of PURE gold; of BEATEN work shall the candlestick

be made; his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knops, and his flowers, shall be of the same."

The true church of Jesus Christ, the bride, is likened to PURE gold. Her righteousness is HIS righteousness. Her attributes are HIS own glorious attributes. Her identity is found in Him. What He is, she is to reflect. What He has, she is to manifest. There is no fault in her. She is all glorious within and without. From beginning to ending she is the work of her Lord, and all His works are perfect. In fact in her is summed up and manifested the eternal wisdom and purpose of God. How can one fathom it? How can one understand it? Though we cannot do that, we can accept it by faith, for God hath spoken it.

But not only is the candlestick of gold, it is of BEATEN gold. Handcrafted of beaten gold, according to her blue prints which were Spirit-given. Outside of her Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, was ever a people so beaten and purged as the bride of Jesus Christ? Surely she is filling up the sufferings that Christ has left behind. Her goods are despoiled. Her life is in jeopardy. She is accounted as sheep for the slaughter. She is killed all the day long. She suffers much, but in it all retaliates not, neither does she cause others to suffer. Worthy of the Gospel is this lovely bride of Christ. And as gold is malleable, whereas brass will break with the beating, this gold of God will bear her suffering for the Lord, not bowed, not broken, not destroyed, but formed as a thing of beauty and a joy forever by the trials and testings of this life.

Christ Praises His Own

Revelation 2:2,3,

"I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars;

And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted."

How beautifully the Saviour praises and commends His children. He takes full account of their fine spiritual attitudes and behavior. He knows that there is weakness amongst them, but as yet He does not cry out against it. Isn't that just like the Lord? He knows how to encourage us in the right matters and discourage us in the wrong matters. We could all learn a good lesson right here in running the church and our families. And better still, we could all learn a good lesson in that God deals with each one of us in exactly this way. Don't ever be discouraged, Saint of God, for God is not ungracious to forget your labors of love. Whatever we do, even giving a cup of cold water to some one, has a reward and blessing from the Lord.

"I know thy works, thy labour, and thy patience." As He walks in the midst of His church, He is aware of the suffering of His people, and He cares. As it was in the days of the captivity in Egypt when He heard their cries, He Who never changes still hears the cries of the oppressed as He walks amongst them. The very word, labour, signifies a weariness through oppression. God's people do not only work for Him in a labour of love, but they suffer for Him with joy. They are patient in bearing the yoke. This first age suffered great persecution. It had to work hard to preach the Gospel and shed forth truth. Their high calling in life was to serve God, and when their hopes in life were blighted they were patient and committed all to Him Who had promised a lasting recompence in heaven for what they had given up for Him on earth.

I think we ought to stop here and deal with the thought that God's people have always been and always will be persecuted. You know that Genesis is the book of beginnings, and what you find started there will carry right on through the Revelation and never change. There we see that Cain persecuted and killed Abel because the latter pleased God. Then we see a perfect picture in Abraham's son of the flesh, Ishmael, who teased and fought the son of promise, Isaac. And there was Esau, who hated Jacob and would have killed him, had not God intervened. In the New Testament we find Judas betraying Jesus, while the religious orders of the first century attempted to destroy the early believers. The children of this world, controlled by the devil, hate the children of God who are controlled by the Spirit.

No matter how just and upright a Christian is before the public, and how gracious he is to his fellow man, doing naught but good, let him confess Christ as his Saviour and

acknowledge the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in tongues, prophecy, healing and miracles, and he will be condemned. The spirit of this world hates the Spirit of God, and because it can't overcome the Spirit of the Lord it tries to destroy the vessel in whom the Spirit of Truth dwells.

Persecution and trials are a natural, normal part of the Christian life. There is only one thing you can do about them. Commit them all to God, judge not, and leave their outworking and final judgment to Him.

"Thou canst not bear them which are evil, and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." These Ephesians believed that God's people ought to be holy. According to this verse they took steps to keep the body unleavened from sin. Most evidently the apostasy had already started. Sin had entered into the church. But they were obedient to the words of Paul when he said to put away the wicked from amongst them. They were a separated people. They had come out of the world, and now they weren't going to let the world enter amongst them. They would not put up with sin in the church. Holiness wasn't a phrase with them or a figure of speech; it was a way of life.

"Thou hast tried them that say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars." My, that is a blunt statement. "Thou hast tried them who call themselves apostles." Isn't that presumptuous? What right has a people to try those who call themselves apostles? And how do they try them? Oh, I love this. Here it is in Galatians 1:8,

"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have (already) preached unto you, let him be accursed."

It was the apostles who brought the original Word to the people. That original Word could not change, not even a dot or dash of it. Paul knew it was God Who had spoken to him so he said, "Even if I come and try to give a second revelation, try to make one little change in what I gave originally, let me be accursed." You see, Paul knew that first revelation was correct. God can't give a first revelation, then a second revelation. If He did, He would be changing His mind. He can give a revelation and then add to it, as He did in the Garden of Eden when He promised the Seed to the woman, and then later designated that Seed had to come through Abraham, and then later said it would come by the same blood lines in David. But it was the same revelation. It only gave the people more information to help them receive and understand it. But God's Word can't change. The Seed came exactly as revealed. Hallelujah. And see what those false apostles were doing. They came with their own word. Those Ephesians knew that Word as Paul had taught it. They were full of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of Paul's hands. They looked those false apostles in the eye and said, "You are not saying what Paul said. You are, therefore, false." Oh, that sets my heart on fire. Get back to the Word! It is not you that really tries the apostle, and prophet and teacher, IT IS THE WORD THAT TRIES THEM. One of these days there is going to come a prophet to the Laodicean Church Age and you will know if he is the real one sent from God or not. Yes you will, for if he is of God HE WILL BE IN THAT WORD EXACTLY AS GOD GAVE IT TO PAUL. HE WON'T DEVIATE FROM THAT WORD FOR A MOMENT, NOT BY ONE IOTA. In that last age, when there will be many false prophets appearing, watch and see how they keep telling you that if you don't believe them and what they say, you will be lost; but when that LAST DAY PROPHET comes on the scene, if he is truly that prophet, he will be crying out, "Get back to the Word or you are lost." He won't build on a private revelation or interpretation, but on the Word. Amen, and Amen!

These false apostles are the grievous wolves that Paul spoke of. He said, "Once I am gone they will try to come and claim equal revelation; but their purpose is not to help you, but destroy you." Acts 20:27-32,

"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things (their own word and ideas, not God's) to draw away disciples after them.

Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the Word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified."

John knew of them, also, for he said in I John 4:1,

"... many false prophets are (already) gone out into the world."

That antichrist spirit was already infiltrating the church, and it was doing it by going against the Word. Why here is where it all started. Right here in the first church age. Already they were denying the Word and setting up their own creeds and philosophies instead of the Word. That is anti-christ, for Jesus is the Word. To be anti-Word is to be anti-Jesus. To be anti-Word is to be antichrist, because the Spirit and the Word are ONE. If you are anti-Word, you will have to be antichrist. AND IF IT STARTED IN THE FIRST CHURCH IT WILL HAVE TO GROW UNTIL THE END WHEN IT TAKES OVER. And that is exactly what you will see as we cover all the ages. It starts out real small in the Ephesian Age and it grows in every age until the anti-Word, antichrist system takes over entirely and the infallibility of the Word is repudiated by the false apostles of the false church.

Now it is easy to get a wrong impression of what we are talking about because I am making this so strong. It could sound to you as though this anti-Word, antichrist spirit, is a complete repudiation of the Word, a denial of the Bible culminating in its rejection. No sir. It is not that. What it is, is Revelation 22:18,19,

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book.

And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

It is the changing of even just ONE word by taking away or adding to it. It is the original trick of Satan in the Garden of Eden. He just added one little word to what God had said. That did it. It brought death and destruction. And in Ephesus, it was just the same. Just a word added, just a word taken away, and the anti- Word, antichrist spirit began to flourish.

Did you get it now? There are those twins again. There are those two trees again, growing side by side in the same earth, partaking of the same nourishment, drinking in the same rain, and benefiting by the same sun. But they come from DIFFERENT seeds. One tree is FOR the Word of God, exactly as God gave it, and loves and obeys it. The other tree is from the seed that is anti the Word of God and changes it where it wants to. It substitutes its own creeds and dogmas for the living true Word exactly as did Cain, who ended up killing Abel. But fear not little flock. Stay with the Word. Keep that Word between you and the devil. Eve did not do that and she failed. And when the church lets down on the Word she goes into the depths of the darkness of Satan.

"And hast borne, and hast patience, and for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." This is just about the same as was said in verse two. But in verse two the work, labor, and patience were from guarding the sacred Word which was committed unto them. How they kept away the adversaries. What a credit they were to Paul. But in this verse their persecutions and trials and patience are over the blessed Name of Jesus.

You know that is not at all strange, for it is the Word and the Name that brings the enemy pouring after us like a flood. That mighty Word which was manifested in healings, signs, wonders, and other demonstrations, caused the Pharisees to scream out for the death of the true believers. And now that Name, hated and despised by the Jews, is mocked by the cultured as they laughed to think anyone could be so foolish as to believe in a man who died and rose again and is now seated in heaven. So here were the religious persecutors, the Jews, cursing this Jesus, Who to them was a false Messiah; and here were the others laughing with delight and mocking sarcastically at the Name of a new god, Who to them wasn't a god at all.

Now here is something else that started in that age and will continue right down through the ages, getting deeper and darker. That is, people were repudiating that Name. It was not the true Ephesian Church that was doing it. No sir. It was the false

apostles. It was the outsider trying to get in and defile the believers. The Ephesians knew that Name and loved it. Recall the origin of that Ephesian Church. A little group of people who were looking for the Messiah heard that a prophet who called himself the forerunner of the Messiah had appeared in the desert of Palestine and was baptizing people unto repentance of sins. These, then, received the baptism of John. But when Paul came to them he showed them that the prophet was dead, that Jesus had come and fulfilled His life as a sacrifice for sin, and that NOW the Holy Ghost was come and would enter in and fill all true believers in Jesus, the Messiah. When they heard this, THEY WERE BAPTIZED IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, and when Paul had laid his hands upon them, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. They knew what it was to obey the Word, to be baptized in His Name (Lord Jesus Christ) and in that way they knew they would be filled with the Holy Spirit. You could not get that people to change. They knew the truth. Acts. 19:1-7.

They knew the power of that Name. They saw that Name was so powerful that even aprons taken from the body of Paul and sent in Jesus' Name to suffering people could deliver the sick from all manner of diseases and cast out evil spirits. So manifestly wonderful did that Name perform that reprobate Jews at Ephesus attempted to use it to exorcise devils. Acts 19:11-17,

"And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul;

So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the Name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus Whom Paul preacheth.

And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified."

They knew the righteous life that accompanied the bearing of that Name, for whosoever nameth the Name of the Lord, let him depart from sin. Be ye holy, ye that bear the vessels of the Lord. Thou shalt not bear the Name of the Lord thy God in vain. These Ephesians were CHRISTIANS. They bore a Name, and that Name was Christ, Who was the Spirit of God within them, and Which was one of the threefold Names of their Lord.

"... And for My Name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted." These believers weren't laboring for Paul, or for an organization. They weren't committed to programs and institutions whereby they built up holdings of value. They worked for the Lord. They were His servants, not the pawns of organization. They didn't go to church on Sunday and talk about that Name and then forget it the rest of the week. They didn't give lip service to that Name. No Sir. It was their lives that were given.

All they did, they did in that Name. In that Name they acted, but if they could not act in that Name, then they refrained from acting. These were heavenly placed Christians whose behaviour was in the Lord.

But that false vine group that wanted to defile that Name hung like skulking wolves in the dark, waiting to get in and tear down. But the saints stood the test and kept the Word and the Name.

The Complaint Of God

Revelation 2:4,

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love."

To understand this you must realize that the Spirit is not speaking to the original saints of Ephesus alone. This message is to the entire age which lasted about 120 years. Its message, then, is to all the generations in that span. Now history keeps repeating itself. In the generations of Israel we see revival in one generation, only to see the fires fading in the next. In the third generation, embers may be glowing slightly, but in the fourth there may be no vestige whatsoever of that original flame. Then God lights the

fire again, and the same process is repeated. It is simply the manifestation of the truth that God has no grandchildren. Salvation is not passed on by natural birth any more than is there any truth to apostolic succession. It isn't in the Word. You start out with truly born-again believers, and when the next generation comes along they are no longer just plain Christians, but they have taken a denominational name and are now Baptists, Methodists, etc. That is exactly what they are, too. They are not Christians. You have to be born of the will of God, not the will of man, to be saved. But these folks are all coming together now by the will of man. I don't say that some of them aren't right with God. Not for a minute do I say that, but the original fire has died down. They are not the same any more.

The fervent desire to please God, the passion to know His Word, the cry for reaching out in the Spirit, all begins to fade and instead of that church being on fire with the fire of God it has cooled off and become a bit formal. That is what was happening back there to the Ephesians. They were getting a bit formal. The abandonment to God was dying out and the people weren't too careful about what God thought of them as they began to be careful about what the world thought of them. That second generation coming on was just like Israel. They demanded a king to be like the other nations. When they did that, they rejected God. But they did it anyway. That is the history of the church. When it thinks more of conforming to the world instead of conforming to God, it isn't long until you see them stop doing things they used to do, and start doing things they wouldn't do initially. They change their manner of dress, their attitudes and their behaviour. They get lax. That is what "Ephesus" means: relaxed - drifting.

That cycle of revival and death has never failed. All you have to do is recall this last move of God in the Spirit when men and women dressed like Christians, went to church, prayed all night, took to street corners and weren't ashamed of the manifestations of the Spirit. They left their old dead churches and worshipped in homes or old store buildings. They had reality. But it wasn't too long a time until they began to get enough money to build fine new churches. They put in a choir instead of singing unto God for themselves. They put gowns on the choir. They organized a movement and ran it by man. They soon began to read books that weren't fit to read. They let down the bars and goats came in and took over. The cry of joy was gone. The freedom of the Spirit was gone. Oh, they kept on with a form; but the fire had died down and the blackness of ashes is about all that is left.

A few moments ago I mentioned that John understood what it was to love God. That great apostle of love would certainly see it when the church began to lose that first love of God. In I John 5:3, he says,

"For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments (His Word)."

One little deviation from that Word was a step away from Christ. People say they love God, they go to church, they even shout and rejoice and sing and have a great emotional time. But when it is all over, watch and see if they are in that WORD, walking in it, living in it. If they go through all the other and then don't walk in that Word, they can say they love God but their lives tell another story. I wonder if John didn't see a lot of that before he died; people saying they loved God but not obeying His Word. Oh, Ephesian Church, something is happening to you. Someone is trying to either add to that Word or take from it. But they are doing it so subtly that you can't see it. They haven't made a move so big you can see it out there in the open. It is under cover, and they are bringing it by way of reason and human understanding and it will take over unless you refuse it. Go back to Pentecost before it is too late!

But as usual people don't heed God's warning. That revival fire built upon the sacred Word is so wonderful, and the manifestation of the Spirit so blessed, that a little fear creeps in and a whisper in the heart says, "How can we protect this truth we have? What can we do to see this revival goes on?" That is when the "antichrist spirit" comes in and whispers, "Look, you have the truth now, see that it doesn't get lost. Organize and set up your creed of what you believe. Put it all in a church manual." And they do it. They organize. They add to the Word. And they die just like Eve did for taking One wrong word. It's God's Word that brings life. And it's not what we say about the Word that counts, but it's what God said.

The Warning Of God

Revelation 2:5,

"Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

God tells them to REMEMBER. Evidently something had left their minds. They had forgotten something. He told them to turn back in their minds to their point of origin. The origin of the first age was Pentecost. They had fallen from it. They had forgotten the glory and wonder of it. It was time to go back in mind and then in reality. Back to when they could say, "For me to live is Christ." Back to purity when Ananias and Sapphira were dealt with. Back to the Gate Beautiful. Oh, what a reproach it is to drift from God and countenance those acts that defile His Name. Let those who name His Name depart from sin and keep their vessels pure for God. Look at what you once were in your heart, and mind, and in your life. Then go back to it.

And what is the way back? The way is the way of repentance. If a sinner has to come to God by way of repentance then the lukewarm or backslider will have to repent that much more. Repent! Bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Prove it by your life. "If you do not repent," said God, "I will remove your lampstand." Certainly. A church in that condition can't give light to the world. Its light has turned to darkness. God will then take away its faithful messenger and its faithful shepherds and leave them to themselves, and they will go on talking about Christianity but be bereft of it.

Repent quickly! Don't hesitate! Evidently Ephesus did hesitate, for her life span was not very long. The glory of God decreased ever so rapidly. It was not long until the city was in ruins. Its glorious temple became a shapeless mass. The land became a marsh inhabited by water fowl; the population was gone except for a few unbelievers in a squalid village. There was not even ONE Christian left. The lamp was rent from its place.

Now it does not mean that she could not have repented. It does not mean that we cannot repent. We can. But it must be quickly. It must be a true heart cry to God in sorrow, and then God will restore. The glory shall come again.

The Seed Of Nicolaitanism

Revelation 2:6,

"But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate."

Now there are two thoughts on what the Nicolaitanes were. It is said by some that they were a group of apostates who had as their founder, Nicholas of Antioch, a proselyte, who became one of the seven deacons at Jerusalem. They had pagan feasts and were most unchaste in their behaviour. They taught that in order to master sensuality one would have to know by experience the whole range of it at first. Naturally they gave way to such abandon that their degradation was complete. Thus they had applied to them the two Old Testament names that symbolized such extravagances: Balaam and Jezebel. Since Balaam corrupted the people and thus conquered them, it was said that Nicholas did likewise. This group was supposedly forced out of Ephesus and found a place of establishment in Pergamos.

But the problem about this belief is that it is not true. There is absolutely no history for it. It is at best tradition. To adopt such a view would make the church age of Ephesus absolutely historical with no bearing upon today. This is not true, for whatever starts in the early church must continue in every age until it is finally blessed and exalted by God or destroyed as an unclean thing in the lake of fire. That this tradition is actually against Scripture, simply note that in Revelation 2:2, the Ephesian Church could NOT BEAR the evil ones. They thus had to put them out, or it would not make sense to say they could not bear them. If they did not put them out, then they were bearing them. Now in verse six, it says that they hated their deeds. So this Nicolaitane group remained a part of the first age, doing their deeds. The deeds were hated, but the people were not rendered impotent. Thus we see seeds in Ephesus that will continue and will become a doctrine that will go right up to, and into, the lake of fire.

What are these Nicolaitanes? The word comes from two Greek words. Nikao, which means to conquer, and Laos, which means the laity. In plain fact, somebody was doing something in that early church which was conquering the laity. If the laity were being conquered, then it must have been some "authority" there doing it.

What was it that God hated that was happening in that church? What was going on then, and is now going on today, is exactly what the word Nicolaitane means. The

people were being subjected somehow in a way that was absolutely contrary to the Word of God.

Now to get the real meaning of what we are about to go into, I must caution you to ever keep in mind that religion (spiritual matters if you like), is composed of two parts that intertwine but are as opposite as black and white. Religion and the spiritual world are made of those two trees which had their roots in Eden. Both the Tree Of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil stood in the midst of the garden and no doubt their very branches intertwined each other. Thus in the Ephesian Church is that same paradox. The church is made up of good and bad. Two vines make the church. They are like the wheat and tares, growing up side by side. But one is the TRUE. The other is the FALSE. Now God will speak TO each one and He will talk ABOUT each one. He will call them the church. And only the elect will really know which is the true Spirit. Only the elect will not be deceived. Matthew 24:24,

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect."

So way back there in the early church (a very short period after Pentecost) the false vine got to intertwine itself around the True Vine and we find these deeds of the Nicolaitanes. And that spirit is going to be found fighting the True Vine until it is destroyed by God. Now have you got it?

Alright. Now what was the spiritual climate of that church? It had left its first love. Leaving its first love of the Word of God was revealed to us as having fallen from its origin, which was Pentecost. In plain English, that means this church was in danger of being taken away from the leading of the Holy Spirit, the control of the Spirit. This was exactly what took place after Moses led Israel out of Egypt. The way of God was to lead them by the cloud of fire, prophetic utterance, miracles and signs, and God-given wonders. This was to be accomplished by 'God-selected', and 'God-ordained', and 'God-equipped', and 'God-sent' men, with the whole camp being dominated by a Holy Ghost move. They rebelled and wanted a set of rules and creeds to go by. Then they wanted a king. Then they wanted to be exactly like the world and went into complete apostasy and oblivion. That is exactly how the first church age started, and it will get worse and worse, until the Holy Spirit is completely rejected and God must destroy the people.

See how it started out in the early church. It was called deeds. Then it became a doctrine. It became the standard. It became the unbending way. It finally took over and God was pushed aside. Oh, it started so small, so quietly, so inoffensively. It looked so good. It seemed so sound. Then it caught a hold, and like a python, it squeezed out the very breath and killed all the spirituality there was in the church. Oh, that false vine is subtle. It is like an angel of light until it gets a hold on you. Now I want to say that I believe in leadership. But it is not the leadership of men I believe in. I believe in the leadership of the Holy Ghost coming through the Word. I believe also, that God has set men in the church, men who are gifted by the Spirit; and they will keep the church in order. I believe that. I believe also that the church is ruled over by men that God sends to take charge. But that rule is BY THE WORD, so that it is not men really ruling but the SPIRIT OF GOD, for the Word and Spirit are ONE. Hebrews 13:7,

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

But see what was happening back there. That false vine was getting a hold and it was teaching that rulership by man was right. It taught that the church had to be governed. It taught a control over the people, but instead of doing it God's way, they simply took authority and vested all the spiritual power in their own hands and came out with a holy priesthood standing between God and the people. They went right back to the old Aaronic system. They became antichrist for they disposed of His mediatorship and imposed their own. God hated that. The Ephesians hated that and any true believer will hate it too. We would have to be stone blind not to see that same thing at work all through the ages and right now it is the worst of all. What it was, was organization. That separated the people. God's people are supposed to be one. By ONE Spirit are they ALL baptized into one body and EVERYONE is to be moved upon by the Holy Ghost and EVERYONE is to participate in the worship of God. But men wanted the pre-eminence, so they took over control, and bishops became archbishops, and with imposing titles they by-passed the Word of God and taught their own doctrines. They got the people to obey them until the time came that their way of worship did not in any way at all resemble

the early days after Pentecost. These deeds were the beginning of apostolic succession. From apostolic succession it was one easy and quick step to "church membership" as the means of saving grace. The Word was reduced to a creed. Antichrist by his spirit was predominating the church.

Look at it today. If you read Acts 2:4 the way some do, you could read it this way, "Now when the day of Pentecost was fully come, there came a priest with a wafer and said, 'Stick out your tongue,' and he laid the wafer upon it, and he himself drank some wine and said, 'You have now received the Holy Ghost.'" Incredible? That is exactly what Nicolaitanism has come to. They say, "Never mind what God's Word says. You can't understand it. We have to interpret it for you. Furthermore the Bible is not finished. It has to change with the times and we will tell you what the changes are." How contrary that is to the Word of God that emphatically states, "Let God be true, but every man a liar," whenever there is a conflict with the truth. Heaven and earth will pass away, but NOT ONE WORD of God will fail. So the people are led by people who presume to be what they are not. They say they are vicars of Christ, but what they are is antichrist.

Here is another sad story. It is the story of water baptism. In Jesus' day and after Pentecost they were immersed in water. No one can deny that. Educated men say that all they did was pour water on them because it was easy to find little holes of water in many places. And when they pour water on them, they do it in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, as if those titles were real names, and as if there were three Gods instead of just one. But stay in that organization and try and preach the truth of immersion in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be put out. You couldn't be led of God and stay in there. It is impossible.

Now Paul was a prophet, taught by the Holy Ghost. If Paul baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and said anyone that did different from his preaching was accursed, then it is time to wake up and see that the church is no longer controlled by the Holy Ghost but it is controlled by the Nicolaitanes. Acts 20:27-30,

"For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.

For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Paul saw it coming. But he warned them about this subtle priesthood that would come and take over with its false doctrines. He knew they would implement a way of worship that excluded the people from any part in a Holy Spirit ministry. And even right today among those who claim to be free and full of the Spirit there is not too much freedom in the laity, and the best we can see is a few preachers with inspired preaching while the flock just sits there and tries to absorb it. This is a far cry from Paul who said that when all came together, all had the leading of the Spirit, and all participated in Spiritual worship.

And the church corporate has never learned this lesson from the Scripture nor from history. Every time God gives a visitation of the Holy Spirit and people get free, after awhile they bind themselves right back to the very thing they came out of. When Luther came out of Catholicism, the people stayed free for awhile. But when he died, the people simply organized what they thought he believed and set up their own creeds and ideas and repudiated anyone who said opposite to what they said. They went right back to Catholicism with a little different form. And right today many Lutherans are ready to go all the way back.

Oh, yes! In Revelation 12, that old whore had many daughters. These daughters are just like mother. They set the Word aside, deny the work of the Spirit of God, subjugate the laity, and make it impossible for the laity to worship God unless they come through them or through their pattern, which is nothing but a blueprint of unbelief from Satan himself.

Where, oh where, are we spiritually? We are in a wilderness of darkness. How far we have wandered from the first church. Pentecost is nowhere in view and the Word cannot be found. Apostolic succession, which today abounds, is not found in the Word. It is a

man-made device. It supersedes illegally the truth that GOD, NOT MAN, has set His leaders in the church. Peter was not even in Rome. Yet they lie and say he was. History proves he was not. There are people who read history, but shrug their shoulders and go back to believing a lie. Where can you find the 'vicar of Christ' in the Word? No one takes His place, yet it has been done and people accept it. Where can you find that 'added revelation' is accepted by God, especially revelation contrary to one already given? Yet they accept it and rest on it. Where do you find a 'purgatory'? Where do you find a 'mass'? Where do you find 'paying money to get out of hell'? It is not in the Word, but men put it in their own book and by it took over the people, ruling them by fear. Where do you find that 'man has the power to forgive us as though he were God'? "Grievous wolves," is hardly strong enough to describe them. Nicolaitanism. Organization. Man over man.

Get back to God. Repent before it is too late. See the handwriting on the wall. It is writing judgment. As the sacred vessels were desecrated and thus brought the wrath of God, now the sacred Word has been desecrated and the Spirit grieved, and judgment is here, even at the door. Repent! Repent! Go back to Pentecost. Back to the leadership of the Holy Ghost. Back to the Word of God, for why will ye die?

The Voice Of The Spirit

Revelation 2:7,

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree Of Life, Which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." It may be that millions will hear these words or read them. But how many will pay heed to them? That we do not know. But he who will lend his ear and want to know the words of truth will find the Spirit of God enlightening him. If your ear is open to the Word, the Spirit of God will make the Word real to you. Now that is a work of the Spirit. I can teach you the truth, but if you don't open your ear to hear it and your heart to receive it, you won't get the revelation.

Now notice, it says that the Spirit is speaking to the churches. That is plural, not singular. The Spirit did not have John write this down for a local Ephesian church, nor for the first age only. It is for all church ages. But this is the church of beginnings. And thus it is like the Book of Genesis. What started in Genesis holds true throughout the entire Word and finally closes out in Revelation. Thus, this church beginning in Acts is God's blueprint for all ages until she closes out in the Laodicean Age. Watch it carefully. Let every age take heed, for what is going on here is only the start. That little tree that was planted is going to grow. It is going to grow through the ages. This, then, is a message for every Christian through every age until Jesus comes. Yes, it is, for it is the Spirit speaking. Amen.

The Reward Promised

Revelation 2:7,

"... To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree Of Life, Which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

This is the future reward to all overcomers of all ages. When the last call to battle has been sounded, when our armour has been laid down, then we will rest in the paradise of God and our portion shall be the Tree of Life, forever.

"The Tree Of Life." Isn't that a beautiful figure of speech? It is mentioned three times in the Book of Genesis and three times in the Book of Revelation. In all six places it is the same tree and symbolizes exactly the same thing.

But what is the Tree Of Life? Well, first of all we would have to know what the tree itself stands for. In Numbers 24:6, as Balaam described Israel, he said they were "trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted." Trees throughout the Scriptures refer to persons, as in Psalms 1. Thus the Tree Of Life must be the Person of Life, and that is Jesus.

Now in the Garden of Eden there were two trees standing in the midst of it. One was the Tree Of Life, the other was the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Man was to live by the Tree Of Life; but he was not to touch the other tree or he would die. But man

did partake of the other tree, and when he did, death entered into him by his sin, and he became separated from God.

Now that Tree back there in Eden, that Tree which was the source of life, was Jesus. In John, chapters six through eight, Jesus sets Himself forth as the source of eternal life. He called Himself the Bread from heaven. He spoke of giving Himself and that if a man ate of Him he would never die. He proclaimed that He knew Abraham, and that before Abraham, He WAS. He prophesied that He Himself would give them living waters that if man drank he would never thirst again, but would live eternally. He showed Himself as the GREAT I AM. He is the Bread Of Life, the Well Of Life, the Eternal One, the TREE OF LIFE. He was back there in Eden in the midst of the garden even as He will be in the midst of the paradise of God.

Some have an idea that the two trees in the garden were just two more trees like unto the rest of those that God had placed there. But careful students know that this is not so. When John the Baptist cried that the axe was laid to the root of all trees, he was not talking of simply natural trees, but of spiritual principles. Now in I John 5:11 it says,

"And this is the RECORD, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son."

Jesus said in John 5:40,

"And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

Thus the record, God's Word, states plainly and clearly that LIFE, ETERNAL LIFE, is in the Son. It is no other place. I John 5:12,

"He that hath the Son hath LIFE; and he that hath not the Son of God hath NOT Life."

Now since the record cannot change, be taken from or added thereunto, then the record stands that THE LIFE IS IN THE SON... Since this is so, THE TREE IN THE GARDEN HAS TO BE JESUS.

Alright. If the Tree Of Life is a person, then the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is a person ALSO. It can't be otherwise. Thus the Righteous One and the Wicked One stood side by side there in the midst of the Garden of Eden. Ezekiel 28:13a

"Thou (Satan) hast been in Eden, the garden of God."

Here is where we receive the true revelation of the Serpent's seed.' Here is what really happened in the Garden of Eden. The Word says that Eve was beguiled by the serpent. She was actually seduced by the serpent. It says in Genesis 3:1,

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made."

This beast was so close to a human being (and yet was pure animal) that he could reason and talk. He was an upright creature and was somewhat in between a chimpanzee and a man, but closer to a man. He was so close to being human that his seed could, and did mingle with that of the woman and cause her to conceive. When this happened, God cursed the serpent. He changed every bone in the serpent's body so that he had to crawl like a snake. Science can try all it wants to, and it won't find the missing link. God saw to that. Man is smart and he can see an association of man with animal and he tries to prove it out of evolution. There isn't any evolution. But man and animal did mingle. That's one of the mysteries of God that has remained hidden, but here it is revealed. It happened right back there in the midst of Eden when Eve turned away from Life to accept Death.

Notice what God said to them in the garden. Genesis 3:15,

"And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her Seed, It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel."

If we give credit to the Word that the woman did have a Seed, then the serpent must have surely had a seed also. If the Seed of the woman was a man- child apart from the man, then the seed of the serpent will have to be in the same pattern, and that is another male must be born apart from human male instrumentality. There is no student who does not know that the Seed of the woman was the Christ Who came by the instrumentality of God, apart from human intercourse. It is also just as well known that the predicted bruising of the serpent's head was in actuality a prophecy concerning what Christ would accomplish against Satan at the cross. There at the cross Christ would bruise the head of Satan, while Satan would bruise the heel of the Lord.

This portion of Scripture is the revelation of how the literal seed of the serpent was sown in the earth, even as we have the account of Luke 1:26-35, wherein is set forth the exact account of how the Seed of the woman came into physical manifestation apart from the instrumentality of the human male.

"And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His Name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David:

And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also That Holy Thing Which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

As the Seed of the woman was literally God reproducing Himself in human flesh, so the seed of the serpent is the literal way that Satan found he was able to open the door to himself into the human race. It was impossible for Satan (for he is only a CREATED spirit-being) to reproduce himself in the manner which God reproduced Himself, so the Genesis account tells how he produced his seed and introduced or injected himself into the human race. Also recall that Satan is called the serpent.' It is his seed or injection into the human race we are speaking of.

Before Adam ever had carnal knowledge of Eve, the serpent had that knowledge ahead of him. And that one born of it was Cain. Cain was of (born of, begotten of) that "Wicked One". I John 3:12. The Holy Spirit in John could not in one place call Adam the "Wicked One" (for that is what he would be if he fathered Cain) and in another place call Adam the "Son of God" which he was by creation. Luke 3:38. Cain turned out in character like his father, a bringer of death, a murderer. His utter defiance of God when faced by the Almighty in Genesis 4:5,9,13,14, show him to be absolutely un-human-like in characteristics, seeming even to surpass any account we have in Scripture concerning a confrontation of Satan by God.

"But unto Cain and to his offering He had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell.

And the Lord said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother's keeper?

And Cain said unto the Lord, My punishment is greater than I can bear.

Behold, Thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from Thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me."

Notice the exact way the record of God sets forth the account of the births of Cain, Abel and Seth. Genesis 4:1,

"And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord. And she again bare his brother Abel."

Genesis 4:25,

"And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth..."

There are THREE sons born from TWO acts of carnal knowledge by Adam. Since the Bible is the exact and perfect Word of God, this is no mistake but a record for our illumination. Since THREE sons were born from TWO acts by Adam, you know

POSITIVELY that ONE of those three WAS NOT the son of Adam. God has recorded this in this exact manner to show us something. The truth of the matter is that Eve had in her womb TWO sons (twins) from SEPARATE impregnations. She was carrying twins, with Cain's conception sometime previous to that of Abel's. See those TWINS again. Perfect type as always. To those who think that this is not possible, let it be known that the medical records are replete with cases where women have carried twins who were of separate ova and separate insemination with the fertilization of the eggs being days apart, and NOT ONLY SO, but some of the records show that the twins were fathered by separate males. Recently worldwide coverage was given to a Norwegian mother who was suing her husband for support for herself and her twins, one of which was white and the other black. She admitted that she had a Negro lover. The two conceptions were about three weeks apart. In Beaumont, Texas, in 1963, the records again set forth a multiple birth wherein pregnancies were many days apart, in fact so much so that the woman almost died along with one child in childbirth.

Now why did this have to be so? Why was it that the seed of the serpent must come this way? Man was created for God. Man was to be the temple of God. The place of God's rest (the Holy Spirit) was man, the temple. Acts 7:46-51,

"Who found favour before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

But Solomon built Him an house.

Howbeit the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool: what house will ye build Me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of My rest?

Hath not My hand made all these things?

Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye."

Satan has known this all along. He also wants to in-dwell man even as God so does. But God has reserved to Himself that right. Satan cannot do that. God alone appeared in human flesh. Satan could not and cannot do that. He does not have creative powers. The only way for Satan to accomplish what he wanted to do was to enter the serpent in Eden even as he entered by evil spirits into the swine at Gadara. God does not enter animals; but Satan can and will to accomplish his ends. He could not have a child directly by Eve as did God by Mary, so he entered into the serpent and then beguiled Eve. He seduced her and by her did Satan have a child vicariously. Cain bore the full spiritual characteristics of Satan and the animalistic (sensual, fleshly) characteristic of the serpent. No wonder the Holy Spirit said that Cain was of that wicked one. He was.

Now I want to go into some certain proof we have that there is a definite affinity between man and animal. It is a physical thing. Do you know that you can take the embryo cells from an unborn fetus and inject them into human beings? Then those thyroid cells will go right to the human thyroid, the kidney cells will go right to the human kidneys. Do you realize how stupendous this is? Some intelligence guides those animal cells exactly to the right place. That intelligence accepts those cells and puts them in exactly the right place. There is an affinity between animal and man. They can't intermingle and reproduce. That has been tried. But back in the garden that intermingling did take place and the chemical affinity which still exists proves it. For back in Eden the serpent was an upright creature. He was close to man. He was almost man. Satan took advantage of the serpent's physical characteristics to use him to beguile Eve. Then God destroyed that pattern of the serpent. No other beast can commingle with man. But the affinity is there.

Now that we have come this far, let me try to crystallize your thinking on this subject so you can see the necessity of our going into the serpent seed doctrine' as I have. We start with the fact that there were TWO trees in the midst of the garden. The Tree of Life was Jesus. The other tree is definitely Satan because of what came forth of the fruit of that tree. Now then, we know that both of those trees had a relationship to man or they would never have been placed there. They must have had a part in the sovereign plan and purpose of God in their relationship to mankind and to Himself or we could never impute omniscience unto God. This is all true so far, is it not? Now the Word most definitely sets forth that from BEFORE the foundation of the earth the purpose of God was to share His Eternal Life with man. Ephesians 1:4-11,

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we

should be holy and without blame before Him in love:

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.

In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace;

Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself:

That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:

In Whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will."

Revelation 13:8,

"And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him (Satan) whose names are not written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

But that Life could not, and would not, be shared in any other way than through the way of "God manifest in the flesh." This was a part of His eternal and predestinated purpose. This plan was to be to the praise of the glory of His grace. It was the plan of Redemption. It was the plan of Salvation. Now listen closely. "God being a Saviour, it was necessary that He predestinate a man who would require salvation in order to give Himself reason and purpose of being." That is one hundred percent correct and multitudes of Scripture bear it out as does the very pointed verse of Romans 11:36,

"For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are ALL THINGS: to Whom be GLORY for ever. Amen."

Man could not directly come and partake of that Tree of Life in the midst of the garden. That Eternal Life of the Tree had to become flesh first. But before God could raise and save a sinner, He had to have a sinner to raise and save. Man had to fall. The fall which would be caused by Satan, had to have flesh to make fall. Satan had to come through flesh also. But Satan could not come through human flesh to make the fall as would Christ come in human flesh to restore the fallen. But there was an animal, the serpent, so close to man that Satan could get to that beast and through that beast he could get to human flesh and cause the fall, and inject himself thereby into the human race, even as Jesus would one day come and inject Himself into the human race, into human bodies, even to the extent of a resurrection wherein we would have bodies like unto His glorified one. Thus what God worked out here in the garden was His predestinated plan. And when Satan had brought about that which was necessary to the purpose of God, then man could not get to the Tree Of Life in the garden. Certainly not. It wasn't time. But an animal (animal had caused the fall had it not? let animal life be shed) was taken and his blood shed and then God had communion with man again. Then there was to come a day when God would appear in flesh, and by means of His humiliation He would restore fallen man and make him a partaker of that Life Eternal. Once you see this, you can understand the serpent seed and know that it was no apple Eve ate. No, it was the degradation of humanity by intermingling the seed.

Now I know in answering one question another one is apt to come up, and people ask me, "If Eve fell that way, what did Adam do, for God lays the blame on Adam?" That is simple. The Word of God is forever settled in heaven. Before one speck of stardust was made, that Word (God's law) was there EXACTLY AS IT IS WRITTEN IN OUR BIBLE. Now the Word teaches us that if a woman leaves her husband and goes with another man she is an adulteress and is no longer married and the husband is not to take her back. That Word was true in Eden as it was true when Moses wrote it in the law. The Word can't change. Adam took her back. He knew exactly what he was doing, but he did it any way. She was a part of him, and he was willing to take her responsibility upon himself. He would not let her go. So Eve conceived by him. He knew she would. He knew exactly what would happen to the human race, and he sold the human race into sin that he might have Eve, for he loved her.

And so those two sons were born. Sons that would be the fathers of the human race

that was even now polluted. And what does the record say of them? Read the record. Jude 14,

"And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied..."

Genesis 5 is the chapter of genealogy of Enoch. It gives that genealogy thusly, Adam, 2. Seth, 3. Enos, 4. Cainan, 5. Mahalaleel, 6. Jared, 7. Enoch.

Notice that Cain is not mentioned. The line of Adam goes through Seth. If Cain were the child of Adam, the law of the birthright would have given Cain the right in the lineage. Also it must be noted carefully that in Genesis 5:3, it says that, "Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image, and called his name Seth." Nowhere does it say that Cain was in Adam's likeness, yet he would have to be if he were his son, for the law of reproduction is emphatically that each brings forth after its likeness. We must also credit the fact that in both genealogies in Genesis and Luke, Cain is missing. If Cain were the son of Adam it would be said of him somewhere that, "Cain, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." It does not say that for it CANNOT say that.

Of course students for a long time have set forth two lines of men: one of which was the godly line found in Seth and the other the ungodly line as founded by Cain. And it is strange, but true, these same students have never told us how it was that Cain was the kind of person he was while Abel and Seth were of the spiritual, godly line. Factually, Cain should have been spiritual and Abel less spiritual, and Seth even more so, and right on down the line because each succeeding generation has always gotten further away from God. But no, Cain comes forth as wicked as no man ever has been described for he violently withstands God and the Word.

Now let this be known: Scripture does not play with words. Whatever is in the Record is there for the anointed eyes to see. It is there for a purpose. In that Word it says, Genesis 3:20,

"And Adam called his wife's name Eve; because she was the mother of all living."

But no Scripture ever says that Adam is the father of all living. If there is not this connotation to be placed upon Genesis 3:20, why would it be mentioned that Eve is the mother of all, and no word said about Adam? The fact is that though Eve was the mother of all living, Adam was not the father of all living.

In Genesis 4:1, Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." She does not credit Adam with the fatherhood of Cain. But in Genesis 4:25, she says,

"... For God, said she, hath appointed me ANOTHER seed, INSTEAD OF ABEL, whom Cain slew."

She does not say God had GIVEN her another seed - that would have been Christ, for He is GIVEN. This son, Seth, was APPOINTED instead of Abel. She recognizes her son that came by Adam; she does not now recognize Cain for he came by the serpent. When she says ANOTHER SEED instead of Abel, she is saying that Cain was different from Abel, for if they were of the same father she would have had to say, "I have been given some MORE SEED."

I don't believe everything I read, but it is certainly a curious thing that the March 1, 1963, issue of LIFE reports psychiatrists as saying exactly the same thing we are discussing. Now I know that all psychiatrists don't agree with each other, but here it is. The fear of snakes is not a conscious revulsion but an unconscious one. If it were a natural fear people would just as happily stand fascinated before the gorilla or lion cages. Their unconscious thoughts keep them staring at snakes. That lure of snakes is unconsciously sexual. That it has been through the ages is seen by the people in generation after generation going through the same thing. Snakes have always been and always will be repulsively attractive. The snake has always stood for that which is both good and bad. It has been a phallic symbol through the ages. Just exactly as the Garden of Eden description, we find the serpent the personification of passionate evil.

It is almost universal amongst the various uncultured tribes that the snake is associated with sex and often worshipped in conjunction with it. The study of sexology brings that out in many instances. Now I would like to know where these people got that from, seeing they are uneducated and never read the Bible. But even as the story of the flood is known throughout the world, so is this truth of the fall of man known. They knew what happened there in Eden.

Now right here someone is going to ask me this question: Did God tell Eve to watch out for the serpent or the serpent would seduce her? Now listen, God didn't have to say one thing about what would happen. Just get the point of the story. He simply gave the Word. He said not to partake of KNOWLEDGE. Partake of LIFE. LIFE WAS THE WORD OF GOD. DEATH WAS ANYTHING THAT WASN'T THE WORD OF GOD. She allowed ONE WORD to be changed and right then Satan had her. God could have said, "Don't pick more fruit off the trees than you can eat." Satan could say, "Look, that is quite right. You see if you pick too much it will rot. But here is a method of preserving the fruit and yet at the same time you can pick all you want. So you see, you can have your way and God's way at the same time." The devil would have her right there. He that is guilty in ONE point of the law has broken the WHOLE law. Don't fool with that Word. That is exactly what happened in the Ephesian Age before it ran out in about 170 A.D.

And what did that tree produce? The Tree of Knowledge produced death. Cain killed his brother, Abel. The wicked killed the righteous. It set a pattern. It will keep that pattern until the restoration of all things as spoken by the prophets.

The Tree of Knowledge produced clever men; men of renown. But their ways are the ways of death. God's people are simple but spiritual minded, leaning toward God and nature, calmly tilling the soil, caring for truth rather than wealth. The seed of the serpent has brought tremendous commerce, wonderful inventions, but with it all comes death. Their gunpowder and atomic bombs kill in war; and in peace time their mechanical inventions, such as the car, kill even more in a time of peace than do the inventions of war destroy in times of trouble. Death and destruction are the fruits of her labors.

But they are religious. They believe in God. They are like their father, the devil, and their ancestor, Cain. Both of them believed in God. They go to church. They mingle with the righteous as do tares mingle with the wheat. In so doing they corrupt and produce a Nicolaitane religion. They spread their poison in every effort to destroy the seed of God even as Cain killed Abel. There is no fear of God before their eyes.

But God loses none of His own. He keeps them even in death, and has promised that in the last day He will raise them up.

Conclusion

"... To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the Tree Of Life, Which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

What a thrilling thought is this. That Tree Of Life in the Garden of Eden Which could not be approached unto because of the fall of Adam is now given to the overcomer. The flaming sword of the guarding cherubim has been sheathed. But it was not sheathed ere its blade was bloody with the blood of the Lamb. Let us meditate upon this truth awhile as we consider why the Tree was denied to Adam and his descendants but now allowed again.

God's intention for His creation, man, is to express His Words. In Genesis, Adam was given the Word to live by. A life lived by the Word would be the Word expressed. That is true is it not? But did Adam live by that Word? No, because he was to live by EVERY Word, and he failed to take heed to every Word. Then there arose Moses. What a great and mighty man he was. Yet he also failed to live by every Word, and that prophet, the type of the Great Prophet to come, failed in anger to obey the Word. And there was also David, the great king of Israel, a man after God's own heart. He failed by adultery, when he was tempted. But eventually, in the fullness of time, there came One, the Head, even Jesus, Who also must be tempted to see if He would live by EVERY Word that proceeded out of the mouth of God. Then was Satan foiled. For here was One Who lived by "It is written," and that Masterpiece of God overcame by reflecting God's Word. Then was this manifested Perfect One given to the cross, as the Perfect Lamb of God for the perfect sacrifice. And on the tree' He received the wounds unto death, that we, by Him and because of Him, might eat of the Tree Of Life, and then that Life freely given would enable us to overcome, and express the Word of God.

And now to these Sons of God, who by Him overcome, are given the privilege of the paradise of God, and the constant fellowship of Jesus Christ. There will never more be any separation from Him. Whither He goes, His bride will go. What is His, He shares with His beloved on a joint-heir relationship. The secret things will be revealed. The dark things will be made plain. We shall know as we are known. And we shall be like Him.

This is the heritage of the overcomer who has overcome by the blood of the Lamb and the Word of testimony to Jesus Christ.

How we long for that day when the crooked roads will all be straightened, and we will be with Him, time without end. May that day hasten its appearance, and may we hasten to obey His Word and thereby prove our worthiness to share His glory.

"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." How tragic it is that this first age did not listen to the Spirit. Instead it listened to man. But thank God, in the last age there will be a group rise up, the True Bride of the last day, and she will listen to the Spirit. In that day of gross darkness the light will return by the pure Word and we will return to the power of Pentecost to welcome back the Lord Jesus Christ.



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Sermons By
William Marrion Branham
"... in the days of the voice ..." Rev. 10:7